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Errata

There is an error on page 339 in the research note by Benjamin T.G. Mayes, “Apology of the Augsburg Confession Comparison Chart,” *CTQ* 80:3–4 (2016). A line was accidentally omitted. The missing line reads as follows:

Of Confession and Satisfaction [Triglot, etc.]: XII (VI) 1–81 [Tappert, etc.]: XII 98–178

Book Reviews

**Additional book reviews are available online
at the following address:**

<http://www.ctsfw.edu/resources/concordia-theological-quarterly/book-reviews>

Lives & Writings of the Great Fathers of the Lutheran Church. Edited by Timothy Schmeling. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016. 320 pages. Softcover. \$25.99.

This excellent book is a real treat for all lovers of Lutheran orthodoxy. The average Lutheran pastor has had little in the way of resources about this topic prior to this publication. Now he can find everything he might want in a single, handy reference tool. In twenty-one chapters, seventeen authors cover twenty-one Lutheran theologians and pastors from the orthodox period (ca. 1580–1675). Each chapter focuses on a single Lutheran father in three ways: a biographical précis; a select bibliography of his major writings; and a single sample of that author's writing. Each bibliography includes a list of works translated into English, where those are available.

Editor Timothy Schmeling is to be highly commended for his labors in gathering together an all-star cast of scholar-authors, starting with the introduction from the present “dean” of the history of Lutheran orthodoxy, Saint Louis seminary's Dr. Robert Kolb. Other authors are from various orthodox Lutheran synods, including the Evangelical Lutheran Synod—the editor's home base, the Lutheran Church-Canada, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche, as well as one contribution from a professor at the Norwegian School of Theology in Oslo. Many of the scholar-authors are younger men, which bodes well for the future of orthodox Lutheranism in their respective synods.

More than just a reference work, this book could be used as a textbook for college, graduate school, or seminary classes on the subject. For pastors and others familiar with Lutheran theology, it may also serve as edifying devotional material.

Martin R. Noland
Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church
San Mateo, California

***Reformation 500: The Enduring Relevance of the Lutheran Reformation.* Edited by Curtis Jahn. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2017. 262 pages. Hardcover. \$37.99.**

Reformation 500 is a collection of essays devoted to demonstrating that the Reformation is not merely a historical phenomenon, but a continuing influence shaping the Lutheran church even in the present day. Produced by the Wisconsin Synod, it is primarily an “in-house” document. Non-Wisconsin Synod readers may be puzzled, for example, by references to Christian Worship and occasionally the Wauwatosa theologians. This does not mean that other readers cannot benefit from it, but rather that its intended audience is somewhat narrow.

The ten articles, mostly popular in tone and focused primarily on Luther, are of uneven quality. Some tend to rely too much on block quotations. That being said, readers may well find *Reformation 500* a welcome refresher on the importance of the Reformation, and some articles, such as Wade Johnston’s article on Matthew Flacius, are bound to be helpful for many.

Zelwyn Heide
Pastor, Redeemer Lutheran Church
Grassy Butte, North Dakota

***Sexual Morality in a Christless World.* By Matthew Rueger. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016. 178 pages. Softcover. \$14.99**

Matthew Rueger has provided the Missouri Synod with a solidly Lutheran resource for the parish. With a doctorate in his subject matter, he is thoroughly conversant with the scholarly literature. He brings to the table the practical knowledge of a quarter-century in the parish and first-hand experience with students at a secular university.

Dr. Rueger uses these gifts to digest for us the historical, exegetical, practical, clinical, and theological contours of contemporary challenges to sexual ethics. His engaging and conversational style makes an incredible amount of information accessible. If a Lutheran pastor were to read only one book on the subject, this ought to be the book.

Chapters on the Roman and Jewish context of the Biblical texts prepare the reader for a thoughtful survey of the relevant passages determinative for Christian sexual ethics. All this leads up to a sensitive yet faithful approach toward those who struggle against sexual sins. This pivotal chapter is worth the price of the book. It reveals how the minds of same-sex attracted people are often quite different

from the activists that dominate the spotlight, and it helps those who love them better to care for them with Christ's word.

Concluding chapters survey the clinical research and natural law arguments for marriage. Finally, Rueger brings us back to the gospel to remind *seelorsgers* that this is what every sinner is ultimately crying to hear.

Rueger understands and lives in the dynamics of law and gospel. This, together with his thorough understanding of the subject matter, his Lutheran training, and his pastoral perspective make *Sexual Morality in a Christless World* an outstanding resource. It is the kind of resource that pastors can comfortably pass along to parishioners in full confidence that they will encounter neither legalism nor liberalism, but solid scholarship presented from a pastoral heart.

Jonathan Lange
Pastor, Our Saviour Lutheran Church
Evanston, Wyoming
Pastor, Saint Paul Lutheran Church
Kemmerer, Wyoming

***The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg.* By Robin A. Leaver. Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies, ed., John D. Witvliet. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017. 162 pages + appendices and index. Softcover. \$16.56.**

The impetus for the writing of this book seems to have been a desire to demonstrate that congregational singing in Wittenberg was not an afterthought of the Reformation, notwithstanding the claims of other scholars to the contrary. Those claims are buttressed in the main by dates of publication, especially the date of 1529 attached to a significant Wittenberg hymnal. What Leaver shows in thorough and masterful fashion, accompanied with copious documentation, is that those claims are unsupported. Significantly, the existence of a Wittenberg *Enchyridion* in 1526, which was itself the product of earlier editions, and of Johann Walter's 1524 *Chorgesangbuch*, shows that vernacular singing was a prominent concern of the Reformers dating from 1523 at the least. "The long-standing assumption—that the first Wittenberg hymnal was choral and primary and that the congregational counterpart [of 1529] was secondary and later—can no longer be maintained" (116).

Leaver's research also reveals, even apart from the virtually irrefutable evidence, the historical likelihood that the phenomenon of congregational singing would have accompanied the Reformation from its onset. His chapter on pre-Reformation folk singing is a fascinating foray into the cultural life of the common folk, whose news was usually transmitted across the land in just this way, via *Volkslieder*. A major

feature of this book is a demonstration of the significant contribution of music toward the success of the Reformation. “Every aspect of life was put into songs, especially the things that were deeply felt, such as one’s religious beliefs” (81). Folk songs soon popped up whose subject was Martin Luther himself. The culture was already ripe for the onset and use of Lutheran hymns in worship, and Leaver asserts convincingly that “[t]he Reformation may have begun in 1517, but it can be argued that only after 1523, when the hymns first began to appear, did it really begin to take hold” (7).

