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## Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

### Authors

Tucker Adkins, William Brown, Brady Kal Cox, Megan Leverage, Philippa Juliet Meek, and Paul Stein

## Book Reviews



Tipson, Baird. *Hartford Puritanism: Thomas Hooker, Samuel Stone, and Their Terrifying God*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 409 pp. ISBN-9780190212520

In *Hartford Puritanism*, Baird Tipson masterfully contextualizes the theology, hermeneutics, and preaching of prominent seventeenth-century Puritan Thomas Hooker and his colleague Samuel Stone. Tipson, a longtime university administrator and current adjunct professor of religion at Gettysburg College, dedicates *Hartford Puritanism* to probing the “divine anger” and “dread” seen throughout Hooker’s preaching and writings as a minister in England and America (2). In the process of assembling this erudite biography of Hooker, Tipson reveals an impressive grasp on theological history from fourth-century debates between Augustine and Pelagius to the positions of Hooker’s Cambridge mentor William Perkins. With such an expansive knowledge of Christian theology and tradition at his disposal, Tipson makes a significant contribution by

effectively historicizing the “extreme Augustinianism” and “terrifying God” of Hooker.

According to Tipson, we must approach the theology and preaching of Hooker with an understanding that his view of God was “ultimately shaped by the imagination” of Augustine, mediated by his teacher William Perkins (92). This “imagination” led Hooker to articulate certain core Augustinian theological principles to his congregations, including mankind’s inherent sin-nature wrought by the Fall, the inability to earn salvation, the need for God to prepare the faithful to receive His grace, and predestination (97). While this foundation was not necessarily unique to Hooker, it was critical to the development of *his* God. Hooker’s emphasis on human brokenness and depravity, particularly developed through an “extreme” Perkinsian Augustiniansm, held an important association with fear. For Hooker, authentic faith and relationship with God was synonymous with terror and fear (249). In short, this was not the “neighborly God,” a latitudinarian ruler who acted from a distance, but a God who, in order to rightly enforce His will and sovereignty upon His creation, liberally injected fear into the faithful and mightily condemned those He saw fit (249).

William Perkins, a leading sixteenth-century English Puritan, mediated Augustinian theology for Hooker. Tipson not only notes this, but deftly traces the development of Perkins's theology by explicating his reverence of Augustine and Theodore Beza, detailing Perkins's "bitter denunciations" of fifteenth and sixteenth-century "Pelagian" Jesuits, such as Gabriel Biel and Luis de Molina, and highlighting the challenges he faced with sixteenth-century freewill proponent Jacobus Arminius (148, 169). In illustrating such a detailed theological history, Tipson better portrays the Perkinsian "theology that shocked many contemporaries by its unrelenting insistence on divine sovereignty," and thus informed the work of Hooker (147). Importantly, Tipson's theological genealogy of Perkins, and thus Hooker, prohibits the reader from simply glossing over Hooker's "terrifying" God or lazily attributing it to a form of caffeinated Calvinism.

Much of the same in-depth historicizing is seen with Tipson's treatment of Hooker's hermeneutical approach. The teachings of Peter Ramus, the sixteenth-century French philosopher, according to Tipson, informed Hooker's interpretation of the Bible and "the entire natural world" (196). Hooker's theology revolved around the Ramist "rule," which "taught the investigator to analyze any subject by breaking it down

into its component parts” (203). By adopting this intellectual tool, Hooker understood the Bible, congregants, and the natural world in a logically deductible way. Hooker’s Ramism dictated that the world was a simple binary governed by God’s perfect and discernible laws. This, Tipson says, gave Hooker insight “into the mind of God” and the ability to “understand the nature of his decree to elect and to reprobate” (216). It allowed the godly minister to intellectualize his faith while reinforcing God’s sovereignty and mankind’s depravity.

