

Book Reviews

Coming to Peace with Science. By Darrel R. Falk. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004, 235 pp., \$17.00 paper.

Falk is professor of Biology at Point Loma Nazarene University in Point Loma, California. He is convinced that the Bible (and especially early Genesis) is theologically significant. Yet he is equally convinced that the natural reading of the text (which he calls the ultra-literal reading) is quite impossible. He believes that many, who have been taught by well-meaning churches and Christian leaders, are forced to choose between rejecting science or rejecting the Bible. Falk believes the evidence is simply overwhelmingly in favor of an ancient earth and gradual creation, but he does not want people to give up their Bible (just their literal reading of it).

Falk, along with Francis Collins (Director of the Human Genome Project), adopts theistic evolution as a peaceful bridge between faith and science. This book is probably the best case yet for theistic evolution, but in my judgment it resolves none of the problems. Falk admits (72) that radiometric dating depends on unchanging decay rates, but there are several other issues with radioactive dating that he does not discuss. He argues (chapter four) that there are many transitional forms in the fossil record but then admits that some of the ones we have (e.g., *Archaeopteryx*) are likely a side branch in the lineage (which means—not a transitional form). Falk is confident, however,

that many transitional forms exist (or existed) but fossilization is rare (an interesting but unclear assumption) and transitional species occur primarily in tiny populations (a convenient explanation for their rarity). Why do we not see gradual modification happening today (130)? Falk's answer is that we do see it, but he admits that peppered moths, extra but non-functional wings on fruit flies, and dog varieties do not qualify. Falk thinks we simply have a much too limited perspective on time. Evolution happens, it just happens too slowly for anyone except trained evolutionary biologists to see it. Evolution does not violate the second law of thermodynamics, says Falk, because we see things growing and increasing in order all around us all the time if excess energy is available from the sun (chapter seven). The sun's energy on non-living matter does not increase its order, however, and Falk knows that. Only living matter can capture and convert the sun's energy to increase order, and that conversion mechanism does not spontaneously arise under any known conditions, nor does it exist anywhere apart from life—and yet the origin of life is the issue. Moreover, the sun's energy does not modify genetic structures or add any encoded genetic information to living forms, and yet that is exactly what evolution requires. So the second law remains an obstacle to evolutionary processes despite Falk's best effort to avoid that conclusion.

Falk believes that life must have been called into existence by God, but he believes a loving God used what I would think is an excessively slow and wasteful process of massive extinction and serial mutation over millions of years to accomplish the environment for today's world. What looks random to us was guided by God, says Falk. The Creator is not a designer (engineer) but an artist. Genesis is poetry (though it seems to me that God himself [see Exodus 20:11] seems to have read it literally). Eve is the bride of Adam just as the church is the bride of Christ, both brides coming from wounds in the bridegroom's side. Thus Falk defends his figurative hermeneutic for Genesis.

Falk interacts with none of the main Creationist writers, nor does he significantly interact with any of their technical articles. Falk clearly defends evolutionary gradualism with the strongest available arguments. We must take this seriously because Falk is a Christian brother. The issues do not seem to change or go away, however. Geographical distributions of species are not well explained by any current theory. Thus, I recommend that this book be read critically as a fair presentation of the theory of theistic evolution, but I cannot affirm that this is the best harmony of science and faith.

L. Russ Bush III
Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary

A Sacramental Catechism. By John Willison. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2000, xxiv + 342 pp. \$29.95.

This is a reprint of a work originally published in Scotland in 1720 and reprinted, along with other works of the author, well into the middle of the nineteenth century. The author was a highly respected Scottish Presbyterian pastor. An "Introduction for the Modern Reader" is added to introduce the reader more fully to the author and his context. The introduction states, "This work will be enjoyed by all who have a taste for sound scriptural theology and experimental piety." Indeed, "experimental piety" is the real strength of the book.

As the title suggests, the book in its entirety (apart from the appendix) is in a question and answer format. As expected from a good Presbyterian, the section on baptism expounds and defends infant baptism and will, therefore, be of less experimental value for Baptists. However, the majority of the book focuses on the Lord's Supper, particularly preparation for it. Here one finds a pastorally rich and theologically sound approach to self-examination. Willison exhorts us to confront seriously our sins but does not fall into the all too common contemporary trap of simply telling us to "try harder and really mean it this time." He points us to grace and comforts the wounded conscience reminding us that all saints struggle with sin and that the struggle is a sign of life. After self-examination Willison turns to the

stirring up of proper affections asking a series of questions, including:

- What shall we meditate on in order to get holy fear quickened?
- What shall we meditate on to get repentance quickened?
- What shall we meditate on to get love to God and Christ quickened?
- What shall we meditate on to get love to the people of God quickened?

