



James C. Peterson

Reviewing Book Reviews

As coeditor for this theme issue, Keri McFarlane has triggered with her invitation essay, and ably helped to shepherd with peer review and editing, four articles of insightful reflection on the role of animals in God's creation. In particular, as animals in the image of God, how should we treat other animals? In our communications section, Matthew Fleenor lets us listen in on his address to a meeting at Virginia Tech of the InterVarsity Graduate Christian Fellowship. His essay is notable both for its content and how it is communicated.

That makes for a worthy issue already, but then we have seventeen book reviews. The readers of *PSCF* have long appreciated this section. It offers a head start on noticing and evaluating the influential new works within one's own fields as they interact with Christian faith, and on across the disciplines.

There was a time when this key task was mainly carried, heroically, by one book review editor who occasionally posted a list of books received from hopeful publishers. Whoever then had the fastest surface mail to receive the list in the quarterly issue of the journal, and reply with a requested choice, would receive the book to review. We had MDs reviewing books on cosmology, and physicists evaluating the latest developments in anthropology. As always, thank you to each one who so contributed. The reviews were often insightful and appreciated, but they were not always as informed and informative as they could have been, had they been written by reviewers with more specifically relevant expertise.

Today, the journal scours the latest announcements and submissions of new publications to recognize the most important developments, and solicits review for each book by an expert on some aspect

of its interdisciplinary contribution. No one person could keep track of the most important works in all the sciences and Christian thought, and then have the knowledge and awareness to offer the books for review to insightful experts across every field. That effort is today pursued by the five book review editors, each covering specific subject areas, who are listed on the inside front cover. Each one still has a daunting, but more manageable, range of disciplines to track. We owe them much, and we can help.

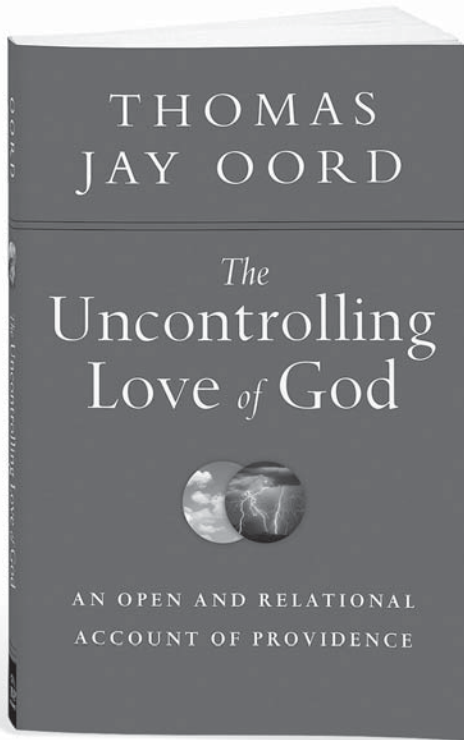
They welcome notice and advice from readers on works that are particularly important, and guide reviewers to be sure that each resulting review is engaging, accurate, and insightful, as it summarizes and critiques the book's main contribution. In particular, Patrick Franklin, as the book review coordinator, welcomes hearing from readers who are glad to be in the reviewer database. The reviewer database lists people interested in writing reviews, along with their areas of particular knowledge. Book review editors can consult that database when thinking about who could best evaluate a particular work. The goal is to recognize people for each book who know the subject, communicate well, and bring the amazingly broad and deep resources of the association to the discussion. You will see reviews in *PSCF* by men and women—scientists, engineers, philosophers, and theologians; scholars from Christian institutions, state universities, professions, government, and industry; and writers with postmarks from all over North America and beyond.

On behalf of the readers, many thanks to all that contribute to the book reviews so admirably at every stage. It is a vital and appreciated service. ◇

James C. Peterson, *editor*



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