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## EDITORIAL

*Robert W. Yarbrough*.....3

## FEATURED ARTICLES

On the Relevance of Creeds and Confessions, *Thomas C. Gibbs*.....6

Radical Black Calvinist: C. Herbert Oliver and the Birmingham Revolution  
*Andrew C. Stout*.....13

“It Does Not Make a Difference”: The Fraught Relation between the  
Textual Criticism of the New Testament and Theology, *Dirk Jongkind*.....38

Inerrancy and the Initial Text, *Peter J. Gurry*.....54

Apples and Oranges: The Theological Implications of Textual Critical  
Discoveries in the Bible and in the Qur’an, *Matthew Bennett*.....68

Prudence Commended: The Commendation of the Master as an  
Interpretative Key for Luke 16:1–8a, *Israel A. Kolade*.....83

Suggested Methods for the Interpretation of the Catholic Epistles:  
Reintegrating Theology and Ethics, *Taylor Tollison*.....90

Serving the Sanctuary, Subduing the Earth: Human Mediation of Divine  
Judgment in Biblical-Theological Outline, *Trevor Laurence*.....104

Purge the Evil from Among You: A Biblical Theology of Excommunication,  
*Charlie Ray III*.....131

Rehabilitating Clarence Bouma, First President of the Evangelical  
Theological Society, *Kenneth J. Stewart*.....144

Wilbur Moorehead Smith: An Evangelical Presbyterian Apologist and  
Bookman, *Jeffrey McDonald*.....166

## REVIEW ESSAY

Paul K.-K. Cho’s *Willingness to Die and the Gift of Life: Suicide and Martyrdom  
in the Hebrew Bible*, *Caleb Miller*.....167

## SHORT CONTRIBUTION

A Librarian’s Comments on Commentaries 49: Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations  
*James C. Pakala*.....171

## BOOK REVIEWS

John D. Clayton, <i>The Curious Conversion of Thomas Chalmers</i> (Brian Habig).....	178
Robert S. Rayburn, <i>The Truth in Both Extremes: Paradox in Biblical Revelation</i> (Taejun Eric Kim).....	180
Patrick Miller and Keith Simon, <i>Truth Over Tribe: Pledging Allegiance to the Lamb, Not the Donkey or the Elephant</i> (Dustin Hunt).....	182
Sue Edwards and Kelley Mathews, <i>40 Questions about Women in Ministry</i> , (Anna Carini).....	183
Elyse Fitzpatrick and Eric Schumacher, <i>Jesus and Gender: Living as Brothers and Sisters in Christ</i> (Eowyn Stoddard).....	185
Lawrence W. Reed, <i>Was Jesus a Socialist?: Why This Question is Being Asked Again, and Why the Answer is Almost Always Wrong</i> (Joshua Sherrell).....	187
Daniel Overdorf, <i>Preaching: A Simple Approach to the Sacred Task</i> (Kevin D. Kozlowsky).....	188
Jonathan Williams, <i>A Practical Theology of Family Worship: Richard Baxter's Timeless Encouragement for Today's Home</i> (B. J. Hilbelink).....	190
Jodi Magness, <i>The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls</i> , 2nd ed. (Anthony Ferguson).....	191
Hannah K. Harrington, <i>The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah</i> , NICOT (Corrine Smith).....	193
Stanley E. Porter and Benjamin P. Laird, eds., <i>Five Views of the New Testament Canon</i> (Brian C. Dennert).....	194
O. Palmer Robertson, <i>Christ of the Consummation: A New Testament Theology</i> , vol. 1: <i>The Testimony of the Four Gospels</i> (Brian C. Dennert).....	196
Richard B. Gaffin Jr., <i>In the Fullness of Time: An Introduction to the Biblical Theology of Acts and Paul</i> (Jonathan Abraham Sullivan).....	198
H. W. Bateman and W. C. Varner, <i>James: An Exegetical Guide for Preaching and Teaching</i> (Phil Henry).....	200
Daniel J. Engelsma, <i>The Church's Hope: The Reformed Doctrine of the End</i> , vol. 2: <i>The Coming of Christ</i> (Mitchell Dixon).....	201
Oliver D. Crisp, <i>Participation and Atonement: An Analytical and Constructive Account</i> (Evan Tinklenberg).....	203
<b>BOOKS RECEIVED</b> .....	206

author's meaning, theories that too often stem from *a priori* assumptions. Excuses are offered along the lines that "the author couldn't have meant such and such," but if he did, it only could be by way of a scribal error of some kind. While in no way insensitive or deaf to the nuances of textual criticism, Bateman and Varner are committed to *explaining the text* in a detailed, grammatical, and syntactical fashion. They also occasionally move into more of the commentary "mode" by providing grammatical and lexical "nuggets."

