

for a narrow committee of specialists, focused on minutiae and using untranslated terms (such as *logos spermatikos*) that only scholars would value and easily grasp. For a work written apparently as an undergraduate textbook and for informed lay readers, it presents highly technical topics and uses scholarly traditions which make it harder for the nontechnically trained reader to easily approach the subject (such as using the Latin titles of Augustine's works in the footnotes). It lacks tools that would help students: there is no bibliography of works cited or a list of Augustine's relevant works or a substantial index (the brief index does not do his work justice, causing me to think, after an initial cursory glance, that he failed to address key issues which he does, in fact, address). Ortlund clearly wants to make Augustine accessible, but I fear this initial chapter, navigating between technical approaches and synthetic overview, in combination with these other weaknesses, does not readily accomplish that goal.

In addressing questions of concern to modern readers throughout chapters 2–5, however, Ortlund hits his stride. These address valuable, appropriate matters critical to numerous communities: Augustine's (surprising) model of humility on how one interprets Genesis 1–3 (in chap. 2 of the book); Augustine's hermeneutical management of the introductory chapters of Genesis (in chap. 3); the epic challenge of animal death and predation (in chap. 4); and the truly knotty problem of a historic Adam and Eve (in chap. 5). All offer depth, thoughtful engagement, and enrichment and are critical companions to the discussions that preoccupy readers of this journal and dominate many pulpits, church pews, classrooms, youth groups, and the like. The section is capped off with a conclusion which I found to be winsome and profound. It reiterates the key lessons Ortlund finds: the wonder at sheer createdness; humility concerning the doctrine of creation encouraging irenic behavior; acknowledging the complexity involved in interpreting the opening chapters of Genesis; the existence of different, rational intuitions about key matters which we should ourselves note, including the example here of animal death; resisting a tendency to choose in absolute terms between history and symbol, and thereby allowing for ambiguity and incompleteness (the opening of Genesis does not seek to answer every question we wish to pose). While I have noted concerns about the first chapter adequately making Augustine accessible in this book, Ortlund has certainly succeeded at demonstrating topics for which Augustine's thought and model is applicable and important.

Meanwhile, it is also critical that one attempt to translate Augustine's thought for modern readers. Ortlund reminds us of the import of bringing an author as influential and seemingly familiar—but really rather distant and difficult—as Augustine to a modern audience and, moreover, doing so without falling into the trap of simply appropriating the audience's ideas. By engaging Augustine's core set of ideas with integrity and appropriate attention to context, Ortlund helps identify and clarify Augustine's contemporary significance.

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## Letters

### A Development Date to Consider for Ensoulment

I read your editorial in the June issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* ("Part II: Evangelicals, Neural Organoids, and Chimeras," *PSCF* 73, no. 2 [2021]: 65). Nice article.

I'm forwarding to you a link, <https://www.vcrmed.com/fertility-treatment/monozygotic-twins/>, that shows data summarized by an organization located not far from you in Virginia. The bullet points in the link explain the timeline after fertilization for splitting of the embryo to form different types of monozygotic twins at different days. It is science-based and agrees with what I know from other sources.

As monozygotic twins age and live their adult lives, there is never any doubt that each individual twin is a separate person and presumably possesses their own soul, which had to be added after the embryo split. So, clearly ensoulment of the human embryo must not occur during the first week or so *after* the joining of the sperm and egg. At least that is the most straightforward interpretation.

This several days' delay in ensoulment would seem to make contraception (preventing uterine implantation, for example) and morning after pills immune to the criticism that those techniques are killing an ensouled embryo.

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