The development of the printing press is something that is customarily associated with the success of the Reformation, but what Leaver’s research emphasizes is what the printing press specifically produced, in addition to Luther’s works, that was profoundly helpful: an increasing number of German songs that circulated not only orally, but on broadsheets or pamphlets. The great popularity of this music even led to the spontaneous interruption of popular songs at the Christmas Eve Mass at the parish church in Wittenberg in 1521. Traditionalists reported this to the Elector as part of an attempt to depict the crowd as unruly, but Leaver suggests, in view of the subject matter of these songs, a greater likelihood that it was more of an expression of religious devotion (44).

Some customary aspects of folk singing were adapted by the Reformers in the crafting of their hymns. Most notably, Luther took advantage of the use of a single and popular melody for more than one song. “He was fully aware of the fundamental role that music would have to play in the introduction of new hymns into Wittenberg worship, since collectively they gave the congregation a much greater role in singing than had been the custom hitherto” (79).

Additionally, many of Luther’s hymns were written in bar form, “the mark of a skillful Meistersinger.” One may often hear a Luther scholar dispelling the misinformed interpretation of that term as an indication that Lutheran hymns were adaptations of songs that were sung in bars: “bar form,” they will rightly point out, and as Leaver also indicates (chapter 2) is a reference to the structure of the song. Curiously, however, this study suggests that the Lutheran hymns may well have been sung in taverns, “printed on single sheets, sung by ballad singers, and pasted on the walls of inns and other public places” (79); for music was critical to the success of the Reformation, in ways that Leaver’s most helpful research makes abundantly clear, even more so than one might have thought.

Rev. Burnell F Eckardt
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***1 Samuel.* By Andrew E. Steinmann. Concordia Commentary Series. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016. 636 pages. Hardcover. \$54.99.**

Andrew Steinmann has written a commentary of 1 Samuel for the Concordia Commentary Series that is rich in grammatical notes, well informed by his own previous exegetical work and study of biblical chronology, and faithful to the Lutheran confessions. A forty-page introduction provides enough background to orient the reader to critical theories, historical issues, literary features, and theological themes in 1 Samuel, but the commentary's focus is on the text itself. Because of this brevity, there are no separate discussions of 1 Samuel's literary structure or relating the book's contents to the prior biblical history of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. In contrast to the way some authors handle 1 Samuel, Steinmann's approach reads it as more than a narrative about Samuel, Saul, and David, the central human characters. The book's purpose "is to portray a God who deals patiently and mercifully with sinners—Israel as a whole as well as its leaders" (9). He understands David as "a prefiguration of Christ" (25), highlights the role of God's anointed, and explores the priestly, kingly, and prophetic offices in 1 Samuel. Pastors will also find the commentary helpful in answering questions about polygamy, the Urim and Thummim, the evil spirit that came upon Saul, and his interaction with the medium at En-dor.

Peter Gregory
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***The People beside Paul: The Philippian Assembly and History from Below.* Edited by Joseph A. Marchal. Early Christianity and its Literature. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015. 338 pages. Softcover. \$43.95.**

The working group producing the twelve chapters in *The People beside Paul* has been meeting since 2005, but various "popular uprisings and populist demonstrations" (including Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement) have had a decided influence also (1). White male elitism and scholarship too much given to "anachronistic" creeds, councils, and Christology are held suspect (10), so Marchal and his collaborators fixate upon populist history "from below" and methodological approaches that "cut against the grain"—namely, feminism and queer theory (e.g., 16–17 n. 49, 19, 148, 151, 155–156, 176). It may be wondered why Missouri Synod Lutheran professors should read such literature, let alone pastors. All I can say is that—like it or not—New Testament academic scholarship has moved off in the directions

of marginalized social history recently, so it behooves some of us to become conversant with current trends and inform the church. Besides, not all the offerings are bad. Some, indeed, are at least provocative, and even helpful, for the type of theology Missouri needs to be producing in our day.

Take the chapter by Peter Oakes (University of Manchester), “The Economic Situation of the Philippian Christians” (63–82). According to Oakes, the Philippian congregation was comprised of the descendants of those Greek-speaking, indigenous farmers who were dispossessed of their lands following Mark Anthony and Octavian’s victory at Philippi in 42 B.C. It was a particularly “brutal” colonization (“the victors could take whatever they wanted,” 66), leading to a congregation in Paul’s day of perhaps 20–50 members who really had to scrimp to support Paul’s Macedonian ministry (cf. Phil 4:18; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Cor 11:8). Against the traditional assumption that the Philippians were well off financially, Oakes supposes that Paul and the congregations to whom he wrote were poor and anti-establishment, if not anti-Roman (for this bias elsewhere in the volume see 142, 225–226, 252–253, 287). Granted, economic suffering could have been part of the situation at Philippi (see Phil 1:29), but it need not follow that Paul and Christians there were anti-Roman—and all but social revolutionaries. Why, for example, does Paul resort in the letter to the sort of military metaphors (e.g., Phil 1:27–28; 4:3) that can only have made a Philippian congregant proud? And when Paul asserts that he and the Philippians’ *πολίτευμα* (“commonwealth”) is in the heavens from which we await as “Savior” (*σωτήρα*) the “Lord Jesus Christ (*κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν*, Phil 3:20), he shamelessly panders to Roman imperial sensitivities—sensitivities, in short, that would have been shared by scads of bureaucrats and middlemen of which the Roman world was so full. My guess is that Paul meant to welcome into the Philippian assembly swaggering Romans too who struggled with sins of “selfish ambition and vainglorying” (2:3) and not merely the poor and disenfranchised. Quite a few of the volume’s other chapters suffer from this same defect, especially the amazing essay by two Floridian fair-food activists, entitled, “Determining What is Best: the Campaign for Fair Food and the Nascent Assembly in Philippi” (247–283). But Paul in particular, and the NT in general, favors legitimate government and paying one’s taxes, not social anarchy (Rom 13:1–7; Phil 4:8–9). The prospect of a radicalized Paul that this volume consistently puts forward does not ring true.