This approach also comes with a weakness, however. In breaking down clauses this way, the authors desire to "trace James's flow of thought" (42). After reading page after page of this analysis, you might wonder if they actually accomplished this goal. Just as biblical "meaning" cannot be reduced to what a single verse says, the attempt to capture a biblical author's flow of thought through the clausal dissection of a passage runs the risk of missing the forest for the trees.

To cite one instance, consider their analysis of James 1:18. The clausal focus of the authors engages the semantic significance of the aorist participle *βουληθεεις*. They argue it has a temporal (*when* he willed), not instrumental (*of* or *by* his will) meaning. But, noting merely that *εις το ειναι* is "syntactically . . . a dependent infinitive clause" and saying nothing further, the "big idea" of James is somehow missed.

That big idea is nothing less than God's semi-realized (but sufficient) eschatological provision for his exiled people with all they need to live out their faith in a hostile, fallen world. This theme is introduced in 1:5, reiterated in 1:12, and climaxes in 1:17–18, where it is clothed in the language of the new creation. It serves not only as an introduction to James's letter, but also as an invitation to the reader to interpret the whole of James's pastoral address both theologically and redemptive historically.

In conclusion, Bateman and Varner have, on the whole, provided an able analysis of James. They situate the letter in the mainstream of Christian theological writing in the New Testament. They address (if compactly, or in "nugget" form) most of the major issues confronting the reader. But, important as the clauses (and theological "nuggets") of James's epistle are, grasping the "big idea" of James requires situating it within the canon of the NT, and, indeed, within the scope of redemptive history.

Thus, while the authors do mostly succeed in detailing the relationship between the independent and dependent clauses in James (21)—a laudable commitment to the detail of the letter of James sometimes overlooked by other commentaries—the overarching significance (the "big idea") of the Epistle of James is underdeveloped in this work. Remembering that their goal is not to "replace current commentaries," Bateman and Varner's contribution could be useful as a companion volume to other works. But will a busy pastor have time for both?

Phil Henry

Pastor, Mercy Hill Presbyterian Church, Glassboro, NJ

*The Church's Hope: The Reformed Doctrine of the End*, vol. 2: *The Coming of Christ*, by DAVID J. ENGELSMAN. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2022. Pp. 208. ISBN 9781736815427

While the intention for John in writing Revelation was "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near" (Rev. 1:3), Christians for millennia have been anything but blessed.

The study of the end times is fraught with controversy and division. Amid the noise and confusion that leaves churchgoers to throw up their hands and pursue more “essential” doctrines, David Engelsma has given an exegetically sound and Christ-exalting exposition on the Reformed doctrine of the end. This is the second book in a two-part series covering the Reformed position on eschatology. The first volume dealt with the topic of views of the millennium, and this one narrates Christ’s *Parousia* or the second coming.

This book fits two major categories. Positively, it is an articulation and defense of the Reformed doctrine of the end. More particularly, it can be aptly labeled a *Dutch* Reformed articulation of this doctrine. Engelsma finds many of his proofs in the Three Forms of Unity and in Dutch theologians such as Herman Bavinck, A. A. Hoekema, G. C. Berkouwer, and Heinrich Heppel. Drawing heavily on the confessions of both major Presbyterian and Reformed traditions and the ancient creeds of the church catholic, Engelsma presents for the reader a biblically sound view of amillennial eschatology in a Dutch Calvinist vein.

Negatively, this book is polemically written against all positions that do not align with this view. Dispensational premillennialism and Christian Reconstruction postmillennialism, Arminianism, Roman Catholicism, Pelagianism, universalism, annihilationism, Reformed churches holding to federal vision, Anabaptist views, and Protestant liberalism are all found to be wanting and condemned for how they lead God’s people astray with their false teaching.

Following the timeline of eschatological events, Engelsma walks the reader through the end of days when the scroll will finally be unrolled by the Lamb who is worthy. Chapter 1 precludes with the precursory signs of the end: the preaching of the gospel to all nations, apostasy, and the appearance of Antichrist. The purpose of the signs is to keep the believer in a state of hopeful expectation that the Lord will return any second, knowing that he comes quickly. Chapters 2–7 take on each of the signs respectively. Engelsma narrates the chronological unfolding of the signs before the *Parousia*, giving detailed descriptions of each of the signs.