Hooker’s extreme Augustinianism and Ramist hermeneutics are tied together with Tipson’s chapter on the minister’s preaching style. Particularly, this section sheds light on the philosophy of the Puritan pulpit and what the sermon’s purpose was. Drawing on a wealth of orations and English sermon historiography, Tipson details that “God used the medium of the preached word to soften or harden the hearts of” congregants (221). More specifically, the message preached in the early seventeenth century intended to engulf the listener in a world of spiritual immediacy and imminent judgment from God. This context gives the reader more understanding of Hooker’s style. Though other divines, Tipson points out, found Hooker’s preaching to be merely “‘railing’ and ‘bawling,’” he found emotional explication of God’s coming terror would effectively

rattle the present sinner and sober the dozing elect (232). Such an approach emphasized Hooker's Augustinian polarization of the elect and reprobate and Ramist logical binary. Hooker's preaching was the place where his theological, intellectual, and hermeneutical principles amalgamated.

Tipson's *Hartford Puritanism* is, by any standard, an incredible theological history. His mission of helping the reader "come away with a deeper understanding of Hooker ... in the overall development of Protestant Christianity" is not only accomplished, but surpassed (398). One must consider, however, the purpose of including Samuel Stone in this work at all. Tipson notes Stone's role as a colleague and pastoral peer of Hooker in Connecticut, but it is unclear how Stone impacted, if at all, Hooker's theological development. The book will go through sizeable chunks without meaningful mentions of Stone, only to sparingly and unexpectedly touch on his similarities with Hooker on certain topics. Also, though he rightly cites it in the beginning, Tipson might have referenced Janice Knight's *Puritan Orthodoxies: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1994) more seriously. Though at times a too-tidy binary, Knight's Puritan history of the "Intellectual Fathers," or mainline orthodoxy led by William Ames, and

“Spiritual Brethren,” the foil “group” headed by Richard Sibbes, effectively contextualizes the theology of succeeding Puritans in America. A heartier relationship with Knight’s text could have benefited Tipson by positioning Hooker’s stances among the larger debates of other prominent divines, such as John Winthrop, Thomas Shepherd, John Cotton, and John Davenport.

Regardless of any due criticism, *Hartford Puritanism* is a must-read for students and scholars of trans-Atlantic Puritanism and American religious history. Tipson’s impressive command of Christian tradition and theological history results in an exceptional biography of an important, international religious leader.

Tucker Adkins  
*Florida State University*

Jefford, Clayton N., ed. *The Epistle to Diognetus (with the Fragment of Quadratus): Introduction, Text and Commentary*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013. 304 pp. ISBN-10: 0199212740

The last substantial English commentary on the *Epistle to Diognetus* was published in 1943. Since that time, several articles and valuable French and German commentaries have been published. In this volume, Clayton Jefford, professor of scripture at Saint Meinrad Seminary

& School of Theology, contributes to Oxford University Press's series, *Oxford Apostolic Fathers*, by providing disparate analyses, expert translation, and insightful commentary. His task is made more difficult by the fact that commentaries on *Diognetus* are, to a certain extent, speculative; no extant manuscript exists, with interpretations primarily drawn from transcriptions. Thus, throughout his analysis, Jefford consistently illustrates the illusive and speculative nature of scholarly interpretation.

The book is divided into three sections: introduction, translation, and commentary. After briefly reviewing the history of scholarship, Jefford problematizes the issues of literary integrity and composition history. He argues that chapters eleven and twelve of *Diognetus* were likely late additions to the first ten chapters of the text, as is evident by the separate and distinct literary styles and thematic elements. Jefford also argues that the asyndetic style of chapter five and six, and chapter seven through ten indicates that certain textual traditions were initially transmitted orally (41). To explain the development from an oral tradition to textual composition, he proposes three major stages in *Diognetus'* historical development: (1) oral recitation (chapters. 1-10), (2) written autograph and evolution of the autograph (expansions within chapters. 1-

10), and (3) additional chapters (chapters 11-12) accompanied by further editorial modifications (expansions within chapters 1-10). According to Jefford, *Diognetus* exhibits the influence of Pauline thought and Logos Christology, which was initially transmitted orally and later edited within an Alexandrian context (125-126). While scholars have rigorously debated the subject, his reasoning is not only convincing, but also valuable in offering a new lens of interpretation.

