

BOOK NOTICES

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Inclusion of a book in this section does not preclude it from being subsequently reviewed. Those interested in reviewing one of the books below in a future issue of *AUSS* may send a request by e-mail to auss@andrews.edu.

Blackwell, Ben C., John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston, eds. *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 286 pp. Softcover. USD 24.99.

With the recent popularity of the concept that Jesus was born and raised as a Jew, scholarship has become more and more aware of the importance of interpreting the New Testament texts within their Jewish context. After having published a similar volume on Romans (2015), the same editors have now compiled a volume on the Gospel of Mark. After an introduction, devoted to the history of research and an overview of Jewish literature of the Second Temple period, the book is divided into thirty chapters, dealing with the entire text of the Markan Gospel account. Each chapter, written by a different scholar, compares one particular Jewish text of the Second Temple period to the assigned Gospel narrative. The goal is to show how parallels and contrasts to these non-canonical texts can shed further light on the content of the Gospel.

D. B.

Douglass, Eric. *Interpreting New Testament Narratives: Recovering the Author's Voice*. *BibInt* 169.

Leiden: Brill, 2018. viii + 281 pp. Hardcover. USD 132.00.

One of the major challenges of narrative criticism is to locate the meaning of the text either on the writer's or on the reader's side. Eric Douglass tends toward the first position, by arguing that it is the reader's responsibility to investigate the environment in which the writer placed the narrative. At the same time, he warns against the idea that the reader is able to access the writer's mind. Therefore, he argues that both the writer and the readers are subjects, and that both acts, writing and reading, are intentional acts. Furthermore, Douglass argues that their relation is ethical in nature, which he understands in such a way that it is the reader's responsibility towards the writer to determine the former's intended ethical impact on the latter. Based on these assumptions, the study of Douglass develops the necessary methodological steps to accordingly perform a narrative analysis on the text. In the final chapter, these steps are applied to some pericopes of Mark's gospel.

D. B.

Dyrendal, Asbjørn, David G. Robertson, and Egil Asperm, eds. *Handbook of Conspiracy Theory and Contemporary Religion*. Brill Handbooks on Contemporary

Religion 17. Leiden: Brill, 2018. xiv + 556 pp. Hardcover. USD 210.

This publication is the first of its kind. No one before has undertaken the tremendously important and timely task of compiling a volume, dealing with the relationship between conspiracy theories and religion. The short description of twenty-eight contributors points not only to the highly academic level the readers can expect, but also reveals the interdisciplinary approach chosen by the editors. In addition to experts in religious studies, professors of media studies, history, psychology, philosophy, sociology, politics, etc. also contribute to this publication. The book is divided into three parts; the first is titled “Explanations,” the second “Correspondences,” and the third “Locations.” The book not only examines the intersection of religion and conspiracy theories, but also provides a survey about the global phenomenon of conspiracy theories by discussing examples in different times and cultural environments.

D. B.

Evans, C. Stephen. *A History of Western Philosophy: From the Pre-Socratics to Postmodernism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018. x + 605 pp. Hardcover. USD 60.00.

As is apparent from the title, the philosopher and prolific author and editor, C. Stephen Evans, provides the newest survey, as comprehensively as is possible in a

single-volume of six hundred plus pages, of the history of Western philosophy by highlighting the key figures, movements, and ideas that have created the philosophical tradition of the West from the sixth century BCE to the time of Friedrich Nietzsche. Along this historical journey, Evans weaves in important insights from the history of religion—especially that of Christianity—that have influenced Western philosophical thought because of his conviction that philosophy is a valuable tool for Christians and because a history of philosophy that does not account for the contributions of religion will be a “poorer history” (11). His concluding chapter offers “some convictions about the way forward in philosophy, particularly for Christians” (563). Teachers of philosophy may find this to be a useful textbook in the classroom for those who are new to philosophy, as well as for those who require more depth.

M. L. T. Jr.

Gardner, Paul. *1 Corinthians*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 7. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 811 pp. Hardcover. USD 49.99.

