On the first page of a widely cited New Testament Studies article from 1978, A. F. J. Klijn once wrote, "Modern study of Jewish Christianity began with F. C. Baur." The present volume, edited by F. Stanley Jones, demonstrates just how wrong that statement was. Through a tightly focused collection of essays and a transcription of the preface and first letter of John Toland’s Nazarenus (1718), the book asserts that the scholarly construct “Jewish Christianity” first emerged in Toland’s work.

Although not the first work to observe that the modern study of Jewish Christianity began more than a century earlier than Baur, this collection of essays establishes that fact more thoroughly than ever. Already in 1877 David Patrick wrote on “Two English Forerunners to the Tübingen School: Thomas Morgan and John Toland” (Theological Review 14 [1877]: 562–603), and it is specifically the construction of early Christianity as composed of two groups—one Jewish and one gentile—that Patrick had in mind. While

1. A. F. J. Klijn, “The Study of Jewish Christianity,” NTS 20 (1974): 419. For this quote and a thorough list of similar statements by others after Klijn, see the essay in the present volume by David Lincicum, “F. C. Baur’s Place in the Study of Jewish Christianity,” 139. The volume will be hereafter referred to by the short title Rediscovery.
2. I should add that, despite this initial misstep, Klijn’s article is still quite useful as a review of the study of Jewish Christianity from Baur to the mid-twentieth century.
the front matter and some of the essays occasionally give the impression that the findings of *Rediscovery* are completely new, the authors of the essays are aware of Patrick and others who had eyes to see what came before Baur.\(^3\) That being said, the volume would have been well-served by a more developed introduction that briefly reviews this book’s own “forerunners” (Patrick et al.) and provides examples of the dominant, Baur-centric view. Such an introduction could have also provided the basic information about Toland’s *Nazarenus*, such as publication dates and an explanation of the editions (both as originally published and as reprinted). As it is, one must glean such information here and there from the various essays.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first, “Background,” consists of a lengthy study by Matti Myllykoski, “‘Christian Jews’ and ‘Jewish Christians’: The Jewish Origins of Christianity in English Literature from Elizabeth I to Toland’s *Nazarenus*.” Through a careful examination of a digital archive of early English books, Myllykoski is able to make a strong case that John Toland’s use of the phrase “Jewish Christianity” in *Nazarenus* is the first known instance in print. But he also shows that the terms “Christian Jews” and “Jewish Christians” had a long history of usage prior to Toland. The terms were used in two major ways (among others): either as a historical designation for the early ethnically Jewish followers of Jesus (“Christian Jew” was more common for this notion) or as a term with various meanings (generally negative) in Christian polemic. Myllykoski also highlights John Selden (1584–1654), who long before Toland argued that the first Christians were “nothing but Jews” (34).\(^4\)

The second part, “John Toland and the Rediscovery of Jewish Christianity,” focuses squarely on *Nazarenus* and its context in the work of John Toland. Pierre Lurbe’s piece, “John Toland’s *Nazarenus* and the Original Plan of Christianity,” situates *Nazarenus* in Toland’s life and work. Lurbe traces the development of the ideas that gave birth to *Nazarenus*, most notably Toland’s early altercations with orthodox notions of “canon” and his embrace of noncanonical works as historically valuable. Toland’s penchant for disputation and controversy in politics, religion, and philosophy is especially notable here. Overall, this chapter also provides the best engagement with the central ideas and themes of *Nazarenus*.

Matt Jackson-McCabe approaches Toland and his work from a very different angle. One notices immediately from the title of his piece, “The Invention of Jewish Christianity in John Toland’s *Nazarenus*,” that Jackson-McCabe refers to Toland’s “invention” rather

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3. Most of the essays cite Patrick at least once in a footnote, along with some other more recent studies that are also aware of Baur’s predecessors.

4. Myllykoski does not place this phrase in quotation marks, so it is not clear exactly what words Selden used.
than “rediscovery” of Jewish Christianity (rediscovery more accurately represents the perspective of F. Stanley Jones, the volume’s editor). Jackson-McCabe is most interested in querying Toland’s rhetoric and ideology. In particular, he rightly asks why Toland formulates Jewish Christianity rather than Christian Judaism. He concludes that it is because “Christianity” stands for “true religion” and that it is the term that holds power, since in Toland’s own time what counts as “true” Christianity is up for debate.