On the other hand, Jefford wholly neglects to address the possible influence of early Gnosticism. For example, *Diognetus* 7:2 refers to the Son of God as ‘the Demiurge,’ which is an important concept found in early Christian Gnosticism and Plato’s *Timaeus*. (See Thomas Gaston, “The Influence of Platonism on the Early Apologists”, in *Heythrop Journal* (2009), 573-580.) I feel that the book could have been strengthened by this inclusion.

Aside from this minor critique, Jefford’s nuanced and meticulous analysis is an excellent contribution to studies on early Christian literature. While the book does not focus on reconstructing early Christian history, his conclusions will certainly influence how scholars approach the subject. This volume will advance the study of *Diognetus* and other apologetic literature. As a reference book, students will find the text useful as it

proves to be an excellent introduction to an often-marginalized piece of early Christian literature. Overall this volume is an important and praiseworthy addition to the studies of *Diognetus*, the Apostolic Fathers, and early Christianity.

William Brown  
*University of Chicago*

Bowman, Matthew. *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 308 pp. ISBN 9780199977604

Matthew Bowman is an Associate Professor of History at Henderson State University, and *The Urban Pulpit* is derived from his doctoral thesis at Georgetown University. In *The Urban Pulpit*, Bowman claims “liberal and fundamentalist evangelicalism were two divergent methods of laying stake to a common evangelical heritage” (10). Fundamentalist and liberal evangelicals ultimately disagreed over how human societies could be transformed, which reflected both their stylistic and theological differences. Bowman’s thesis relies on his understanding that both “liberalism and fundamentalism were religious responses to the urban experience,” (14) and to detail and nuance his claims he specifically

focuses on how both movements attained prominence in New York City from the 1880s to the 1920s.

The changing cultural landscape of New York City threatened the dominant evangelical life of the urban city. As Bowman depicts, “the unholy trinity of urbanization, immigration, and industrialization” (15) challenged the, arguably imagined, evangelical cultural dominance. Initially, evangelicals were unsure of how to face these changes and they responded by retreating northward, away from the challenging new developments. They sold their houses and churches largely to the entertainment industry and to immigrants, and moved to quiet residential neighborhoods further north in the city. However, it quickly became clear that avoiding these challenges would not be an option. The immoral forces the evangelicals were fleeing—entertainment and industry—as well as the immigrants who did not share their faith—Catholics and Jews—followed as they moved north. Evangelical leaders realized that the rituals of evangelical faith, which included preaching, scripture, and the rites of revival, would have to be reimagined and contextualized in ways relevant for the new generation of urban evangelicals. It was the different approaches to reimagining the rituals of evangelical faith in response to

the demands of the changing urban environment that led to the split in evangelicalism that Bowman describes throughout this work.

Bowman outlines the differences that led to the split in evangelicalism in a number of ways. He provides historical background for the religious and societal milieu of New York City, and goes into detail regarding the *cathedralizing* of the built environment of the city. Bowman continues by discussing the diversity in preaching styles of the major Baptist and Presbyterian pulpits, analyzing theories about language and the concept of scripture as God's Word in a modern context, as seen in the debates over the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible. He characterizes the liberal evangelical commitment to social justice and reform as a direct expression and outgrowth of Christian conversion, narrates the attempt to institute a distinct liberal evangelical curriculum at the Union School of Religion, and describes John Roach Straton as the main example of the emerging fundamentalist style of preaching that embraced prophetic and confrontational means. Bowman concludes by telling the story of Harry Emerson Fosdick and his failing efforts to develop and maintain liberal evangelicalism at the Riverside Church in New York City.

Bowman asserts, “the problems evangelicals faced in New York were shared nationwide” (14). However, the focus of Bowman’s narrative on New York is so exclusive that events elsewhere seem unimportant, even if these events were directly impacting those in New York (e.g., the number of revivalist preachers ending their tours in New York). If the reader understands that Bowman’s work is an attempt to support his thesis through describing in detail how the evangelical split played out in New York rather than prescribing this process for all major North American cities at the time, this is not an issue. Bowman’s thesis would benefit by more explicitly stating that the *Urban Pulpit* serves as a case study of the larger trends in evangelicalism.