Paul Gardner holds a PhD from Cambridge, was a lecturer in New Testament, and served as a Dean and Archdeacon of the Church of England. After moving to the United States, he continued to serve as a senior minister for Christ Church Presbyterian. Spot-checking Gardner’s exegetical commentary, one can observe, that his confessional heritage leaves

marks in his exegetical discussions. For example, he defends headship theology in 1 Cor 11:3, eternal functional subordination of the Son to the Father in 1 Cor 15:28, and rejects the reading of 1 Cor 14 in light of the witness of Acts. Dealing with the challenge to give structure to Paul's scattered discussions of themes in this particular epistle, Gardner suggests that the underlying issue is the Corinthian's wrong perception of the possession of wisdom and knowledge as a spiritual gift, leading to "spiritual arrogance." Thus, according to the author, Paul calls the Corinthians "to return to the humbling centrality of the gospel message in which Christ is preached as the crucified Lord" (36).

D. B.

Hanna, Martin F., Darius W. Jankiewicz, and John W. Reeve, eds. *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018. xiii + 464 pp. Softcover. USD 29.99.

This multi-edited and multi-authored work is one of the most significant books that was recently published in Seventh-day Adventist scholarship. Some of the preeminent biblical scholars, historians, and theologians in Seventh-day Adventism, many of whom are from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, write on the key issues of soteriology, such as the cosmic controversy between Christ and Satan; the relationship of foreknowledge,

predestination, and human free will; sin and human nature; the atonement and Jesus Christ's high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary; prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying/perfecting grace; regeneration and rebirth; and assurance and judgment. The book engages these issues in light of previous and current soteriological discussions in Christian church history, as well as in close conversation with the biblical text.

M. L. T. Jr.

Köstenberger, Andreas J., Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer. *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek: An Intermediate Study of the Grammar and Syntax of the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016. 550 pp. Hardcover. USD 49.99.

This textbook has achieved a new level of excellence in teaching a biblical language that will set a higher standard for competing publishers. As a tribute to A. T. Robertson, this book follows standard syntactical categories and approach. Designed for a classroom setting, this intermediate textbook integrates practice exercises and vocabulary. Two features of this book are somewhat novel. First, it includes Textual Criticism as the initial chapter. Second, it includes a chapter on Discourse which aids in understanding the contextualized argumentation. Verbal aspect is the most relevant section of the book and follows the current trend in scholarship.

L. N.
Kujanpää, Katja. *The Rhetorical Functions of Scriptural Quotations in Romans: Paul's Argumentation by Quotations*. NovTSup 172. Leiden: Brill, 2019. viii + 374. Hardcover. USD 174.00.

This publication contains the final product of the author's doctoral studies at the University of Helsinki. In contrast to previous studies, which focused on how Paul interprets scriptures, Katja Kujanpää takes a closer look at how the apostle uses the scriptural quotations in his argument. In doing so, she assesses Paul's rendering of the quote, its function within Romans, and its relation to the original context. In addition, Kujanpää attempts to examine the level of scriptural knowledge necessary on the part of the original audience, so that they would have been able to follow Paul's argumentation. Kujanpää limits her studies to the fifty-one direct or explicit quotations in Romans, discussing each within its context (Rom 3:1–20; 4:1–25; 9:6–29; 9:30–10:21; 11:1–36; 14:1–15:21). In her final chapter, she examines the eight stand-alone quotations (1:17; 2:24; 7:7 and 13:9; 8:36; 12:19–20). The different angle on Paul's use of scriptural quotation, presented in this book, makes it an indispensable addition to Pauline scholarship.

D. B.

Lee, John A. L. *Basics of Greek Accents: Eight Lessons with Exercises*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 110 pp. Softcover. USD 14.99.

This publication attempts the teaching of the often-neglected Greek accentuation. Knowledge in this area is “indispensable” “for advanced research and publication” (5). The material has been previously published in 2005 by a different publisher in a different physical format. The author revised the material and added a section, entitled “Traditional Accent Terminology” and “Illustrations.” The book is structured in eight lessons, ideally taught in one hour per week over eight weeks. Each session deals with some essential basics of Greek accentuations, followed by an in-class exercise and an exercise for homework. In addition to the eight lessons (11–64), Lee provides further exercises (65–67), a bibliography for tools dealing with accentuation (69–70), a glossary explaining some technical terms (71–72), an answer key to the exercises (73–85), and finally an illustrative section that shows the development of the Greek accentuation based on pictures and transcriptions of selected manuscripts (87–103).

D. B.

Moskala, Jiří, and John C. Peckham, eds. *God's Character and the Last Generation*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2018. 286 pp. Hardcover. USD 29.99.