What excellent questions!

While at times the author probably over interprets, this book is welcome in our situation when communion is so rarely appreciated. This theological reflection could arouse some anew to the value of Christ's ordinance. Furthermore, the book will be helpful to pastors simply in the model of self-examination whether or not used in connection with the Lord's Supper. The book's length makes it difficult to read through all at once, but could profitably be used by reading just one section prior to communion over a certain period.

Ray Van Neste
Union University

Richard Hooker and Reformed Theology: A Study of Reason, Will, and Grace. By Nigel Voak. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, xvii + 348 pp., \$95.72.

The Elizabethan and Jacobean churches have been the subject of a great deal of recent scholarly research, some of which has modified earlier perspectives on just how "Reformed" those churches actually were. I recall some years ago my own

surprise at discovering that Charles I sent a delegation to the Synod of Dort so that the Church of England might have some representation at that great Reformed conclave. The battle cries of "Elizabethan Compromise" and "Harrie the Puritans out of England" shouted so loudly at some of us that we did not pause to look carefully at just what the issues really were. Scholars such as Diarmaid MacCulloch, Dewey Wallace, Patrick Collinson, and Alister McGrath have reopened questions concerning the Reformed heritage among the non-Puritan, non-Presbyterian English Reformers of the period and have demonstrated that the situation was not quite what we had been led to think by earlier scholarship. The general sense of the new research is that many (though not all) of the non-Puritan, non-Presbyterian leaders of the English church during this period actually were more committed to Reformation theology (or theologies) than one might guess; it was their anti-Puritan rhetoric which made it seem to be otherwise. With such a revisionist historicism making its tedious way through the dusty journals of ecclesiastical history, one might guess that attention would eventually turn to the one man with the greatest *via media* reputation of all, and it has.

Nigel Voak's treatment of Richard Hooker is only the latest in a series of monographs and essays on Hooker that have been appearing for about the last decade or so. Hooker's great work, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie*, sets him forth as a defender of many things which were considered

by the Protestant Reformers to be anathema—vestments, rituals during the services of the church, and so on. Further, this work rejects (or modifies) many issues that the Reformers were well known for instituting, such as church discipline. The result is that Hooker has long been seen as the precursor of Laud, or at least the defender of the status quo in an extremely conservative Elizabethan church that wanted little to do with Reformation theology, but that instead sought alliance with Geneva and Zurich only to keep Rome at arm's length. That estimate of Hooker has recently been evaporating; or perhaps it might be better to say that the fog of history has cleared a little so that we might get a better picture.

Voak argues that Hooker underwent development. In his early days (he only lived to be forty-six years old, by the way) he was apparently more committed to Reformation theology. McGrath even argues that Hooker held to a Calvinistic understanding of justification through most of his writings, a point with which Voak concurs. When, however in his early 'thirties, he took the Mastership of Temple Church, his views began slowly to change. There he came into conflict with Presbyterian elements within Anglicanism in the form of Walter Travers. Travers had been involved with Cartwright in the Admonitions Controversy over a decade earlier, and had been a supporter of Cartwright's attack on episcopacy. Hooker's relationship with his fellow-minister Travers left a bad taste in his mouth, and four years after leaving that post, he published

the *Larves*, a volume that would lay out many of the bases for the future Anglican *via media*, especially that which was adopted by the Oxford Movement much later on.

Voak's volume analyzes the key issues related to Hooker's understanding of reason, common grace, special grace, justification and sanctification. Lying before him are the key questions: To what degree was Hooker Anglo-Catholic? Is his position essentially that which will later give comfort to John Henry Newman? Was he the precursor to William Laud? His answers are nuanced. But overall, Voak supports the newer perspective on Hooker that has been advanced by scholars in recent decades. The book is a bit pricey (perhaps a paperback will soon appear), but it is an important addition to the literature both on Hooker and the Elizabethan and Jacobean churches.

Chad Owen Brand

A Genetic History of Baptist Thought. By William H. Brackney. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2004, xvi + 592 pp., \$40.00 paper.

There is no doubt that this book will be considered a major contribution to Baptist studies. Brackney teaches history in the Department of Religion at Baylor University, and he has collected an extensive body of data regarding British and North American Baptists.

