he tends to adopt a more positive approach to characters and events in Ruth. Thus, the move of Elimelech and his family to Moab, the marriage of his sons to Moabite women, and their subsequent deaths are not to be viewed negatively as entailing divine judgment (*contra* Block) but are incidental details in the story (594–99).

This commentary will serve well pastors and teachers with a general or even limited knowledge of biblical Hebrew. Chisholm is often insightful and perceptive. His homiletical trajectories are both a strength and weakness to the commentary: his applications tend to be moralistic rather than canonical or biblical-theological in outlook. His sermon ideas may stimulate one's thinking but perhaps will be of limited value in developing sermons. On the whole, I commend this work to those who plan to preach or teach in Judges or Ruth.

Kyle C. Dunham

Perspectives on the Extent of the Atonement, ed. Andrew David Naselli and Mark A. Snoeberger. Nashville: B&H, 2015. xiii + 242 pp. $24.99.

The question "For whom did Jesus die?" has a robust tradition of point and counterpoint in theological discourse since the late Reformation. Perhaps the most significant treatise on the Calvinistic side is John Owen's *The Death of Death in the Death Christ* that put forward the classic argument for a "limited" atonement." Those more inclined toward an Arminian understanding on the extent of the atonement have their champions, from John Wesley's sermon "Free Grace" (1739) to Roger Olson's *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (IVP, 2006). At times the debate has been rigorous and the stakes, seemingly, high. No less a figure as Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892), robust "five-point Calvinist" that he was, was accused by contemporary James Wells (1803–1872) of failing to appreciate the implications of holding to a limited atonement. If the atonement was limited, the lost could not be invited to accept the Gospel since it was not *intended* for them. Calvinists and Arminians have debated with each other and with everyone in between the nature and extent of Christ death.

Seldom has a debate of this intensity been held in such a civil way as is presented in the recent volume under consideration. Andrew Naselli and Mark Snoeberger have brought together three contemporary scholars to argue their respective views under one cover—Carl Trueman, Paul Woolley Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary; Grant Osborne, Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; and John Hammett, John Leadley Dagg Chair of Systematic Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. The classic polar-opposite sides of this debate are "definite atonement" held by Trueman and "universally sufficient atonement" held by Osborne. Arguing a mediating position is Hammett, who defends "multiple-

intentions" of the atonement.

Those wanting a full-orbed defense of any particular view will find this book wanting. However, by juxtaposing three diverse views and by including friendly rejoinders from fellow contributors, the authors are able to present a broad survey of their respective views, hitting high points. The lone drawback with this approach is that it lacks the requisite space for discussing critical components of the individual positions. This would include a discussion of the larger implications with the theological corollaries that the espousal of a particular view entails. But this obvious weakness of a book of this nature is also what contributes to its strength. The juxtaposing of the views allows the serious student to read the best arguments of a given view and compare them with the antithetical arguments of the alternative view. In this way Trueman and Osborne go *tête-à-tête* in presenting definite vs. universally sufficient atonement.

Early in his essay, Trueman makes an important concession: "The case for particular redemption, like that for the Trinity, does not depend on the understanding of any single text, nor does any single text explicitly teach it. Instead, it is the result of the cumulative force and implications of a series of strands of biblical teaching" (23). Trueman discusses key New Testament texts from which he argues his view for a definiteness in the atonement, including John 6:37–40, John 10, and John 17. He also responds to a number of texts that seem to speak of a general atonement such as 1 John 2:2, asserting that the meaning of the text is ultimately not clear but needs to be understood within the wider flow of Scripture. A critical argument for Trueman is based on the objective efficacy of Christ work. "If the sins God punished there are indeed the sins of everyone indiscriminately, from Hitler to Buddha…what does it actually mean to say that Christ bore anyone's sins on the cross when, unless one is a universalist, God punishes those same sins in one's own person in hell if one dies outside of Christ?" (41).

Grant Osborne offers the typical generalist view that affirms a universal intent in the atonement without affirming a universal application. "The biblical evidence and the justice of God both demand that the atonement has universal ramifications" (105). He argues that *world* (*kosmos*) found more than one hundred times in John always means "the world of unbelievers who are hostile to God and yet are the object of God's love and mission" (108). Lest he be accused of falling into the error of semi-Pelagianism, Osborne affirms that it is the doctrine of "prevenient grace" (God's gift of a measure of grace to all humanity) that keeps him from that error. "God's prevenient grace is the source of all decisions" (122). To the charge that this implies that humans have the final say in their own redemption, Osborne avers that God "has sovereignly made human choice possible" (122).

Finally, Hammett attempts to mediate between the two opposite positions. He states that in the atonement God has three "intentions": a universal intent, a particular intent, and a cosmic intent. He starts by demonstrating the universal intention "to provide forgiveness of sins for

all" (149). Using many of the same texts that Osborne marshals, he walks the readers through a defense of a general aspect to the atonement. But then midway through his argument, he switches to his defense of the particular intent, for he holds "God did not intend to save everyone by Christ's death on the cross, but to make provision for the salvation of all" (162). The atonement includes both an "objective provision" and a "subjective application" (163). Here Hammett picks up some classic arguments for a definite atonement—e.g., "sending anyone to hell whose sins have been paid for would be patently unjust" (164). This leaves Hammett believing that his view has "all the virtues of both traditional positions with few of the problems of either" (183). He concludes with a discussion of the cosmic intent that he identifies with Christus Victor: "An intention in the atonement that addresses all the enemies believers face in the world" (184).

After the presentation of each view, the three main contributors are allowed space to respond to aspects of the other views presented. The exchange is cordial and gracious, whether or not one considers the responses persuasive or definitive. The editors provide essays that bracket the entire discussion with introductory and concluding comments on the importance of the debate and the manner in which a discussion of this nature ought to be engaged by thoughtful Christians. The final result is a book that provides a most helpful introduction to a controversial theological subject.

Jeffrey P. Straub

Interpreting the General Letters: An Exegetical Handbook, by Herbert W. Bateman IV. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. 311 pp. $29.99.

Herbert Bateman holds a Ph.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary and has taught at several seminaries in the United States and abroad. Bateman is currently an adjunct professor of New Testament at Liberty University. He has also written or edited a number of books, including *Jesus the Messiah* (2012) and *God's Big Picture* (2015).

According to Bateman, the purpose of *Interpreting the General Letters* is to "shape the way people think and go about studying and communicating eight books of the New Testament" (13). Broadly speaking, Bateman desires to pass on his exegetical skills and knowledge of Scripture to the next generation of students (13).

For Bateman, there are important steps that students must take when studying and communicating those eight NT books. Before getting to those steps, Bateman discusses the genre of the General Letters (19–56), their background (57–88), and the theology of the letters (89–126). Then, Bateman gives a nine-step approach to go from preparing for the interpretation of the letters (127–170), to interpreting the passages of those letters (171–208), to then communicating those General