Another remarkable chapter is by Angela Standhartinger (Philipps-Universität, Marburg), “Letter from Prison as Hidden Transcript: What it Tells us about the People at Philippi” (107–140). Paul was “in chains” when he wrote the letter (1:7, 13, 14, 17) but just where he was—Rome, Caesarea, or Ephesus—and the circumstances of his imprisonment are hard to determine. Standhartinger finds “implausible” (109) the image of Paul’s imprisonment drawn from Acts, so points

out, e.g., that during the period of his house arrest in Rome recounted in Acts 28 Paul seems to have had nearly “complete freedom of movement” (111 n. 14). However, the picture recoverable from Paul’s own letters—including Philippians—is of more vexatious confinement (e.g., 1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 6:4–5; 1 Thess 2:2) and such hardship sets the stage for Standhartinger’s “hidden transcript”: prisoners in Roman jails were routinely subjected to severe physical abuse, deprivations of many types, and—above all—malicious scrutiny by jailers bent on gathering incriminating evidence not only against the imprisoned but their letter recipients supposed to be coconspirators (119–124). Thus, the language was often “coded”—meaning that efforts were made to communicate with supporting communities with phraseologies that could not have incriminated them (cf. “defense and confirmation of the gospel,” 1:7, 16; “my affairs,” 1:12; 2:23; “his own interests,” 2:4; “interests of others,” 2:4, etc) but would have been “nothing but religious nonsense” (130) to outsiders. Standhartinger’s piece helps one come to terms with the “loaded” language many suggest Philippians contains.

In my opinion, the essays by Oakes and Standhartinger are best, though much scholarship remains to engage a confessional Lutheran reader. It seems to me that confessional Lutheran exegesis has nothing to fear from such scholarship, though it is impossible here to provide suitable responses to everything given space constraints. Here is a list of the other chapter titles and scholars’ names to suggest the scope of the overall project: “Philippian (Pre)Occupations and People Possibilities: an Introduction” (Joseph A. Marchal), “Priestesses and Other Female Cult Leaders at Philippi in the Early Christian Era” (Valerie Abrahamsen), “Collaboration of ‘Samothakiasts’ and Christians in Philippi” (Eduard Verhoef), “Slaves as Wo/men and Unmen: Reflecting upon Eudodia, Syntyche, and Epaphroditus in Philippi” (Joseph A. Marchal), “Out-Howling the Cynics: Reconceptualizing the Concerns of Paul’s Audience from His Polemic in Philippians 3” (Mark D. Nanos), “An Alternative Community and an Oral Encomium: Traces of the People in Philippi” (Robert L. Brawley). The response chapters are written by Richard S. Ascough, Antoinette Clark Wire, and Richard A. Horsley. Given the different approaches, the book cannot help but be uneven at times (I counted typographical errors, split infinitives, and Greek mistakes on pages 104, 117, 135 n. 101, 160, 167, 209, 212, 215, 219, 257, 263, 268 n. 37, 270, 272, 280, 283). The volume also contains Acknowledgments, Abbreviations, Bibliography, Contributors, Author Index, and Subject Index.

John G. Nordling

***The Wittenberg Reformation (1545)*. By Philipp Melanchthon. Translated by John R. Stephenson. (With *The Household of God: Observations on “Church” in the New Testament and the City of Ephesus*. By Thomas M. Winger). St. Catharines, Ontario: Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary, 2016. 60 pages. Softcover. \$11.95**

In 1545, Charles V requested a report on the Reformation. This is the first English translation of the response written by Philipp Melanchthon, which is essentially both a commentary on the Augsburg Confession and a description of how the Reformation was put into practice. At the end of Luther’s life and influence there was still agreement among the Wittenberg divines so that Luther, Bugenhagen, Major, and Melanchthon could sign it.

Attached is an exegetical essay by Thomas M. Winger, presented to the Lutheran Church–Canada’s East District Pastors Conference in April 2016 on Church Order.

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***On the Law. Theological Commonplaces: XV–XVI*. By Johann Gerhard. Edited by Benjamin T.G. Mayes and Joshua J. Hayes. Translated by Richard J. Dinda. St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015. 362 pages. Hardcover. \$54.99.**

In a contemporary setting in which the very meaning of “law” varies widely, even among theologians, whether as the natural law, the eternal divine law, God’s condemning legislation, works of love, or even human edicts, this new publication in English of Gerhard’s commonplaces on the law takes a confident place in traditional Lutheranism. For Gerhard, the law, biblically speaking, is simply the statements of what ought to be done and what ought to be avoided, according to the divine will. The law falls into three familiar categories: moral, ceremonial, and civil or “forensic.”

This threefold division—at least of the Mosaic law itself—has been criticized in recent years with the counter-position that ancient Israel made no such distinction, but understood the covenantal character of the Mosaic law, such that everything communicated by the Lord via Moses was integral to the covenant. Not merely the decrees, but the whole narrative of the Pentateuch is a constituting document of the old covenant. Along these lines, interesting contemporary research challenges the general assumption that the term “law” (*nomos/torah*) in the Bible usually refers to principles or decrees in favor of a definition of law as “covenant narrative” or the

like. These discussions in turn are significant in that they raise the question of the relation of the Mosaic law to the Christian. Does the Mosaic law only accuse? Is obedience to it expected? Or does the law have a broader role as both accusation and typological prophecy? Is it a kind of wisdom literature which assumes meditation, inward delight, and prudential, expansive application to life? For an excellent, recent contribution in this area, see Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013).

For his part, Gerhard engages the law as morally accusing and instructive, but also as typological of Christ and the gospel. The primary purpose of the ceremonial law is to look forward to the coming Christ, and his sections treating the ceremonial law present passages in some detail according to this view. Some sections are quite long and even somewhat repetitive, although in some cases this length is due to numerous biblical quotations. Sometimes it would have been appreciated if Gerhard had not just strung quotations together, but had developed his explanation of these passages in interesting ways with reference to the passages presented for consideration.

Regarding the moral law, Gerhard structures his treatment in line with the Ten Commandments. This treatment of the moral law is especially interesting in the way that he explains the meaning of the commandments far beyond the brief summaries in the Small Catechism. One example is his treatment of the Third Commandment. Not only is assembling for the Divine Service required by this commandment, but avoiding activities which would distract or undermine the use and meditation on the word of God. Rest for servants—employees and workers of all kinds—is required to be offered. Gerhard also elaborated on the benefits of prayer and meditation. In Gerhard's treatment of all the Ten Commandments we see that their broad scope finds concrete exercise in numerous and various practices to be pursued and vices to be avoided. Reflection on Gerhard's guidance, whether the reader agrees or disagrees, will deepen his understanding and practice of love for God and neighbor.

The volume is published in a sturdy hardcover binding that will endure through many years (although the gold-colored foil stamp of my copy has started to wear after several months of moderate use). The book will be of great value to theologians, historians, pastors, and interested lay people.