Almost encyclopedic in scope, Brackney's coverage includes Canadian, African-American, early and

later British Pastors and Academic Theologians, and American Baptist Pastors, Editors, and Schoolmen. There is also a chapter on Baptist Hymnody and one on Baptists in what Brackney calls a Diaspora. In this Diaspora chapter he briefly surveys the work of Carl F. H. Henry, E. J. Carnell (though he admits the identity of Carnell as a Baptist is dubious), Bernard Ramm, Clark Pinnock, Millard Erickson, James William Mclendon, and Harvey Cox. It is instructive to note the relative space given to each of these. The conservative Erickson, the most widely read, is given the least coverage and the most superficial coverage. Pinnock is given a far more significant section of the chapter, and in light of recent challenges to Pinnock's integrity (he signs an inerrancy statement each year in order to maintain his membership in the Evangelical Theological Society, a fact not mentioned by Brackney), it is interesting that Brackney chooses to quote Pinnock as saying (in a 1989 book) that the reason he formerly believed the doctrine of inerrancy was that he "desperately wanted it to be true."

As a side note at this point, Brackney reports a meeting between Paul Pressler and Pinnock at Antoine's Restaurant in New Orleans, a meeting apparently mentioned in Pressler's book (which is listed but wrongly classified in the bibliography). But then Brackney immediately confuses this meeting with one at the Café Du Monde between Pressler and Paige Patterson (who is mentioned by name in the book only in an early chapter as the SBC President who appointed

the committee that formulated the 2000 revision to the *Baptist Faith and Message*). Brackney completely overlooked Ken Keathley's significant Southeastern Ph.D. dissertation on Pinnock, *An Examination of the Influence of Vatican II on Clark Pinnock's "Wider Hope" for the Unevangelized*. This is inexcusable since the bibliography includes many dissertations and even includes various 2-5 page journal articles: it is a very detailed and extensive bibliographical listing. But according to a comment on p. 390, Brackney apparently did not realize that Southeastern even had a Ph.D. program in theology.

In the Diaspora chapter, Brackney also discusses W. A. Criswell. (With over 20 years of close association with Criswell, I only faintly recognize the person in Brackney's description.) He also briefly covers Billy Graham (giving him less credit than he deserves) and Jerry Falwell (giving him more credit than he deserves).

There is also a chapter on Baptist confessions. Brackney gives a generally fair summary of the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (though on p. 57 he incorrectly seems to imply that the article on religious liberty was eliminated in favor of one on the family). He also includes a rather lengthy summary of something called a *Baptist Manifesto* that was formulated by moderate to liberal Southern Baptists who rejected the BF&M 2000. It would appear that he considers this *Manifesto* to be a significant document, but in my view it has been almost totally insignificant for several reasons, some of which Brackney himself identifies.

The chapter on Southern Baptists and their schools is the one on which I have the most factual perspective. Not wanting to appear self-serving, I really expected in a book with almost 1500 footnotes that *Baptists and the Bible* (a book I co-authored in 1980, revised and expanded in 1999) would at least have been mentioned somewhere. Moreover, I was a member (along with Brackney) of a Baptist World Alliance (BWA) team that engaged the Eastern Orthodox leadership in ecumenical dialog in two meetings (one in Istanbul and one in Oxford), and yet only James Leo Garrett and Dale Moody get any recognition for such interests (538, n. 11). Brackney is critical of a list of Baptist theologians for not participating in such ecumenical dialogues, but fails to mention that the BWA groups to which he refers were not open membership groups but were hand-picked by Denton Lotz. Brackney also fails to mention a long series of formal dialogues between Southern Baptist leaders and Roman Catholics in the late twentieth century.

In the chapter on Southern Baptists, however, Brackney surveys Mercer University (the influence of John Dagg), Furman University (James Mims), Southern Seminary (Boyce, Manly, Mullins, Ward, Rust, Garrett, and Dale Moody—surely incorrectly called the most significant Southern Baptist theologian of the latter half of the twentieth century), and Southwestern Seminary (Carroll, Goodspeed, W. T. Conner, and James Leo Garrett). Brackney claims a long list of theological influences on Conner, but Conner's major text-

books (the most widely read of any in Southern Baptist life until Erickson came along) receive no footnote recognition. Brackney says he is disappointed that Garrett in his massive theology textbooks so often ends up accepting a "predictable" position. To me, on the other hand, for a man of Garrett's vast scholarship to arrive at the same conclusion that Baptists have historically affirmed is rather a great encouragement.