The “last generation theology” (LGT) of M. L. Andreasen, Seventh-day Adventism's most influential theologian of the mid-twentieth century, continues to have a strong impact on some sectors of the denomination.

This interdisciplinary collection of essays authored and edited by a competent team of biblical scholars, historians, theologians, and even a psychologist from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, attempts to address the key questions raised by LGT advocates in the areas of theology, anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology, Christology, and eschatology. However, instead of a “polemic against” LGT, the editors of this work hope it will provide the reader with “a positive, constructive approach” that builds upon “the teachings of Scripture and the additional insight given by Ellen G. White,” one of the denomination’s cofounders, in order to bring clarity to these all-important issues for Christians who are living just before the second advent of Christ (13).

M. L. T. Jr.

Nikki, Nina. *Opponents and Identity in Philippians*. NovTSup 173. Leiden: Brill, 2018. x + 268 pp. Hardcover. USD 131.00.

Despite recent doubts about the value of historical inquiries regarding Paul’s opponents, Nikki still considers such a project legitimate, when the relationship between text and reality is approached with an awareness of its complexity. The study aims to identify the opponents, mentioned in each instance, especially the polemic ones (Phil 3:2, 18–19). In doing so, the author proposes a fresh reconstruction of Paul’s relationship to the Jerusalem-based, Jewish, Christ-

believing community. To prevent a simplistic reading, Nikki examines the text according to ancient polemical rhetoric and performs a controlled and detailed mirror-reading. In addition, she applies the social identity approach to determine Paul’s strategy of enhancing the image of his own group, by clearly distinguishing them from his opponents. As a logical consequence of these applied examinations, she also contributes to the discussion of the complex relationship between the early Christianity and its relationship to Judaism.

D. B.

Rieger, Joerg. *Jesus vs. Caesar: For People Tired of Serving the Wrong God*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2018. xiv + 145 pp. Softcover. USD 19.99.

Having a PhD from Duke University, Rieger Joerg currently holds the Cal Turner Chancellor’s Chair of Wesleyan Studies and teaches as a Distinguished Professor of Theology in the Divinity School and Graduate Department of Religion at Vanderbilt University. *Jesus vs. Caesar* addresses the daily challenge Christians face in their choice between worshiping the live-giving Jesus, or Caesar; Rieger presents the latter as a life-destructive lifestyle. In his short treatise, the author argues that this choice affects human beings beyond the religious realm, impacting also their political and economic situations.

D. B.

Rigby, Cynthia L. *Holding Faith: A Practical Introduction to Christian Doctrine*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2018. xxxvi + 372 pp. Softcover. USD 39.99.

This introductory textbook on the basic beliefs of the Christian faith is unique in its class in that it not only explores the “what” question—that is, “what is the content of theology?”—but it also delves deep into searching out answers of relevancy and applicability to the “why” and “how” questions—that is, “why and how theology matters?” It explores the traditional loci of Christian theology (e.g., epistemology, bibliology, theology proper, Christology, anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology) in a way that is lucid and accessible in its explanations of the jargon of God-talk so that the seeker, layperson, seminary student, pastor, and scholar can reflect more profoundly and fully on the various doctrines that compose and inform Christian belief and practice, respectively.

M. L. T. Jr.

Luther were essentially correct in their reading of Paul. He begins with a short introduction (under twenty-five pages) and ends with a short theological summary (under fifteen pages) which gives precedence to the textual analysis, which is the key feature of this newest addition to the plethora of existing commentaries. Relegating the interaction with the major voices in the study of Romans into the footnotes supports even further the priority given to the textual analysis itself. Numerous excurses deal with major text critical issues and important discussions that took place in the history of the interpretation of Romans. Thielman’s exegesis mainly consists of linguistic and historical analysis, finishing each section with a “Theology in Application” section. While the precedence given to the textual analysis is welcomed, a major point of critique is the author’s occasional failure to directly connect his interpretative conclusions to his exegetical analysis.

D. B.

Thielman, Frank. *Romans*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 6. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 812 pp. Hardcover. USD 59.99.

Thielman holds a PhD from Duke University and is currently teaching New Testament and Greek at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. Within recent Pauline scholarship, the author is a proponent of the Old Perspective, that Augustine and