

David W. Baker, Elaine A. Heath with Morven Baker., *More Light on the Path: Daily Scripture Readings in Hebrew and Greek.* Grand Rapids, Mi.: Baker Books, 1998.

Beginning students in biblical languages are often surprised to discover the richness of meaning communicated by scripture texts in their original tongues. Although many fine English translations are available, none can fully reproduce the artistry of Isaiah's rhetoric or the intricate nuances of Paul's labyrinthine Greek. Sadly, however, many find it difficult to sustain language study amidst the demands of ministry. And for those who succeed in doing so, the constant need to refer to grammars and lexicons usually makes reading scripture in the original languages more a labor of the mind than a feast for the soul.

More Light On the Path is thus a welcome resource, for it invites its reader to develop facility in biblical languages within the context of devotional reflection on scripture. The book comprises a series of daily readings, each of which consists of three texts: a brief prayer or meditation followed by short readings from the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Bible. The scripture readings are accompanied by notes which offer morphological analyses of difficult forms and definitions of uncommon words, allowing the reader to grasp quickly the sense of the readings without recourse to other sources. The texts are united by a title which suggests interrelationships between them, and the daily units are joined with others into weekly units grouped by subjects that draw from biblical themes and liturgical calendars (e.g. hope, prayer, suffering, worship, Advent, Easter, Simhat Torah). An explanatory preface and list of abbreviations, as well as a calendar of weekly readings and scripture and subject indexes, facilitate the book's ease of use as a devotional guide.

Although the daily readings are sure to enhance one's competence in the biblical languages, the deeper value of the book, in this reader's opinion, is to be found in its capacity to stimulate meditation and prayer. Since the readings are brief, the technical aspects of grammar and terminology can be worked through quickly, allowing the reader time to read each text again and again. Pondering a text repeatedly in the original language unlocks new meanings and spiritual truths, and these are deepened as reflection is extended to the related scripture passage and the meditation. Each day's readings thus prompt the *contemplation* of scripture, a discipline too seldom practiced in a fast-paced society.

Under the daily pressure of busy schedules, even devotional time can become task-driven and perfunctory. *More Light on the Path* allows a prayerful digestion of scripture which nourishes both mind and soul. Those looking for a new and vital devotional experience will find a refreshing answer in this book. L. Daniel Hawk

John Van Seters, *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis,* Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 367 pp., 1992.

Since his important book published in 1975 (*Abraham in History and Tradition*, Yale University Press), John Van Seters has been part of a revolution in Pentateuchal studies, redefining the way many scholars understand the role of the Yahwist (author of

J in Wellhausen's older formulations). Most who work in the framework of the classical documentary hypothesis assume J was written in the ninth century BC by a historian of the southern kingdom, Judah. But Van Seters has argued that the Yahwist was a historian who worked in the period of the exile. In his earlier books, Van Seters has emphasized parallels with Greek history. Here he considers the significance of both Mesopotamian and Greek traditions from the first millennium BC as evidence for the exilic date for the Yahwist.

In his earlier work, Van Seters limited himself primarily to the Abrahamic narrative. This book extends his analysis to Genesis as a whole, applying his methods to the Primeval History, Jacob traditions, and the Joseph story. He continues to argue that the whole book has pre-J materials that were taken up and expanded by J, and further supplemented later by a priestly writer (P). Primarily however, and this is the fundamental contribution of his work, he concludes that the Yahwist was written as a "prologue" in form and function to the Deuteronomistic history (Deuteronomy-2 Kings). He considers Genesis and Exodus-Numbers the two major parts of the Yahwist's work.

Van Seters complains that since the days of H. Gunkel, Genesis has been identified as a composite of myth and legend, which has precluded subsequent scholars from regarding and treating J as a work of history. On the assumption that the Yahwist was first and foremost a historian, this volume compares Genesis with works of ancient historiography from Greece and Mesopotamia. Van Seters addresses the roles of myth, legend, and etiology in the various forms of ancient historiography. He concludes that Genesis presents us with "a type of antiquarian historiography concerned with origins and a national tradition of people and place" (page 22).