The most striking feature of these chapters is the one on Antichrist. Engelsma states that “Antichrist is a worldwide political power, a religious entity, and an individual—a *male* individual” (72). The *male* was a special designation to refute feminist readings of the text. We read here that Antichrist is going to be a worldwide political power, which negates the original writing of the Westminster Confession that the pope was the Antichrist. He is a political and religious leader whose sole purpose is to turn people away from the worship of God. It is hard to read this work and not think of the modern secular state pushing specific agendas that fly entirely in the face of biblical orthodoxy. “The main doctrine of this kingdom is that man is God” (74). Espousing the same lie the serpent told Adam and Eve in the garden—that they will be like God—the kingdom of Antichrist will exult man as the maker of his own destiny, apart from trust in God.

Yet even amid the horrifying nature of Antichrist and his coming kingdom, Christ will return already victorious in his *Parousia* (chap. 8)—bloodied by his death on the cross, carrying a sword, with the church triumphant to defeat evil once and for all. Thankfully, we know the end of the story: Christ wins.

This victory will be won after a final resurrection from the dead of both the just and the unjust and a worldwide judgment (chaps. 9 and 10). “The main purpose of God with teaching and preaching of the final judgment is the salvation of the elect” (155). Good news is offered to those who place their trust in Christ; they are judged fully and entirely at the end of the age for everything they have done and are entirely exonerated on behalf of the finished work of Christ. Engelsma pastorally tends to the anxious consciousness about the end when he says, “Terror at the thought of the final judgment on the part of the believer is a spiritual disease,

from which he must be healed by the medicine of the gospel of grace. Those who instill terror into a believer over the judgment, whether at his death or on the world's last day, as some ministers do, are bad physicians of souls" (156).

This volume excels in explaining the significant texts related to the end: Daniel, Matthew 23–25, and Revelation. It gives a complete and straightforward introduction that would serve well for a pastor to hand to his congregant confused about eschatology. I wish Engelsma would have engaged with the Reformed premillennialism espoused by men like William Barker, James Montgomery Boice, and J. Oliver Buswell. Their position, too, is within the bounds of historic Reformed orthodoxy, and not engaging with it is one prominent blind spot of the book. Yet, overall, Engelsma succeeds at encouraging the reader to echo the last words of both this book and of Scripture, "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:20b).

MITCHELL DIXON

Cru Mid-Missouri

MDiv (Church Planting), Covenant Theological Seminary

*Participation and Atonement: An Analytic and Constructive Account*, by OLIVER D. CRISP. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2022. Pp. 259 + xi. ISBN 978-0801049965

Oliver Crisp has been a prolific participant in the project of analytic theology. Much of his work has centered on the person and work of Christ, with such publications as *Divinity and Humanity*, *The Word Enfleshed*, and *Approaching the Atonement*, alongside numerous journal articles exploring related dogmatic loci. In his work more broadly, Crisp seeks to express the logic behind various theological assertions often made of Christ and his work, in order to present a clear, logically sound, and comprehensive doctrine for the sake of the church.

Crisp's most recent book, *Participation and Atonement*, draws together the multivalent strands of his previous work into a dogmatically minimalist presentation of the work of Christ as "a vicarious, reparative, and penitential act of soteriological representation" (148, emphasis original). By "dogmatically minimalist," Crisp intends to convey an understanding of the atonement that is relatively "thin" in its dogmatic claims. While there are some aspects of atonement doctrine which Crisp would like to clarify—particularly the mechanism by which sinful humans are reconciled to God—he resists setting forth a more exhaustive account. This, for Crisp, allows readers from many different theological and confessional backgrounds to affirm what is presented, rather like a diplomatic statement is carefully worded in order to promote unanimous agreement. Such ecumenical aspirations are admirable, though the comparison to a diplomatic statement may also evoke less favorable connotations, as will be seen below.

Before beginning his constructive work, which takes up the third part of the book, Crisp first lays some methodological groundwork (part 1) and critically examines four prominent models of the atonement (part 2). In the first part of the book, Crisp analyzes several terms of art in theological discussions of the atonement. Chapter 1 focuses on this disambiguation, making a helpful distinction between doctrines, theories, motifs, and models of the atonement. While it is unlikely that Crisp's proposals here will find large-scale adoption among scholars in the field, they helpfully clarify the aims of the book. Crisp's account is not merely a motif (which bears little explanatory or dogmatic content), nor something as comprehensive as a doctrine or theory (which would entail broader claims than Crisp intends to make). Rather, this book offers a model that fits into a wider series of theological claims. I note in passing that