been done on sacrifice and purity in recent years, but he does not seem to be familiar with the carefully nuanced work of John P. Meier in *Law and Love*, the fourth volume of his *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (ABRL [vols. 1–3]; AYBRL [vols. 4–5]; New York: Doubleday, 1991–2008 [vols. 1–3]; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991–2016 [vols. 4–5]). F. would do well to consider Meier’s conclusion that the historical Jesus never made specific pronouncements on purity laws.

Finlan also makes attention-grabbing assertions, such as his concluding line, “God saves us in spite of the crucifixion, not because of it” (p. 190; italics original). Likewise, when he treats the parable of the murderous tenants (Mark 12:1-12), he concludes, “Jesus, by this time, expects to be killed, but he makes it clear that this is not God’s will” (p. 119; emphasis added). I appreciate that F. is trying to debunk the popular notion that God sent Jesus to die. And maybe in the popular realm expressions such as F.’s are needed to make the point. But a more nuanced formulation is needed, such as “Jesus’ death did not occur outside God’s will.”

I applaud F.’s examination of psychological motives behind sacrifice and purity systems, and I appreciate his intention to expose the deleterious effects of atonement thinking. There is much to gain from F.’s analysis, but readers will need to beware assertions that divorce Jesus from Judaism or that imply he had a systematic theology opposed to sacrifice or purity.

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Granados Rojas, Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, has given us a very good book on an important topic. The volume’s well-conceived and well-written introduction and five chapters argue for the centrality of reconciliation to Pauline thought and analyze four key reconciliation texts in the Pauline corpus before offering broader theological reflections on the implications of this study for understanding Pauline soteriology, christology, and ecclesiology.

In the introduction, G.R. asserts that Paul took the essentially secular Greco-Roman principle of reconciliation (between two warring parties) and blended it with the concept of expiation from the LXX to create a new and unprecedented theological construction that centered on Christ and his death as the reconciler of all things. G.R. seeks to demonstrate the validity of this thesis by detailed examinations of two authentic Pauline texts (Rom 5:1-11; 2 Cor 5:18-21) and two disputed Pauline texts (Eph 2:14-16; Col 1:20-23).

In the first chapter, G.R. interprets Romans 5 as the introduction to Romans 6–8. According to G.R., Romans 1–4 discusses the how and when of justification, Romans 6–8 discusses the consequences of justification, and Romans 5 provides the christological link that demonstrates how the universal justice of God is distributed to all persons—through the death of Christ, the universal mediator between God and humanity. All persons, Jew and gentile, are reconciled to God in Christ.

Chapter 2 opens its examination of 2 Corinthians 5 by noting that Paul’s use of reconciliation terminology has significantly altered the Greco-Roman usage by inserting a
divine meditator, Christ. Hostilities are brought to an end as the hostile parties are brought together in Christ. Paul’s discourse in 2 Corinthians 5 demonstrates the divine initiative to reconcile persons together in Christ.

In chap. 3, G.R. interprets the theme of reconciliation in Ephesians 5 as a sophisticated development of the thought in Paul’s authentic letters. He argues that the reconciliation themes in Ephesians must be understood in light of the embodied language in Ephesians. In Ephesians, God has taken the initiative to create a new body with Christ as its head. All those who participate in the body are reconciled with God and with one another by being part of one body with one head, Christ. Enmities, but not enemies, are overcome through the creation of a body.

In chap. 4, G.R.’s reading of Colossians 1, he argues that the development of Pauline thought in Ephesians is extended further to make the creation of the new body a present reality that incorporates all of the existing creation into a new creation. This new creation, brought forth by Christ’s death and resurrection, experiences complete reconciliation with God as a new creation.

In the final chapter, G.R. draws together the threads of his previous analyses and explains that Pauline thought regarding reconciliation shares one unifying principle: “Reconciliation in the Pauline letters is understood as transformation” (p. 129; my translation). In Paul’s authentic letters, this transformation results from divine action that is accomplished through Christ. The language of justification is adopted as a subservient metaphor to describe this transformation from enemies into offspring, ambassadors, and ministers. In Ephesians and Colossians, the language of creation is adopted to image this transformation as the creation of one new body with one head (Christ). In these later letters, the means of God’s reconciliation (transformation) is made clear. This divine transformation occurs through a new creation, the body of Christ, which—in its inherent unity under one head—eliminates all need for imposed unity. Reconciliation in these later letters, therefore, is not the blending of two separate groups—Jews and gentiles, or some conflicting parties—but rather the creation of a new entity that incorporates all creation under a new head.

This volume is recommended for all students of Paul. Its early chapters are not particularly innovative and seem plodding at times (the grammatical analyses are robust in detail) but methodologically sound and well informed. (The prolonged grammatical discussions will have their greatest pedagogical value for those new to detailed exegesis of the Greek text.) The book’s greatest value lies in the analysis of the pseudo-Paulines and their place in the development of Pauline thought. For those with an appreciation of Spanish, the final chapter will be as inspiring as the first chapter is pedantic. G.R. apparently reads Spanish, French, German, English, and Italian, but his primary dialogue partners write in English and German.

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This intense work of scholarship originated as the author’s doctoral dissertation under the direction of L. Gregory Bloomquist at the University of Ottawa, where Gruca-Macaulay