Gifford A. Grobien

Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony. Second Edition.
By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, 2017. 680 pages.
Hardcover. \$50.00.

“We worship the Christ of faith, not the Jesus of history.” “The Gospel accounts, written years after the fact, are not reliable historical sources.” “The gospel stories are the result of a kind of Telephone game, in which a story, told and retold, takes on a whole different shape.” “The gospels are a third—sometimes fourth—generation recollection of Jesus’s actual deeds and words.” “People originally thought of Jesus as a good teacher, and only years later did they confess him as Savior, Lord, and God.” These are the stories told in our public universities. They are the tales spun at almost every liberal seminary, and throughout our popular culture. This is the kind of stuff that has made Bart Ehrman not only a minor celebrity, but the favorite New Testament scholar of skeptics and Muslims alike. But it is all wrong.

For those interested in how it really happened, try Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, now in a second edition. The stories of Jesus were not fabricated out of whole cloth. How could they be? There were too many people who saw and heard him. While the Twelve formed the foundational witness to Christ, the minor characters also played a role. No fiction writer would ever include the bewildering array of women named Mary. But they were present at the death and at the tomb, and that is why they are mentioned. Simon of Cyrene was an eyewitness, and so was Bartimaeus, once he was no longer blind.

In a fascinating turn, Bauckham examines the names in the Gospel accounts, and he does so over and against the names common to Palestine in the 1930s. He checks the scriptural account and matches it with names found on papyri, including legal and financial documents. Think of our own time. Heather was a popular name in the 1980s, not so much now. Fashions come and go. So also were certain names found in the inscriptions of the time, not to be found in later decades. Certain names were popular in Palestine, but not in the diaspora.

The second edition is not vital to Bauckham’s overall argument, which remains essentially unchanged. He does, however, answer his critics, including an excellent chapter on the “Eyewitnesses in Mark.” Here he revisits the special role of Peter, as well as the minor witnesses, including the women. He also does a splendid job of comparing Mark to other classical works, demonstrating that Mark was not alone in including minor characters as further testimony to the history he records. Bauckham’s additional chapter on the Beloved Disciple, whom he identifies as a Jerusalem disciple other than John the Son of Zebedee, is also fascinating, if not

convincing. Perhaps Bauckham could be helped here if he considered an early dating for John. This, however, in no way detracts from the book's value.

If you already own the first edition, the second is not a necessity. If you do not, buy it now. And, if you have a friend or loved one who has taken Bart Ehrman as scripture, buy a copy for him, too.

Peter J. Scaer

***Lutherans in America: A New History.* By Mark Granquist. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. 375 pages. Softcover. \$60.00.**

In this volume, Mark Granquist, professor of Church History at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, aims to tell the story of Lutherans in America from the ground up. While he admits he must detail the narrative of “denominational structures, schools, hospitals, social service agencies and the like,” he is more eager to “tell the individual and social history of Lutherans in America, their own struggles to live lives of faith and to adapt to a new and different religious culture” (2). It is ironic that Granquist does not succeed in putting forward a comprehensive story of Lutheran individual and congregational experience in America. The book is not primarily focused on interpreting such stories. However, he does do fine job at tracing the larger story of structures and institutions—the story of Lutheranism at a more traditional level. When writing a general history of Lutherans in America, the weight of the institutional storylines inevitably seems to dominate and the social history in Granquist’s narrative takes a back seat.

However, this is not a failure. A general history such as this must make sense of the myriad of synods, ministeriums, denominations, mergers, educational institutions, and the like, which defined Lutheran life. This alphabet soup of American Lutheranism can be intimidating to anyone seeking to understand how European Lutherans made their way in the new world. Granquist methodically and patiently rolls out the story and provides a very helpful glossary of abbreviations and acronyms, as well three graphs which function as a family tree of Lutheran synods in this country. The best acronym in the book is the TCFTS-OTCAOOM which was a committee involved in restructuring the LCA in the early 1970s (306). In the middle of the twentieth century, Lutherans became exceedingly fond of burdensome structures and organizations and this lengthy acronym is a prime example of the obscurity and dangers involved in building such bureaucracy. While individual and social history is not the focus of the volume, Granquist is able to weave such stories into his larger narrative. The twelve chapters of his book are each followed by an excursus which gives details on lesser known but illustrative people and events and

movements such as Hispanic Lutheranism and the relationship of American Lutherans to revivalism.

Inevitably, when reading a book such as this, one looks for his own synod or immigrant group. LCMS pastors might be disappointed there is not more here detailing the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's own particular history and role in American Lutheranism. Granquist seems to devote more space than needed to Norwegian and Swedish experiences. Yet, such quibbles are perhaps unavoidable in a book such as this.

Granquist's history tells the whole story of American Lutheranism reasonably well. It is good introduction to the subject and students of American Lutheranism will find many resources and avenues toward deeper study.

Paul Gregory Alms
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***Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective: Ancient and Contemporary Approaches to Theological Anthropology.* By Marc Cortez. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. 264 pages. Softcover. \$27.99.**

Lutheran theologian Hans Schwarz once commented that one difficulty in dealing with theological anthropology is that the subject can cover an unwieldy number of themes. In *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective*, Marc Cortez tries to narrow the field by focusing on the subject's christological dimension. What, Cortez asks, does the revelation of the person and work of Jesus Christ specifically tell us about what it means to be human?

The author does not intend to present a constructive anthropological proposal. Instead, his purpose is to stimulate questions and insights on the topic by presenting a diverse range of perspectives across history. The following list of the representative figures examined by the book reveals this diversity: Gregory of Nyssa, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Karl Barth, John Zizioulas, and James Cone. In presenting the perspective of each, Cortez is more concerned with achieving understanding than he is with evaluation. Still, the effect is not superficial. Many engaging and relevant issues arise in the process.

For instance, in chapter one the book discusses Gregory of Nyssa's anthropology in terms of how human sexuality, between the fall and the coming resurrection, is or is not constitutive of our essence as human. Gregory sees Christ's incarnation as both defining and transformative of human nature. Therefore, since Scripture teaches that there is in Christ no male or female, our created sexual make-up, says Gregory, no longer defines our individual existence after our resurrection.

So why, Cortez asks, did God create his human creatures in a sexually differentiated way to begin with? Gregory's rather unusual answer is that Genesis reveals a two-stage process of creation. God created human beings first in his own image, which means that we are essentially non-gendered like God. Then, in light of the human act of sin which God foreknew, he created us male and female—a condition that better matches our present situation in a fallen world.