On pages 428-29 Brackney bemoans what he perceives as a lack of Southern Baptist leadership in the world-wide family of Baptists or in evangelical Protestantism. I suppose he has forgotten our 6,000 internationally based missionaries (who are establishing Baptist churches), but I think it is more likely that he is simply unhappy with the SBC for giving up on the BWA (at least for now). More significantly, it seems that he probably has not looked at the list of Presidents of the Evangelical Philosophical Society and the Evangelical Theological Society over the last twenty-five years. I believe he would find a good number of Southern Baptists in leadership roles in these significant, non-denominational, national, professional, academic societies.

It is often easy to critique large comprehensive books like this one by pointing out details missed or matters omitted. I do not mean to leave the impression that this volume is flawed to such an extent that it should not be added to Baptist History collections. It is a valuable resource as far as it goes. I have always been impressed with Brackney's Baptist

commitments and with his immense command of Baptist information. This is a valuable resource, and Mercer Press should be commended for publishing this very important volume.

L. Russ Bush III
Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary

Paul and the Jews. By Andrew Das. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003, 256 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Through the developments in Pauline studies in the past three decades, Paul the Jew, his self-understanding, and his relationship to early Judaism and its Scriptures, have attracted much attention. The present volume is a fine survey of Paul's most important statements on his fellow Jews.

"In *Paul and the Jews: A New Starting Point*" (1-16) Das gathers all the seemingly negative statements of Paul on Jews and Judaism and juxtaposes all the positive statements in order to illustrate the issues of this monograph. He presents the history of research, including the so-called "new perspective on Paul," defines his position in relation to it, and previews his own study.

In Paul's reasoning, the gracious elements in Judaism were never efficacious for salvation by themselves and apart from the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Mosaic Law had never provided salvation in and of itself. Performance of its regulations involved empty human deeds, and nothing more, apart from the proper framework

of grace in Christ, Abraham's seed. Consequently, if the works required by the Mosaic Law were never the means to salvation, then the Law's own distinctions between Jew and Gentile would not be the basis for identifying those who have a place in the world to come (12).

In chapter two, "Crisis in Galatia: Salvation in Christ and the Mosaic Law," Das describes the situation in Galatia and the identity of the "they-group" that had infiltrated the churches. He outlines the heart of the conflict between Paul and his opponents—"Even as the Galatians have been justified apart from the works of the Law through faith in Christ . . . the subsequent Christian life in the Spirit is based on faith in Christ and not on the Mosaic Law" (33)—and Paul's interaction with them from an apocalyptic perspective. Discussion also includes Paul's critique of the Law and his rethinking of the concept of an elect covenant people.

The following two and a half chapters are devoted to Paul's programmatic letter to the Romans. Das sets out with a fascinating reconstruction of the situation in Rome—"how one reconstructs the situation of the letter would have profound implications for understanding Paul's relationship with the Jews and Judaism" (50)—including the tensions between law-observant and non-Law-observant members. This is followed by a description of the Claudius edict, expelling the Jews from Rome in A.D. 49, and the impact it had on the churches, both during the absence of Jewish Christians and when they returned following the

death of Claudius in A.D. 54. Das then gathers the evidence of the situation in the letter itself and discusses the question of whether the Roman Gentile Christians were still within Jewish synagogues (interacting with M. Nanos, who argues that the weak in Rom 14:1-14:13 are non-Christian Jews, and rightly offering a careful critique). The chapter closes with reflections on Rom 14:1-15:6 (the strong are the non-Law observant; the weak are the Law-observant Christians). Chapter three is a section-by-section study and summary of the argument of Romans 9-11 ("The Messiah and Israel's Elect in Romans") and includes discussions of the following: the election of Christians, the Jews as an elect people not benefiting from their election, God's impartiality and Israel's advantage, the scope of ethnic Israel (God's elect, or God's elect within Israel?), the stumbling of ethnic Israel over the Messianic stone, Paul's expected salvation of "all Israel" in Rom 11:26 (with a fine survey of the three major approaches taken in understanding the Pauline "mystery," including a balanced persuasive critique of the two covenant model), and, finally, Paul's vision for the fate of ethnic Israel. Das writes,

The most satisfactory understanding of 11:26 takes the verse as an anticipation of the day when all Israel will be saved. Once the full number of the Gentiles has entered into the ranks of believers in Christ, the Jewish people will come to faith in Christ en masse. The remnant of Israel that believes in Christ is a promise of what is to come. God has not abandoned

the Jewish people and will graft ethnic Israel back onto its own olive tree *before the end of the age* (11:23) (109, italics mine).