This book should be of great interest not only to religious historians, but also to those seeking to understand the cultural history of the American city. Bowman’s work is essential to anyone interested in the scholarship on American religious history, and it should challenge others to continue engaging in the burgeoning study and scholarship on the topic of American Protestantism. Bowman believes that this historical account still speaks “to the troubled state of evangelicalism in America, and reminds us, urgently, that it is strongest when it imagines itself diverse” (293). While this claim is not well developed in the book, it should serve

as a catalyst for others who are interested to continue to explore this claim. If Bowman's thesis regarding the divergence in evangelical beliefs as a response to the changing urban environment is accurate, as he clearly articulates it is for New York, it would be interesting to see other researchers and scholars engage in similar historical studies for other cities (e.g., San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia, etc.) Under comparison to such research, would Bowman's thesis hold true for these other urban centers during the same time period?

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Innis, James R., Jr. and Sakmyster, Thomas, eds. *The Shakers of White Water, Ohio, 1823-1916*. New York: Richard W. Couper Press, 2014. 311 pp. ISBN 978-1937370121

The well-known American Shaker establishments of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky; Mount Lebanon, New York; Canterbury, New Hampshire; and Hancock, Massachusetts are widely familiar to students and scholars of Shakerism. Indeed, the history and cultural uniqueness of these great religious settlements have been exhaustively documented by historians of American religion. Nevertheless, there remain several Shaker communities—now splendidly preserved historic sites—that continue to

reside outside the scope of academic scrutiny. Despite the factors contributing to this scant scholarly attention, fresh curiosity has turned to one such settlement: White Water, Ohio. In *The Shakers of White Water, Ohio, 1823-1916*, editors James R. Innis, Jr., and Thomas Sakmyster, alongside contributing historians, have compiled a collection of essays elucidating the history of this long-overlooked Shaker establishment.

Innis and Sakmyster's preface anticipates a question likely lingering in readers' minds: why the belated scholarly attention? One explanatory clue is the 1907 conflagration that engulfed White Water's archive of historical deeds and documents; historians have since conjectured over the biographical lacunae that have rendered the village's historical narrative incomplete. To finally rectify these historical inaccuracies, this volume's contributors piece together White Water's record by drawing on a rich set of primary sources, including periodical literature, letters, and Shaker memoirs. *The Shakers of White Water* is divided into eight thematic chapters: History, Spiritualism, Children, Women, Agriculture and Industry, Music, Land, and Buildings and Topography. Chapters are supplemented by individual appendices containing photographs, prints, musical scores, community rosters, demographic charts, poetry, and maps. While each section offers rare

historical information on the White Water community, two particularly absorbing chapters deserve special notice in the limited space of this review: “A History of White Water Shaker Village” and “Agriculture and Industry.”

Founded in 1823, roughly twenty-five miles northwest of Cincinnati, White Water was the last Shaker community to be established in what was then considered the great American West. At that time, sixteen other Shaker communities flourished throughout the United States. The Shakers, formally known as the United Society of Believers in Christ’s Second Appearing, had erected their first settlement in 1774 outside of Albany, New York, and after several decades of turbulent persecution, emerged as a prosperous religious minority. The society had advanced south to Kentucky, then as far as Florida, and progressed westward into Indiana and Ohio, where there emerged the Union, North Union, and White Water villages. White Water all but conformed to the trajectory of events that typically inspired the founding of other Shaker villages. The 1820s marked the gradual decline of the United Society’s era of expansion, as its itinerant missionary program fell into quiescence. Without the influence of Shaker missionary circuits or peripatetic evangelists, a local band of settlers who “wished to learn more of the

Shaker faith” initiated the establishment of a new Shaker community—a spiritual yearning alone had inspired White Water’s first log cabins to dot the fringes of the American West (13).