Cortez examines and tries to deflate recent theological attempts to use Gregory as a resource for making "gender" a more fluid and socially-constructed concept. This is an interesting discussion. Unfortunately, the book does not examine what would seem, at least in this reader's mind, the Greek philosophical assumptions behind Gregory's rather spiritualized view of human existence. The Patristic theologian's notion that physical sexual differentiation is characteristic of a fallen rather than an originally created human reality sounds more Platonic than biblical. Still, these are exactly the kind of questions Cortez intends to stimulate.

The discussion of Luther's anthropology in Chapter 3 focuses on how the Reformer's understanding of justification informs what it means to act ethically as a human agent in the world. The chapter draws on Luther's own works, along with interpretations of Luther by scholars like Oswald Bayer. Cortez treats Luther's notion of justification as an essentially christological concept. Justification involves the human being's *coram Deo* experience of being justified through the righteousness of Christ. So as this faith in Christ yields works of love, it is Luther's specifically christological anthropology that lies at the foundation of his vocational ethic.

As the book proceeds through its seven chapters, the diverse perspectives invite comparisons. Barth's grounding of anthropology in God's saving election through the one Word of God, Jesus Christ, stands in sharp contrast to James Cone's view of human beings as *co-liberators* who model the work of the *Great Liberator* in an oppressed world. On the one hand, Julian of Norwich's dependence on her mystical visions of the crucified Christ is miles away from Luther's strict reliance on God's word. On the other, the role of suffering as it flows from the cross of Christ into the life of the Christian is a common theme of both anthropologies.

The comparisons and contrasts that arise from these divergent perspectives make for an engaging learning exercise. However, there is a weakness in Cortez' approach. Despite its name, *Christological Anthropology in Historical Perspective* spends very little time discussing the historical contexts of, or connections between, the anthropological visions of the theologians involved. This gives the book a rather episodic feel. Each of the seven theologies seems to stand out apart from any underlying narrative.

The final chapter includes a short but interesting discussion on an issue common to all the perspectives examined. Cortez notices that none of the seven anthropologies have much to say about humanity outside Christ's salvation or the fold of the Church. The few that hint at it, such as that of Karl Barth, tend to project an accompanying doctrine of universal salvation. None seem able to assign a deep value to all created persons while at the same time holding that only those who are transformed through Christ find their human destiny fulfilled in eternity. This issue has ramifications for an increasingly secular and pluralistic world. It is also something, the author points out, that Christian theology needs to tackle. Cortez makes no pretension of knowing how to do that yet. He simply raises one more worthwhile question in a very worthwhile book.

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***The Way of Concord: From Historic Text to Contemporary Witness.* By Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand. St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Press. 145 pages. Softcover. \$14.95.**

In *The Way of Concord*, Robert Kolb navigates through the political and ecclesial history that lies behind the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. He spares no detail as to the occasions, conflicts, persons involved, etc., of each document contained in what became the Book of Concord. For example, he points out that Melancthon "used the so-called '*genus iudicale*,' the rhetorical form for effective presentation of ideas in a courtroom," in constructing the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (25). In this respect, the book is highly useful for pastors who desire to know the human circumstances that underpinned the bold confession of faith made at the time of the Reformation. Kolb sheds much light on the historicity of the texts of our Confessions.

With respect to the overall structure of Dr. Kolb's book, the chapters of *The Way of Concord* arose over two decades and were originally written as separate essays later edited into the present volume. This makes it difficult to identify the major thesis of the book, and sometimes interrupts the flow of the book.

On the place of the Confessions in the life of the Church, Dr. Kolb speaks of them as primarily an *example* or *model* for church discourse and confession as opposed to confessions that each generation of Lutherans makes their own by confessing them as "now first uttered by our lips, or now first gone forth from our

hands.”¹ According to Kolb, because confessions “are bound in their own times, [they] may not make good reading for the beginning of a person’s exploration of the faith. But because they are set in the eternal word of God, they do provide guidance and insight for believers of all subsequent ages” (97). Here is a weakness of the book. Kolb does not sufficiently discuss the ecclesiastical authority of the Confessions for Lutheran churches today. The exegesis of our forefathers in the faith and the dogmatic assertions that follow from their sound exegesis are grounded upon “the pure, clear fountain of Israel,” the Holy Scriptures—the very claim of a *quia* subscription. Thus, they do not merely provide guidance and insight for believers of all subsequent ages. Rather, they are the clear and concise eternal confession of the hope that we have drawn from Scripture. “Therefore, it is our intent to give witness before God and all Christendom, among those who are alive today and *those who will come after us*” (SD XII 40, emphasis added).²

The historical insights of Dr. Kolb are of value to those who are unfamiliar with the human circumstances that lie behind the Book of Concord. In this regard, *The Way of Concord* is a useful book for the academically-inclined pastor or the interested layman. But readers should look elsewhere to understand the contemporary authority of the Confessions.

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***A Defense of the Lutheran Faith on the Eve of Modern Times.* By H.G. Masius. Edited, translated, and annotated by John Warwick Montgomery. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2016. 223 pages, including 91 pages of facsimile of the second edition in French, 1699. Softcover. \$30.99.**

John Warwick Montgomery has provided a service in translating this theological apologetic from the end of the seventeenth century in Paris. The author, H. G. Masius, was a Danish Lutheran theologian who was appointed chaplain to the Danish embassy in Paris in 1682. The original was written in French. He divided the work into two parts: the first, in which he demonstrated on the basis of their own

¹ Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2007), 169.

² Translation taken from Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

hypotheses that the Lutheran religion cannot be condemned by Roman theologians; and the second, in which he put forth the fundamental differences between the Lutheran and the Roman churches. The work was directed solely against the Roman church using Scripture, the assertions of Roman theologians, and reason. He offered short chapters on the Pope, traditions, the invocation of saints, purgatory, the seven sacraments, the sacrifice of the mass, original sin and free will, evangelical counsels, and justification and good works. He returned to these topics in the second part, giving particular attention to the Scriptures and unwritten traditions, the invocation of saints, purgatory, communion in one kind, transubstantiation, the mass, and justification and the fulfillment of the law.