F. Stanley Jones’s “The Genesis, Purpose, and Significance of John Toland’s Nazarenus” provides the most helpful introduction to Toland’s work, much like I would have liked to see at the beginning of the volume. Readers not already familiar with Toland’s work might thus do best to begin here, as it provides the best actual introductory account of Nazarenus (in terms of important dates, the history of the editions, etc.). As for the purpose of Nazarenus, Jones shows how the work is not merely a historical investigation but is rather part of a contemporary argument for religious tolerance (see esp. 96), a point that Lurbe also makes.

The third and final section then investigates the path of a concept of Jewish Christianity “From Toland to Baur.” In “‘Jewish Christianity’ and ‘Christian Deism’ in Thomas Morgan’s The Moral Philosopher,” Matt Jackson-McCabe again attends to the ideology behind the construction of Jewish Christianity. He notes the remarkable circumstance that, while the two Deists Toland and Morgan both place a concept of Jewish Christianity at the center of a historical redescription of early Christianity, they do so for opposite reasons. While Toland essentially embraces Jewish Christianity as the earliest form (albeit somewhat trapped in externals), Morgan vilifies Jewish Christianity as a corruption from the internally focused and universal “religion of nature” espoused by Jesus. As Jackson-McCabe points out, Baur’s view of Jewish Christianity is in some ways closer to Morgan’s (except that Baur saw Jewish Christianity as the most primitive), although I would also add that Morgan’s Jewish Christianity also has much in common with the polemical uses of “Jewish Christian” traced by Myllykoski (e.g., in some ways, Morgan’s Jewish Christianity is simply a cipher for Catholicism, which he also attacks). This then makes Toland’s positive portrayal of Jewish Christianity all the more distinctive.

In a piece of careful literary sleuthing, F. Stanley Jones investigates the lines of connection between Toland and Baur in “From Toland to Baur: Tracks of the History of Research into Jewish Christianity.” Not content with the general observation that Baur’s notion of an early Christianity marked by division between two “parties”—one Jewish Christian, headed by Peter, and one gentile Christian, headed by Paul—bears a striking resemblance to Toland’s depiction of early Christianity, Jones examines what actual evidence exists for the lines of influence. Jones makes a strong case that Baur was influenced by Toland’s ideas (Morgan is not considered), but indirectly through the work of J. S. Semler and J. K.
L. Gieseler. Although Jones does not (nor do any other contributors to the volume) directly engage the full history of the relevant German terms (e.g., *Juden Christen, Judenchristent[h]um*), by correlating the evidence of Myllykoski and a study of the German terminology by Hella Lemke, Jones is able to conclude that the terms are generated in German scholarship under the influence of the British Deists.

The final piece, David Lincicum’s “F. C. Baur’s Place in the Study of Jewish Christianity,” is a real gem that summarizes many of the findings of the essays with regard to Toland and takes up what indeed was Baur’s contribution to the topic. Fully concurring with the other scholars that Toland (more or less) deserves credit for the concept of “Jewish Christianity,” Lincicum shows that Baur’s contribution lies in the way he situated a concept of Jewish Christianity at the center of his overall (and extensive) portrait of early Christianity.