Most interesting, Innis and Sakmyster’s chapter, “A History of White Water Shaker Village,” chronicles compelling historical instances that suggest the political ethos of White Water was, at times, at stark odds with the United Society’s doctrine. There are numerous examples of White Water’s tendency to sidestep the rules and injunctions issued by the Central Ministry, the United Society’s government. In 1841 and 1842, for instance, the Central Ministry proscribed consumption of tobacco, tea, coffee, “ardent spirits,” and, most contentiously, pork. White Water, however, housed both a brewery (a transient operation) and maintained a lucrative swine enterprise. Dutiful obeisance to these mandates at White Water was short-lived; by 1850, use of these commodities and swine production resumed, the latter being a longstanding staple food source. White Water’s community largely disregarded another pillar of Shaker doctrine during the Civil War. While pacifism was a cardinal principle of Shakerism, many White Water Believers openly championed Union war efforts. Innis and Sakmyster document that White Water regularly provided farm produce to Cincinnati’s Sanitary Commission, an

organization that cared for Union casualties. Demonstrations of public charity notwithstanding, a decided pro-Union spirit pervaded the community: “The Believers of White Water tried in various ways to demonstrate that, despite their refusal to submit to the draft, they were in fact loyal to the Union and had deep concern for the soldiers wounded in combat” (49). Indeed, there was a prevailing disregard for maintaining the Shaker posture of hushed pacifism. In July 1863, shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg, White Water hosted a public Independence Day fête featuring Shaker song, dance, and prayer to honor Union soldiers. Innis and Sakmyster write, “No celebration of this kind is known to have taken place at any other Shaker village during the Civil War” (49). Such instances point to a distinct tone of frontier independence and patriotism that shaped White Water’s perspectives on national affairs. This is not to say White Water Believers were restive agitators, but rather more apt to voice that certain Shaker principles were, at times, incompatible with the political exigencies of the era.

Political sentiments aside, White Water believers enjoyed considerable industrial success. They tilled fertile farmland, manufactured iconic Shaker commodities, such as brooms and bonnets; and lucratively peddled the famed Shaker garden seeds. Several agricultural and industrial

ventures, however, distinguished White Water from its counterparts. Chapter 4, "Agriculture and Industry," uncovers industries unique to White Water, particularly malt beer brewing, silkworm cultivation, and fish farming. Innis and Sakmyster document that the log brewery was one of White Water's first structures and even welcomed the general public for a brief period; the weekly beer production rate yielded fourteen barrels (197). White Water's silkworm enterprise flourished in the village's two log cabins and garden shed; Shakers garnered a yearly production rate of fifty pounds, valued at \$275 (198). Not only was raw silk sold in bulk, White Water believers spun silk for clothing and handkerchiefs. Most peculiar was White Water's fish farming venture launched in the early 1880s. What began as a ten-fish, six-acre expanse of interconnected ponds, turned into an enterprise replete with an estimated forty thousand German carp by 1884 (201). The annual fish farming revenue hovered around \$350. Following the Civil War, as the United States plunged inexorably into industrialization, formerly profitable Shaker industries dwindled. White Water Shakers struggled to compete with mass-produced commodities, but in turning to these unconventional industries, the community was able to adapt to a rapidly evolving economy. Importantly, the chapter undermines the common historical oversimplification that

Shakers were only callous-handed farmers, carpenters, and itinerant merchants. Though White Water believers occupied these roles, they skillfully (and successfully) experimented with novel industries not generally known to have had a place in Shaker history.

If the book has a fault, it lies in its frustrating omission of an index. Although the appendices provide valuable supplemental information, the book's exclusion of a comprehensive index inconveniences readers. Despite this flaw, the essays of *The Shakers of White Water* collectively succeed in rescuing White Water from historical obscurity. Every chapter eloquently emphasizes White Water's singularity, uncovering the idiosyncrasies, both peculiar and provocative, that rendered the community a truly unique Shaker establishment. That is, in reading the essays, one discerns that although Shaker communities comprised a larger religious institution, settlements were individual microcosms defined by their own intellectual and industrial triumphs. True, Shakers were grounded in a deeply shared theology, but the United Society was by no means a one-dimensional, homogenous sect—and White Water was no small contributor to achieving this diversity.