The value of this work is found in the procedure Masius used to interact with the dominant Roman religion in France at a time of anti-Protestant bias. Masius demonstrated an extensive knowledge and interaction with his opponents' writings. The book affords the modern reader the opportunity to evaluate the importance of being prepared to give a defense of Lutheran theology to theologians, popular proponents, and laity of an opposing theological persuasion, as well as to consider the effectiveness of using the opponents' works and human reason along with Scripture in that defense. It should be noted that Masius did not quote the Lutheran Confessions in his defense, though he did know them.

One jarring discord in *The Defense* is in Masius' explanation of the Lutheran teaching of the Lord's Supper. He posed the question, "But surely Jesus Christ said, speaking of the bread, 'This is my body'?" He responded, "I answer, 'No'" (105). He explained by asserting that τοῦτό in the words of institution does not refer to the bread. Montgomery, in an explanatory footnote, writes that "τοῦτό must reference the total sacramental act of the giving of the bread." But the Lutheran Confessions explicitly reject this circumlocution, stating for example that Jesus "spoke these words about the bread, which He blessed and gave, 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you' (FC SD VII 44).¹ The oral eating and the unworthy eating of Christ's body are both bound up with the assertion that the bread of the Lord's Supper is the body of Christ. Masius' discussion serves as a warning that a vigorous rejection of Roman errors not propel Lutheran theologians into Calvinist language or thought.

A Defense of the Lutheran Faith will be useful for training theologians in the defense of Lutheran doctrine and as a primary document in the history of Lutheran theological apologetics. I do not recommend this book for general use, since the

¹ Translation taken from Paul T. McCain, ed., *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005).

sound understanding of the Lord's Supper could be damaged by the misleading assertions found in it.

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***The Word Does Everything: Key Concepts of Luther on Testament, Scripture, Vocation, Cross, and Worm. Also on Method and on Catholicism: Collection of Essays.* By Kenneth Hagen. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2016. 474 pages. Hardcover. \$25.00.**

Kenneth Hagen (1936–2014) was a prolific scholar of Luther's thought who combined vigorous study of Luther's writings and other primary texts in their original languages with clear analysis (frequently very critical of modern scholarship and its assumptions) and a creative as well as idiosyncratic style of writing. As a doctoral student of Heiko Oberman's at Harvard Divinity his scholarship was deeply shaped by Oberman's approach to Luther and the Reformation through the lens of the late Middle Ages and the intellectual heritage going back to the church fathers that shaped this culture. As its long title indicates, the book being reviewed is a collection of Hagen's essays (originally published between 1969 and 2010) on a wide range of topics. These essays focus especially on Luther's practice of exposition (not interpretation!) of Scripture as that Word of God proclaims the Law and Gospel, in his vocation as an Augustinian friar (not monk!), professor of theology, pastor, and reformer. Hagen planned the volume several years before his death and penned its preface in 2010.

One of the purposes of publishing a collection of essays by a notable scholar is to display both the range of interests and the coherence as well as developments in a scholar's life work. The volume succeeds admirably in this goal, bringing together twenty-four of Hagen's essays; many of these are easily accessible online through the ATLA database, but several that appeared originally as book chapters or published conference proceedings (such as the Pieper Lectures and the annual Congress on the Lutheran Confessions sponsored by Luther Academy) are more difficult to find. Some of Hagen's most important and intriguing discoveries such as the importance of Luther's monastic experience (theology as the "sacred page") are nicely laid before the reader in several distinct forms in this collection. One of the idiosyncrasies of Hagen's writing is frequent (sometimes tedious) repetition of key concepts and vocabulary, however, and this is somewhat magnified by the bringing together into one volume of so many essays authored for very different contexts.

Hagen spent most of his career at Marquette University, an institution founded by the Jesuits and still deeply shaped by Jesuit culture. He served his university and

the academy generally very much as a confessional Lutheran who engaged critically the liberal culture of his academic training and professional context. Several of his essays, in particular one commemorating the career and theology of Dr. Robert Preus, another subtitled “What I observed about the Catholic Church while teaching with the Jesuits for 33 years at Marquette University,” and a third entitled “The Decline of Christianity in Europe,” reveal Hagen’s lively and appreciative if also incisive engagement with the religious (and not religious) cultures of his contemporaries.

The essays are arranged topically and it is helpful (even necessary) before reading to identify the original date and context of publication from the bibliographic information provided in the front matter.

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***Ad Fontes Witebergenses: Select Proceedings of Lutheranism and the Classics III: Lutherans Read History.* Edited by James A. Kellerman, E.J. Hutchinson, and Joshua J. Hayes. Minneapolis: Lutheran Press, 2017. 326 pages. Softcover. \$20.00**

A number of years ago, John Nordling, a trained classicist and New Testament exegete, had a dream. Nordling’s academic career has been devoted to reinvigorating the study of the classics within Lutheran circles. Long an advocate for the study of both Latin and Greek, Nordling has spoken forcefully and often about the need for our church to get back to its roots, to return to the fountains of knowledge. This dream has come to fruition in a bi-annual conference, held at Concordia Theological Seminary, and entitled “Lutheranism and the Classics.” In the October of every even year, Lutheranism and the Classics brings together scholars from the worlds of Lutheran dogmatics, Greco-Roman antiquity, medieval history, and everything in between. Accordingly this conference, though it may seem to some narrowly focused, brings together a wide range of people. All this diverse wisdom is on display in *Ad Fontes Witebergenses*.

Open the book to Cameron MacKenzie’s delightful article on “Martin Luther and History.” In a world that thinks history is driven by secular ideologies such as Marxism, or perhaps thinks history has no goal or meaning at all, this essay is essential reading. Learn from MacKenzie and Luther that history has a meaning and a goal, driven by God, centered in Christ. Then move to an essay by the great historian Paul Maier, who lays out for us all the ways in which the New Testament story was acknowledged and known by the ancients, including the likes of Josephus

and Pliny. Again, in an age in which the New Testament history is unfairly derided, this is more essential reading.

Many of the essays are quirky, and in the best sense of the word. Joel Elowsky speaks of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and does so in light of both Luther and the Church Fathers. Paul Strawn has marvelous essay detailing the publication and reception of patristic literature at the time of the Reformation. This is a helpful reminder to us as Lutherans, but is also something we need to tell the world. Lutheranism is not the beginning, nor is it a new thing, but is a continuity of the church catholic. It is a reformation, but not a revolution. The church fathers are our fathers, as Strawn's evidence demonstrate. For those interested in classical education, and there are many, Martin Noland offers an essay on the German contribution and appropriation of the ancient model. Nordling himself chimes in with a fascinating essay on Josephus, whose works may have brought biblical prophecies into the minds of the Roman empires.