The remaining portion of the volume consists of the transcription from Toland’s *Nazarenus*. As stated earlier, only the preface (which summarizes the whole work) and first letter are included. The first letter begins with a discussion of a newly discovered manuscript of a “Gospel of Barnabas,” which Toland claims is the same as a text attributed to Barnabas in antiquity. Toland uses this text as a springboard for his description of early Christianity as originally (and rightfully) composed of two separate Christian groups: a torah-abiding Jewish group (also known as the Ebionites or Nazarenes) and a nonobservant gentile one, an arrangement he calls “the original plan of Christianity.” Despite early tension, Toland thinks the apostolic decree (Acts 15) addressed this tension in some measure by laying down necessary rules for gentile Christians living in close contact with Jewish Christians. The “second letter,” which concerns the Irish gospel manuscript and ancient Irish Christianity, was deemed less relevant to the topic of this present volume and not included. The transcription is very good, and it is of course a great feature to have Toland’s work transcribed here, even to the point of including marginal references, reproducing errors, and so on. Although most of the introductory information can be gleaned from various parts of the book, I would have liked to see at least a brief introduction providing the basic data on dates, editions, and the like positioned directly before the transcription, or at least at the beginning of the volume as suggested above. As it stands, the reprint of Toland is not separated from Lincicum’s essay by even a single page. There is also no statement that the

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6. Having consulted a physical copy of *Nazarenus* in the Special Collections of Pitts Theology library at Emory University, I did not notice any deviations in the transcription in *Rediscovery*, although the copy I examined had a slightly different cover page. Many thanks to Brandon Wason, the Pitts archivist, for making the book available to me.
original page numbers are given in parentheses in-line with the text, a feature that makes it slightly more difficult to track down references to Nazarenus from the essays, since they give only the original page numbers.

Although not as “revisionist” as the book’s preface and overall tone suggest, there is no doubt that the key point has been more forcefully made than before. While not a perfect analogy, there is a sense in which Rediscovery actually relates to Patrick’s article “Two English Forerunners” as Baur does to Toland. In both cases the later, more voluminous work builds on and extends earlier, lesser-recognized work. Furthermore, every genius has precursors and influences, including Toland himself, which calls into question the usefulness of determining who the “father” of some idea is. Nonetheless, this volume is important because Toland’s contribution has generally been overlooked. As an example, even the first volume of William Baird’s standard work History of New Testament Research, subtitled From Deism to Tübingen, which gives more credit to the Deists than many such histories of interpretation, completely ignores Nazarenus.

My other main point of critique is that, by approaching Toland from the perspective of the contemporary discussion of Jewish Christianity, there is a tendency to isolate Toland’s notion of Jewish Christianity from the other “Christianities” Toland discusses: gentle, “Mahometan,” and Irish. In particular, attention to the second letter, on Irish Christianity, might have implications for an understanding of Toland’s Jewish Christianity. Recognizing the way Toland sets up an ancient Irish Christianity against the contemporary Catholicism of the time would actually strengthen some of the points of the book, especially Jackson-Mccabe’s, since once again Toland uses a rhetoric of origins to attack the later “corruption” of Christianity. Yet Toland’s “Irish Christianity” might also modify how much significance should be given to his supposed coining of the term “Jewish Christianity.” Both Jackson-McCabe and Jones consider Toland’s move from “Jewish Christian” (which previous authors had used) to “Jewish Christianity” to be a quite significant development, in terms of objectifying Jewish Christianity as an object of study. But it seems that Toland is willing to discuss many different “Christianities,” which are not necessarily to be conceived of as completely distinct entities.

7. See, for example, how Jones must qualify his straightforward statement “Semler was not the first to equate the Nazoraeans and the Ebionites; Toland was” (131, emphasis original), with a footnote: “Mosheim … can indeed list some predecessors in this view, but Toland still remains the first to develop this perspective prominently and systematically” (131 n. 51, emphasis added). This is exactly what some scholars would say about Baur and Jewish Christianity. This illustrates the peril in trying to make strong claims that any particular person was “the first” to have an idea.

To the extent that the bulk of the essays are primarily concerned with understanding Toland’s contribution in its early modern context, the volume will be of most interest to readers already deeply engaged in either the contemporary scholarly discussion of Jewish Christianity or in the history of biblical interpretation. Those who are either new to the discussion or are primarily interested in the first centuries CE may be better off starting with a broader collection of essays, such as Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik’s *Jewish Believers in Jesus* or Matt Jackson-McCabe’s *Jewish Christianity Reconsidered.* But those who wonder how we even began talking about Jewish Christianity will find no better treatment than this collection and the primary text of its focus. The volume, and especially the essay by David Lincicum, would be especially helpful for doctoral seminars on the history of New Testament research.