Sebastian Galbo  
*Dartmouth College*

Balmer, Randall Herbert. *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America* 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 409 pp. ISBN-10: 0195300467

The 25th Anniversary edition of Randall Balmer's *Mine Eyes Have Seen The Glory* emerges at an important moment in American religious history, when scholars are questioning the centrality of the New Christian Right. Insisting that the scholarship is lopsided, historians are now calling for a more expansive study on American evangelicalism.

Balmer's work, then, is perhaps more relevant today than it was twenty-five years ago. While Balmer was one of the first to argue that scholars should take evangelicals seriously; he explains in the preface to this fifth edition that his more specific aim was to show that evangelicalism could not be reduced to what Americans saw on their televisions: the religious right or televangelism. Rather, the evangelical subculture is deeply rich and diverse. Embarking on a journey across the United States, Balmer knits together the stories of fascinating and very different evangelicals, fundamentalists, and charismatics in his classic travelogue, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*. Featuring chapters on Jesus freaks in California, futurist pentecostals, healers, Christian bookstores,

youth camps, colleges and universities, just to name a few, this work helps to diversify and complicate the study of American evangelicalism.

As Balmer explains in his new preface, his work was one of the first historical ethnographies and that it provided a unique perspective, as the book was as much a personal venture as it was a professional one. Balmer was raised fundamentalist, but left the movement in his early adulthood—coinciding with the rise of the religious right—which according to Balmer, had grown much too political. Returning to the evangelical subculture years later, Balmer was delighted to become reacquainted with the evangelical faith he remembered from his youth. While his curiosity and compassion for his unique subjects are laudable, Balmer detracts from the quality of his research as he affronts the religious beliefs and practices with which he disagrees. His bias becomes increasingly pronounced, especially in chapters added in the later editions. Despite this, the later chapters are not entirely without merit. In fact, they examine at varying levels, essential topics in the study of American evangelicalism, such as: Jimmy Swaggart, Christian rock music, Thomas Kinkade and Christian art, and megachurches.

The 25th Anniversary edition adds yet another important topic: Latino Evangelicals. But again, Balmer's ethnographic history is lacking.

I'm not sure what the reader is supposed to take away from Balmer's evaluation of what he referred to as "the Murmuring Moment," which he observed at the New Life Covenant Church in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago. Balmer writes, it "has become so predictable that it seems contrived to me, even coercive. It's as though the worship leaders are saying, 'Now folks, twenty minutes into the service, we're going to speak in tongues'" (342). I also find it more distracting than helpful that Balmer organizes his entire chapter around his own normative political positions, expressing hope that "The rise of Latino Evangelicalism suggests that evangelical political activism may be coming of age" (349) and that the subculture may be "moving away from the hard-right policies to reclaim the mantle of nineteenth-century evangelicalism, which, like traditional Catholic social teaching, invariably took the part of those on the margins of society, those Jesus called 'the least of these'" (350).

In terms of audience, as reviewer Timothy Weber said of the first edition, readers will judge Balmer's book "on the basis of whether they

can find people like themselves in it.”<sup>1</sup> Balmer explains in his new preface that he has been grateful to hear from so many readers over the years who have expressed appreciation “for telling ‘their’ stories, [and] for understanding them.” These readers who identified with the people Balmer met along his journey will be pleased to learn that the 25th Anniversary edition includes updates on a number of the beloved figures and movements from the earlier chapters, in a new afterword.

Some readers of this journal, however, will not find themselves represented here, as the entire intermountain west region is all but absent in this work. Moreover, Balmer’s bias extends to Mormons. In his chapter “Episcopal Indians,” Balmer laments the fact that the mainline denominations lost interest in Indian missions, giving way to “the well financed Mormons, who condemn native religions and lure many of the best students off the reservation to be educated in Mormon schools” (223). Balmer also draws on evangelical scholars in Oregon to explain the tragic state of the subculture, which they believe to be secularized, rationalized, much too focused on morality instead of grace, and thus, no longer unique. “We’re no better than the Mormons,” Balmer quotes one of the scholars

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy Weber, review of *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, by Randall Balmer *Church History*, 62, no. 1 (1993), 156.

saying, “in fact, in terms of morality, we’re not as good as the Mormons. The Mormons outdo us. If that’s what the gospel is all about, then they’re to be emulated. But they don’t understand the gospel, either. We think we do” (274).