There are quite a few other essays well worth your while. By way of disclaimer, the author of this review finds his own banquet speech in the volume. In it you will learn about the great Fort Wayne classicist, Edith Hamilton. All of this is quite the bargain at twenty dollars, and can be purchased through the Concordia Seminary Bookstore.

Peter J. Scaer

***Discovering Romans: Content, Interpretation, Reception.* By Anthony C. Thiselton. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 297 pages. Softcover. \$22.00.**

Discovering Romans is the third volume to appear in the *Discovering Biblical Texts: Content, Interpretation, Reception* series providing "comprehensive, up-to-date and student-friendly introductions to the books of the Bible." The book's twenty five chapters are divided between introduction (chapters 1–6, pp.1–66), and commentary (chapters 7–25, pp. 67–263).

Thiselton offers eight brief reasons for studying Romans (1). Most compelling is the transformative influence Romans has had on Christians over the centuries including such giants as Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Wesley. Next, Thiselton briefly summarizes three essential (2) and nine limited-use reading strategies (3). The three essential strategies employed throughout Thiselton's commentary are historical-critical method(s), rhetorical criticism, and sociological or socio-scientific reading. The nine limited-use strategies are reader-response theory, structuralist exegesis, liberation hermeneutics, existentialist interpretation, pre-critical exegesis, Barthian exegesis, lexical and grammatical exegesis along with text-critical research, social factors such as the shame-honor system and imperial

cult, and some form critical techniques. His brief summaries prove helpful for those unfamiliar with these varied approaches. Thiselton then rehearses the reception history of Romans beginning with Marcion and continuing through Augustine to Martin Luther, and to E.P. Sanders and the 'New Perspective on Paul' (4). Romans 13:1–7 concerning political authority serves as a single example passage, especially germane in light of recent political developments affecting individual religious liberty and church-state relations (e.g. same-sex marriage). Consideration follows (5) of two significant text-critical issues: Romans 5:1 'We have peace' or 'Let us have peace;' and the placement of the doxologies at the end of chapters 14, 15, 16, as well as the overall integrity of Romans. Thiselton concludes these introductory chapters with a brief biography of Paul, noting in particular the ecclesial origin and character of Paul's ministry and Paul's call as both a missionary and a pastor (6).

Thiselton divides Romans into nineteen thematic sections, averaging ten to twelve pages of commentary per section, identifying key exegetical issues and terms. Rather than plowing new ground, Thiselton surveys the landscape of current scholarly discussion as well as historical reception in keeping with the overall purpose of the commentary series. One distinctive mark is the correlation he draws between 1 Corinthians and Romans. According to Thiselton, Paul articulates in Romans his mature reflection upon problems initially addressed in 1 Corinthians.

Written for students, the series strikes a balance between the readability of a popular commentary and the scholarliness of a critical commentary. The reader is able to listen in on current scholarly debate on Romans without being intimidated or overwhelmed. Overall, the book is a good primer on Romans and Pauline theology.

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***The Gospel According to St. Luke.* By James R. Edwards. Pillar New Testament Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 859 pages. Hardcover. \$65.00.**

In this commentary, James R. Edwards (the Bruner-Welch Professor of Theology at Whitworth University, Spokane, Washington) challenges the traditional view that Luke is the Gospel for the Greeks, citing "repeated reliance on Hebraisms in its construction" (10). For Edwards, "the primary purpose of the Third Gospel is to present Jesus as Messiah, and thus Israel's long-awaited savior, into whom Gentiles are also engrafted" (10).

The broader purpose of Luke's Gospel, according to Edwards, is apologetic, "to set forth a convincing narrative of the truth of the Christian Gospel" (14). This is Edwards' conclusion based on the opening words of the Gospel, in which Luke states his purpose explicitly. Edwards opines that Luke is seeking to defend Christ and the Church against the belief that the Jews are the legitimate heir of the promises to Israel.

Edwards is to be commended for writing a commentary on the third Gospel that is as exegetically rigorous as it is edifying. His exegesis is enhanced in many places by his grappling with extra-biblical literature as well as a thorough analysis of the Old Testament echoes and allusions throughout the Gospel. His attention to Old Testament background is seen especially in the infancy narrative, where he observes that "The effect of the infancy narratives is to demonstrate that the births of John and Jesus flow out of Israel's saving history, and that the birth of Jesus marks the fulfillment of it" (31). He then goes on to identify several connections to Old Testament narratives, concluding: "Luke's infancy narrative throbs with the literary and theological pulse of OT expectation." He is careful to observe that "The allusions of the infancy narrative do not simply repeat former stories and outcomes, however, as do the decrees of Mount Olympus. . . . They herald new possibilities" (31).

His eye for Old Testament allusions and echoes leads Edwards to examine the Old Testament background of certain Greek expressions in the Gospel. This can be seen, for example, in his interpretation of Luke 4:14–30, where the townspeople drive Jesus out of the city (4:29). He notes that the Greek expression behind the phrase, ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς πόλεως is used in the LXX for "ridding a (Jewish) city of defilement, such as plague (Lev 14:40–41, 45), foreign gods (2 Chr 33:15), or a (supposed) evil person (1 Kgs 21:13). The phrase is a ritual anathema and a gauge of the outrage against Jesus. Jesus has become like a Gentile pollutant" (141). Edwards is also quick to point out instances in which something in Luke's second book is foreshadowed in the Gospel. Using the same example above, the phrase in Luke 4:29 is a "foreshadowing of the Christian mission, for in Acts both Stephen (Acts 7:58) and Paul (Acts 14:5–6) will be "thrown outside the city" with murderous intent" (141).

Significant attention is paid to Christological themes throughout the Gospel, making this commentary a useful contribution to the study of early christology. In his interpretation of Luke 5:1–11 (calling of the first disciples), for example, Edwards offers a helpful commentary on the use of the title "Lord" (κύριος). At first, Peter calls Jesus "Master" (ἐπιστάτης), signifying what is "ultimately allegiance" (155). However, after the miraculous catch of fish, Peter calls Jesus "Lord" (κύριος). While κύριος can mean "Sir" as well as "Lord," Edwards argues for translating it Lord, since Luke has prepared readers for a full christological understanding of the

term in verse 8. (155). According to Edwards, “Luke surely intends readers to hear ‘Lord’ as a divine title, confessing both Peter’s sin and his faith” (155–156).