Chapter five is devoted to Israel's priority among the nations, covering the privileges of Israel in Romans 11:11-26, Israel as mediator of God's blessings in Galatians, and a sensitive treatment of Paul's much disputed censure of the Jewish people in 1 Thess 2:14-16 (including discussion of other passages of violent Jewish reactions to the early Christian movement). To me it is not clear why this passage is treated under this heading. It would have deserved a chapter of its own. In 1 Thessalonians 2 Paul is not making a general statement on Jews but referring to those Jews/Judeans who persecute the Jewish Christians of Judaea:

Paul further specifies the objects of wrath by censuring the Jews who had personally prevented him . . . from speaking the gospel of Christ to the Gentiles that they might be saved. . . . The apostle's harsh comments represent intra-Jewish polemic necessitated by a particular situation. Paul is simply responding to the resistance to his message and the persecution of his converts in the polemical language of the apocalypses, a language that tends towards exaggeration, vituperation, and starkness (189).

Das argues, "Such Jews did not realize that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of *all* people. Never did Paul condemn the Jewish people as a whole or leave them without hope in God's final plan" (189). While this is convincing for vv. 14 and 16, v. 15 with its reference to the murder of Jesus and

of the prophets seems to be more fundamental.

The final two chapters deal with aspects of the Mosaic Law, inseparable from the Jewish identity. In view of the heated discussion of this topic in the past two decades, any attempt to summarize it is a daunting task. According to Das, Paul the Jewish Christian, finds three things wrong with the Law: its requirement of perfect obedience, its ethnic exclusivity, and the idea that the Law can function as an enslaving power. Das further studies the various meanings of "Law" in Paul's use (155-65). Chapter seven examines the role of the Mosaic Law in the life of Christians.

In his "Reflections: Paul, the Apostle of Hope," Das summarises his findings, compares Paul with Hebrews and the letter of Barnabas, and relates them to the position taken in the Qumran literature. He also discusses the question, "Is it possible for moderns to affirm the Pauline emphasis on Christ without at the same time affirming the Christian confession's 'anti-Judaic left hand' for the majority of Jews who would disagree?" (194), with reference to the vastly different positions of G. Wasserberg (a radical Christian rejection of Paul and the Jews), D. Boyarin, and M. Rosen (the founder of *Jews for Jesus* ministries). This is welcome as today's "Messianic" Jews are rarely noted in academic discourse. Das concludes:

Although Paul ultimately held out hope for ethnic Israel, the christological focus of this hope will likely remain a stumbling block for Jewish readers. Whether or not the change

that took place in Paul's life is described as a conversion, it initiated a radical departure from his former worldview. He adopted the aberrant position that ethnic Israel would not benefit from God's election or promises apart from faith in Jesus Christ. Should a Jew or Gentile follow Paul in his spiritual journey, a similar conversion would be necessary. But such a convert dare not proceed beyond faith in Christ to a presumptuous dismissal of ethnic Israel's place in God's plan. The apostle would excoriate any who do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah *of Israel*. 'The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable' (Rom 11:29) (196).

A selective bibliography (197-220) and indexes of modern authors, subjects, and ancient sources round off the volume. Das provides a solid and balanced introductory treatment of Paul and the Jews in Galatians, Romans, and 1 Thessalonians and a good survey of Paul's multifaceted relation to the Mosaic Law. Obviously there are issues I would disagree with. One disagreement concerns his interpretation of Rom 11:26 and argumentation that the envisioned conversion of Israel will not take place with the return of Christ from the heavens, but will take place within the present age through some kind of evangelizing activity. Das takes the prophecies quoted by Paul to refer to Christ's first coming. While 1 Cor 1:23 is once quoted without further treatment (103), 1 Cor 1:22 ("For Jews demand signs") does not occur at all. Philippians 3:1-11 could have been treated on its own rather than as individual verses appearing in several sections of the book.

In addition, Das limits his discus-

sion to the commonly recognized letters of Paul and does not include any of the disputed letters. In these letters it would be important for instance to look at Eph 2:11-3:13; 4:1-16 (other interesting references would be Col 1:26-29; 2:4-23; 3:11; 1Tim 4:1-5, and Titus 1:10-16). It would also be illuminating to compare the relationship of Paul and Judaism in *Luke's* portrayal of Paul in Luke-Acts. The Lukan Paul is also convinced of the priority of Israel among the nations. What do his statements in Acts 1:6f; 13:40-51; 18:5-8, and 28:25-28 imply for the future of ethnic Israel?

Christoph Stenschke
Missionshaus Bibelschule,
Wiedenest and University of
South Africa