> heir to an ancient religious tradition. One of the major tasks of forthcoming Qumran research is to approach the scrolls from this new perspective and situate the Qumran community where it originally belonged, namely, at the center of Second Temple Judaism. (24)

The articles following the introductory essay masterfully direct scholars in this task.

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Paul for Today's Church: A Commentary on First Corinthians. By Stanley B. Marrow. Foreword by Thomas Stegman, S.J. New York: Paulist, 2013. Pp. ix + 213. $22.95.

The wit throughout this contemporary pastoral commentary on First Corinthians is a rare quality for its genre. Since Marrow almost intended his volume as a "pastoral last will," he allows himself some bold side comments that hit right on target. Many readers will smile even if they mildly disagree with a particular remark. M., a Jesuit born in Iraq and long-time New Testament professor at Weston Jesuit School of Theology (d. 2012), had a real gift for brilliant punch lines. Examples can be adduced from almost every page. It must be added, however, that sometimes M.'s desire to denounce vigorously the small (or large) sins of contemporary American churches comes across as a little bitter. It is the price to pay for the boldness and personal character of the work. That said, the theological and spiritual balance is so strong that his comments will nourish a Bible study group or any reader seeking solid food (30). M.'s commentary is accessible, clear, and takes stands on issues.

On a formal level, the commentary proceeds verse by verse, and each comment is rather brief, making for easy reading. Technical exegetical remarks are rare, and the decision to proceed this way does not give much space to the rhetorical organization of the letter (main arguments, theses, and parts), or to the Greek nuances of the text. This lack of engagement with scientific scholarship will not satisfy the Bible scholar, but M. knows it and does not write with that intent. Nevertheless scholars will appreciate the outspokenness and clear choices of the exegete. Two readings could have been developed a bit more: some modern commentators view the two assertions in 6:13 ("food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for the food, and God will destroy both one and the other" [NRSV]) and 7:18 ("every other sin which a man commits is outside the body" [RSV]) as slogans of the Corinthians, and not Paul's actual thought. Likewise, the comment on 14:33b–35 could have mentioned its possible status as interpolation.

The commentary is moderately canonical—M. does not hesitate to quote other pertinent verses from the whole Bible. It is also deeply theological; M. does not hesitate to offer insights about the Trinity, grace, flesh, faith, general resurrection, and more—quoting abundantly and aptly from Augustine. But he never loses sight of the text. It says something very original in today's literature on the Bible that names like Henri de Lubac (32) and John Henry Newman (186) pop up, as do less probable writers like

Simone de Beauvoir (95) and G. K. Chesterton (123). In that regard, an index would have been a plus for the book. Another fresh characteristic of M.'s commentary seldom encountered in scholarship: M. acknowledges quite frankly when he does not understand a passage (see comments on 3:14–15 and on the famous cruces of 5:5 and 11:7–10).

In sum, the commentary is concise, ecclesial, energetic, and deeply personal in a very refreshing way. M.'s personality springs from the page but never distracts from first-century Corinth or Paul's passionate commitment to his churches.

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Thorns in the Flesh: Illness and Sanctity in Late Ancient Christianity. By Andrew Crislip. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2012. Pp. 238. $65.

True to the dictum "You can't tell a book by its cover," the dust jacket of Crislip's academic volume displays a dramatic 16th-century painting of the stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi, who lived in the twelfth century. But the book is about the ascetic practices of early Christian monks who flourished in the fourth to the sixth centuries. Not a stigmatist among them and, unlike Francis, many lived to a ripe old age. Anthony of Egypt, for example, the first true *monachos*, lived alone in the Egyptian desert to the age of 105, if Athanasius's *Life of Anthony* is to be believed. According to the anonymous *History of the Monks in Egypt*, written in the 390s, the monks' health and longevity were due not to their abstemious diet and ascetical practices, but were seen as rewards from God for having renounced the world, fought off temptations, and devoted themselves to spiritual rather than carnal concerns.

Ancient folk wisdom regarded a healthy long life as a divine reward for virtuous living, a notion found in both the OT and NT and dramatized in the early chapters of Genesis. The *Life of Adam and Eve*, an ancient work that amplifies the biblical narrative, elaborates on the consequences of the first sin, including pain and disease in addition to toil and death. Saintly superheroes living in the desert seemed to embody the belief that spiritual health and physical well-being went hand in hand.

But not always. Just as the author of Job confronted the problem of why bad things happen to good people, early Christian writers and the monks themselves had to figure out why asceticism was not always rewarded with positive physical consequences. Suffering and sickness forced thoughtful Christians to construct a more nuanced interpretation of health and its opposite than did the authors of Proverbs and the Psalms. The desert fathers in particular faced an existential dilemma that was peculiar to monks: "On the one hand, illness functions as a component of asceticism: it accomplishes many of the same goals as other practices that are more commonly called 'ascetic.' On the other hand, illness undermines asceticism" when it reduces the ability to focus on God (24).