All in all, Balmer’s work is significant. The early chapters of the first edition are worth reading for an extensive understanding of American evangelicalism, and if the reader is willing to overlook Balmer’s opinions, a great deal can be learned about other important and related topics.

Megan Leverage  
*Florida State University*

Biggar, Nigel. *In Defense of War*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2013. 384 pp. ISBN 9780199672615

Nigel Biggar is currently Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology and Director of the MacDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics, and Public Life at the University of Oxford. His main objective in *Defence of War* is to argue that war can be morally just, culminating in chapter seven, which analyze the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Biggar argues that the invasion was justified, even if in hindsight, alternative courses of action would have provided more preferable results.

In chapter one, Biggar argues against the ideal of Christian pacifism that has persisted and grown in recent years. He focuses on arguments made by Stanley Hauerwas, John Howard Yoder, and Richard Hays, but concludes that their positions are flawed because they do not consider the many facets of violence and anger and whether these concepts are compatible with love and forgiveness. He defends his position in chapter two, offering empirical evidence of soldiers from six different theatres of war, spanning almost a century. He concludes that soldiers rarely took pride in their kills, nor did they feel a sense of satisfaction from killing the enemy. This, Biggar argues, demonstrates that emotions such as anger and hatred are usually tempered and restrained; the enemy is respected and treated with compassion.

I find Biggar's third chapter somewhat problematic. He argues that soldiers should not intend to kill their enemies, but ought to do so with reluctance rather than want. While this is idealistic and in line with the Christian view of calculated restraint, my view is that any reluctance on the battlefield could cause increased loss of life, rather than neutralising the enemy without hesitation. Biggar does argue his point well and makes a good case from the point of view of a moral theologian, but the reality may be quite different.

Chapter four addresses proportionality, drawing on the example of the Somme, where 622,221 Allied soldiers were killed. Biggar discusses whether the significant loss of life can be justified in the sense of what amounted to an advancement of a mere six miles, or in the sense of its larger role in the war. He concludes that both world wars were justified for the greater good and the terms reached at the end of each war.

The tone shifts in chapter five. Biggar spends much of the chapter analyzing the work of David Rodin and others including Hugo Grotius, Thomas Aquinas, and Augustine. He considers the legalities of war, justifications for killing, issues of national defence, the use of war as a means of law enforcement, and civil conflicts such as the troubles in Northern Ireland, while debating the impact of Christian morality on law since the Middle Ages.

Chapter six looks at Kosovo in 1999 and the legal status of NATO's intervention under international law, the UN Charter, and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. Biggar argues that although NATO's actions could be interpreted as illegal, they can still be considered morally right. Events in Kosovo and subsequent conflicts have raised a number of questions and discussions between international legal experts: while some interventions may be considered illegal on paper, they may be deemed

legal due to mitigating circumstances, and more frequently are considered morally right, even if not legitimized by the UN Security Council.

Biggar concludes this chapter by stating that a global government would be ideal for the enforcement of international law. However, he concedes that it is unlikely to happen due to diversity of global opinion. Even within the European Union (EU), cracks have been appearing for some time. Recent terrorist attacks threaten to fracture the EU further. Following the attacks in Paris in November 2015, some countries within the Schengen Zone have reintroduced border control and Britain voted to leave the EU in a June 2016 referendum.

Chapter seven examines the moral complexities of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and applies Biggar's just war theory to determine if the Anglo-American invasion was warranted. Biggar analyzes Saddam Hussein's regime, the implied threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the political spin from both Washington and London regarding WMD, including retrospective accusations that Tony Blair misled Parliament, and that US officials forged documents in order to exaggerate the perceived threat. Here Biggar reaches his crescendo: can the invasion of Iraq be justified? The unfounded level of threat from WMD weakens the case for the war being just. However, the aim of a regime change and

ending the atrocities caused by Hussein was successful, and therefore, arguably, the war can be justified.