A common feature in the Pillar New Testament Commentary series is the use of *excurses* to delve deeper into an issue of interest without getting “off topic” in the main body of the commentary. One can read an extended discussion of the relation of the infancy narrative to the body of the third Gospel (97–100). Edwards also devotes an entire *excursus* to the topic of “Christ” (271–279) in which he explores the Jewish antecedents for the title. One can also read about Elijah and Elisha typology in the Galilean Ministry (216–219), Jerusalem (408–409), and pairs in the third Gospel (413–414), to give just a sampling. A list of the different *excurses* and their page numbers in the Table of Contents would have been most helpful.

Besides Edwards’ tendency to try to make translations more colloquial, there is little to find fault with in this commentary. The amount of content that he fits into one volume is quite remarkable. I have already used it for research and would recommend it for use by parish pastors or professors of the New Testament.

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***Why on Earth Did Anyone Become a Christian in the First Three Centuries?* By Larry W. Hurtado. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2016. 144 pages. Hardcover. \$15.00.**

Many have described the rise of Christianity and the factors that made possible its relatively rapid and widespread growth. But Hurtado’s work, based on a series of lectures offered at Marquette University, moves from the macro to the micro level, asking a more basic and fundamental question: “Why would anyone ever have wanted to become a Christian in the first place?” On a basic theological level, we might speak about the power of the gospel, and the impact of the Spirit. But Hurtado speaks to the issue on a fundamentally human level. What were the early Christian converts up against, and why did they pursue and confess Christ in the midst of such hostility?

As Hurtado notes, in the first three centuries, there were many reasons for people not to become Christian. There was, of course, persecution. St. Paul speaks of his beatings and imprisonments. We know of the martyrdoms of Stephen and James, Polycarp and Ignatius. But persecution was not confined to the religious leaders, nor was it simply a matter of the official judicial system. Hurtado makes a distinction between social costs and political-judicial costs. He explains, “By social consequences/costs, I mean the tensions that Christian adherents experienced

with their families, acquaintances, co-workers and others” (48). Early Christians were frequently subject to ostracizing from friends and families, with consequences for their livelihood. Hurtado cites Lucian’s *The Death of Peregrinus* as a good example of the widespread contempt for Christians. He goes on to talk about Celsus, whose work was characterized by an elite disdain for the intellectually inferior Christians. While Christianity held a certain appeal to the marginalized, its ranks were filled also with those of higher education and higher social status. And they often paid a heavy price.

What must be remembered is that the pagan culture permeated nearly every aspect of life from sports, social clubs, and the arts, to military membership, political groups, and trade associations. Hurtado writes, “Indeed, practically any formal dinner included ritual acknowledgement of deities” (75). Rarely were Christians asked to renounce Christ. More regularly, they were expected to raise a cup and to offer a word of acknowledgement to the god or gods of the day. Failure to do so would often result in a kind of social death, political banishing, and familial discord.

What was it, then, that drove people to become and remain Christian? Hurtado begins with the simplest and most profound of facts. Christians preached a loving God. Hurtado notes, “In high pagan piety to be sure, particular gods could be praised as benign and generous, but it is hard to find references to any deities either loving humans or being loved by them in Roman-era pagan discourse (setting aside the myths of the erotic adventures of various male deities with human females)” (125). Hurtado likewise speaks about eternal life, embodied in the resurrection (128). Indeed, the troubles of this present time pale in comparison to the joys in the life to come.

Admittedly, Hurtado’s little book is just a start. To say that Christians were drawn by God’s love needs to be fleshed out. In some ways, Hurtado’s analysis seems abstract, in that he does not play out the love found in that particular person, Jesus Christ, manifested in a particular event, the crucifixion, which meets the deepest problems of our humanity, sin and isolation. More could be said about how this love was embodied in a eucharistic community, in which true family and friendship could be found. On the other hand, Hurtado’s work is a wonderful conversation starter. For years, Christianity has been the default setting for our people. America has long been nominally Christian. Even those who promote abortion and same-sex marriage tout their Christian credentials in doing so. But the situation is changing rapidly. Secularization has won the day, and the persecutions have begun. Early Christians were tempted to offer a toast to the pagan deity. A small nod to the gods paved the way to upward mobility and higher social status. Our own challenges are not too dissimilar. In almost every profession and walk of life, Christians are being challenged for their belief in traditional marriage, and for their opposition to the

LGBT agenda. While Christian business people traditionally have joined churches to help their networking, affiliation with orthodox churches now carries a certain stigma. Christians who uphold the Christian teaching are regularly labeled as haters. Already, Christians are losing their livelihoods, being fined and fired out of business. Sportscasters have been taken off the air, judges off their benches. Day by day, we are learning that Christianity comes with a cost, sometimes financial or social, sometimes judicial. What if you are a teacher, required to teach the LGBT agenda? What if your business sponsors a gay pride parade or rally? How will you respond? Will you keep your mouth shut, or will you speak the truth? Many Christians, especially those who live in Islamic and totalitarian lands, even now face bitter persecution, even death. For us, the persecution will more likely hit our pocket-books, our social status, and our reputations. What will we do, and how will we navigate such waters? Will we remain faithful, or offer that toast to the gods? Hurtado might not address the present crisis, but his book sets the table for our discussions. For, no doubt, our own children and grandchildren will be asking, “Why on earth would I want to become a Christian?”

Peter J. Scaer

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Bartholomew, Craig G., and Heath A. Thomas, eds. *A Manifesto for Theological Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. 304 Pages. Softcover. \$29.99. (Jacob Hercamp)

Betz, Hans Dieter. *Studies in Paul's Letter to the Philippians*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 343. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015. 205 + xiii pages. Hardcover. €89.00. (John G. Nordling)

Block, Daniel I. *Obadiah: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd Edition. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. 144 pages. Hardcover. \$21.99. (Brian T. Crane)

Demacopoulos, George E. *Gregory the Great: Ascetic, Pastor, and First Man of Rome*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015. 236 pages. Softcover. \$28.00. (James G. Bushur)

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- Saunders, Stephen M. *A Christian Guide to Mental Illness, Volume 1: Recognizing Mental Illness in the Church and School*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2016. 478 pages. Hardcover. \$43.00. (Gary W. Zieroth)
- Schuetze, John D. *Doctor of Souls: The Art of Pastoral Theology*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2017. 348 pages. Hardcover. \$39.99. (Gary W. Zieroth)
- Ugglå, Bengt Kristensson. *Becoming Human Again: The Theological Life of Gustaf Wingren*. Translated by Daniel M. Olson. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016. Paperback. 392 pages. \$65.00. (John T. Pless)