Dr. James P. Ware has beautifully produced a useful tool for the study of the Pauline Epistles that will enable students and teachers alike to save lots of time and labor. The title *Synopsis of the Pauline Letters* sounds somewhat strange to those of us who have been so accustomed to associate “synopsis” with Gospels, not with the Pauline Epistles. Ware explicitly claims that this *Synopsis* has made a marked advance over the previous tools for comparative study of the Pauline Epistles, which are entitled *Pauline Parallels* or *Paul’s Parallels*.

First, this is the first comparative work of related passages of the Pauline Epistles in the original Greek text of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* 27th edition. Since the Greek text is undoubtedly indispensible for comparative work such as this, it is surprising that the previous tools have been produced only in English translation, without Greek text. In addition to the Greek text, the English translation (New Revised Standard Version) is provided on each opposite page of the *Synopsis* so that the reader who is not sufficiently comfortable with the Greek text of the New Testament can also make use of this tool.

Second, since it is always good to have more material than less to undertake a comparative study, I consider it a good decision to include the entire Pauline corpus of
the New Testament, that is, the thirteen Pauline Epistles, in this *Synopsis*. Since the disputed Pauline Epistles are included in the *Synopsis*, users can see for themselves how different and how similar the undisputed Pauline Epistles and the disputed ones are.

Third, relevant passages of the description of Paul’s teaching and ministry in the canonical book of Acts are included in the *Synopsis*, which is intended to “permit the user to do comparative study of any passage within the Pauline corpus in light of the entire canonical witness to Paul’s teaching and mission within the New Testament” (xi). It is slightly disappointing to find out that no apocryphal document, especially works such as the Acts of Paul, is included in the *Synopsis*.

The format of the *Synopsis* is claimed to be “innovative.” The body of the work consists of 177 groups of related passages whose topics are arranged in the order of epistolary structure (1–8), epistolary forms (9–14), literary forms (15–22), content or theme (23–161), key events of Paul’s mission (162–66), and Paul’s co-workers (167–77). The Table of Parallels enables the user to locate the specific passage that one is investigating. Ware claims that every passage from the Pauline Epistles is listed in this table, and the abbreviation “cf.” indicates references to “additional passages for comparison given under the indicated topic or topics” (xii), but I find that Gal 1:10 is somehow missing from the table.

As stated above, the Greek text of Nestle-Aland 27th and NRSV are employed in this *Synopsis*. Since the New Revised Standard Version (1990) is a revision of the Revised Standard Version on the basis of the 3rd edition of the UBS Greek New Testament (1975), not Nestle-Aland 27th, it was necessary to adjust the English translation of NRSV to correspond to the Greek text of NA27. To my knowledge, the editor has managed to accomplish this quite well. However, I have noticed an unfortunate oversight in 1 Thess 2:7, which appears under headings 105 Paul’s Apostolic Life and Ministry (192–93), 107 Paul’s Founding Preaching (194–95), and 161 Gentleness toward All (290–91). The Greek word νήπιοι of the NA27 does not mean “gentle” as in the NRSV text but “infants.” Any standard textbook of New Testament textual criticism points out this passage, since this is a classic instance of either dittography or haplography: if the νῆπιοι was original, then ἠπίοι arose by haplography after the preceding -ν, whereas it could also be that νηπίοι arose from dittography by repetition of ν. Since external evidence weighs almost even, the compiler is allowed to determine which word to read, but the discrepancy between the Greek text and its supposedly English translation is misleading, to say the least.

It is disappointing to find out that the two embedded letters in Acts are not included in the *Synopsis*: the one composed to deliver the decision of the so-called Jerusalem Council (15:23–29) and the other sent by the commander Claudius Lysias to the governor Felix.
They undoubtedly provide the user with a good example of non-Pauline epistles. I also wish that other epistles of the New Testament and some samples from papyri letters were included in this Synopsis. I am aware that this criticism is not completely fair because it seems to lie beyond the explicit scope of the Synopsis, and publishing considerations undoubtedly limited what Ware could include in his work. Still, I found myself missing comparative material from the New Testament (e.g., 1 Pet 2:13–17 alongside Rom 13:1–7) or contemporary letters from the Hellenistic world, such as those in John White’s Light from Ancient Letters.

Another caveat is in order. Since this work is entitled a Synopsis, the user may well expect that the editor must have devised some new devices to present the Pauline parallels in a brand new layout, something comparable to that of the Synoptic Gospels or even all the four canonical Gospels. He has not really done that but merely organized his Synopsis according to the headings he has devised.

Despite these minor quibbles, James Ware’s Synopsis of the Pauline Letters is undoubtedly a useful and indispensable tool that will serve students and teachers well in the years to come.