The complexities of war make it impossible to know if the sacrifice will be worth the gain. Many arguments are made in hindsight, but we must analyze situations as we see them. While these points will continue to be debated, I agree with Biggar's argument that war can be justified and that pacifism ought to be justified too. In recent years, mobs, militia, and terrorist groups rather than established governments have increasingly instigated conflict.

Biggar has an in-depth knowledge of the subject and has carried out meticulous research utilizing a large number of sources. His contribution to the field is significant and his book is potentially the best argument in defense of war written in recent years. The title of the book could have benefited from some reference to the Christian moral, ethical, and theological stance adopted in the text, however.

The text is accessible to anyone with an interest in the topic, and although the author states that it is not intended to be a textbook, I do see it having a place in the classroom.

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Ehrman, Bart D. and Plese, Zlatko. *The Other Gospels: Accounts of Jesus From Outside the New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. 324 pp. ISBN-10: 0199335222

Bart D. Ehrman, the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies, and his colleague Zlatko Plese, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and specialist in Gnosticism at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, are co-editors and translators of *The Other Gospels: Accounts from Jesus Outside of the New Testament*. *The Other Gospels* is an edited edition of Ehrman and Plese's earlier work, *The Apocryphal Gospels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), omitting some literature appearing in the earlier work. Both are collections of the extra-canonical (i.e. apocryphal) gospels used in early orthodox and heretical expressions of Christianity. The additions to this book include the Discourse upon the Cross and a new translation of The Gospel of the Savior, a fragmentary gospel from the second or third century. *Unlike The Apocryphal Gospels*, which include both the original language (Greek, Latin, Coptic, or Syriac) and an English translation, *The Other Gospels* only includes the English translation.

While *The Other Gospels* is intended for the novice, Ehrman and Plese have included a fairly extensive collection of apocryphal works.

Many of the gospels, such as the Gospel of Nicodemus (a fourth century text also known as the Acts of Pilate), are rarely available in English (Ehrman and Plese, xii). Ehrman and Plese also include helpful introductions that contextualize each document. These introductions often include: a brief description of how the work was discovered or became known, the provenance of the work, and a brief bibliography. While the bibliography is useful, it does tend to exclude important research.

This volume has many exceptional features. For persons unacquainted with the apocryphal works, the introduction provides a relatively thorough introduction to apocryphal texts and specifically those included within this volume. Ehrman and Plese have largely avoided the pitfall of using academic jargon. As a result, the book is very accessible, even readers with a basic knowledge of early Christianity can profit from Ehrman and Plese's tome. Overall, I found the text translations to be clear and concise, following the manuscript evidence available.

Despite its strengths, the book does have a few notable flaws. There are some important apocryphal works missing from the book. For example, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, a second century text about the effect of the Apostle Paul on Thecla, a virgin, is not included. This is particularly important, as scholars have argued that the canonical Acts of

the Apostles that is included in this publication is partially dependent on the Acts of Paul and Thecla. Moreover, it seems odd that Ehrman and Plese included the Diatesseron, a 2<sup>nd</sup> century attempt by Tatian, an early theologian, to harmonize the four gospel accounts. The Diatesseron has been the focus of a number of scholarly works. However, some academics have debated whether or not the book is truly apocryphal. The authors have also neglected to include a few essential secondary resources within their bibliographies. For example, the work of the late Helmut Koester, who was an outspoken proponent of the Gospel of Peter's antiquity, is absent. Finally, the authors have chosen not to include an overarching bibliography at the back of the book.

This is a phenomenal volume and is highly recommend. It cogently summarizes the extra-canonical gospels as well as a clear, concise introduction and eminently readable translations. Regardless of how controversial Ehrman has been, this is some of his best work. I would encourage those who find this tome useful to also look into Ehrman's *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* and *Lost Christianities*. *The Other Gospels* is an excellent addition to the layman and academic's library.

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