As always, Van Seters has written a book that is provocative and stimulating. His work has contributed to the current state of Pentateuchal studies, which is not unlike the political reality during the judges period; everyone is doing what is right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 21:25).

There is much that we could criticize in the author's methods. But I will limit myself to two simple observations. First, Van Seters continues to insist that "Israel shares much more with Greece than it does with Mesopotamia and Egypt" (page 42). Such a position is hard to defend in light of ethnic, linguistic and socio-political historical realities. Despite the author's protestations to the contrary, the ancients were more inclined to recognize the sociological continuity of the various people groups of Western Asia. By this I mean that Egypt, Syria-Palestine, and Mesopotamia were considered contiguous political identities throughout most of ancient history prior to the Persian period. Unfortunately, Van Seters's books tend to perpetuate the old mistakes of failing to appreciate Israel's role in its ancient Near Eastern context.

My second main objection is the way the author uses the Mesopotamian materials selectively. At those points when he acknowledges what is surely undeniable Mesopotamian parallels with Genesis, he restricts the connections to later sources, denying that the Yahwist had access to anything besides Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian material. But the problem is the process of literary influence. Van Seters attempts to locate the Yahwist in the exilic period and therefore claims the ancient historian had easy access to the leading texts of Mesopotamia during the Persian period. But the mechanics of such literary borrowing remain problematic. Very recent studies have explored instead a second millennium Amorite connection between early Israel and

certain Mesopotamian traditions (especially legal traditions). Such explanations are more promising, and might eventually show Van Seters's approach is untenable.

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Gordon J. Wenham, *Numbers, Old Testament Guides, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, 130 pp.*

Iain W. Provan. *1 & 2 Kings, Old Testament Guides, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, 125 pp.*

The publication of the above volumes completes Old Testament Guides, a series of concise handbooks written by members of the Society for Old Testament Study (U.K.) and designed for student use. Each of the volumes includes an introduction to the content of the book, a survey and assessment of critical issues and recent scholarship, cross-references to relevant works in the discipline, annotated bibliographies, and an attention to theological perspectives. The series has distinguished itself for its uniformly high quality and clarity and therefore constitutes an important resource for student, pastor, and scholar alike.

Those familiar with Gordon Wenham's fine commentary on Numbers (TOTC) will recognize in this introduction the lucid exposition and judicious discussion of critical issues that characterize the former work. Wenham excels in synthesizing a vast body of scholarship and presenting the key issues in a succinct manner that focuses the reader's attention squarely upon the text. His survey of Numbers consists of six chapters. The first explores the difficult question of the book's structure and the arrangement of its contents, beginning with a discussion of the issue before elaborating the views of Olson, Douglas, Milgrom, as well as his own. The second engages the equally difficult task of identifying and explaining the diverse genres which comprise Numbers (e.g. census lists, purity rules, dedication records, travel notes, complaints, cultic calendars). A third chapter offers a thorough yet concise account of the fragmentary and documentary hypotheses as these pertain to the book's composition and concludes with a discussion of holistic readings, attempts to combine synchronic and diachronic approaches (with particular attention on the work of J. de Vaulx), and contemporary diachronic analyses. The relationship between Numbers and history is explored in the fourth chapter. After a discussion of scholars who see the book as a response to issues faced in Jehud in the 5th Century B.C. (J. Gray, M. Douglas), Wenham presents extrabiblical (archaeological discoveries, ancient Near Eastern parallels) and biblical (e.g. outlook, terminology) evidence for the antiquity of the book's contents. The fifth chapter addresses the theology of Numbers, classified in terms of thematic or kerygmatic approaches. The volume concludes with a valuable discussion of the interpretation of Numbers in later biblical and extrabiblical literature.

Iain Provan's volume on 1 & 2 Kings also comprises six chapters and begins with an excellent introduction which orients the reader to the historiographical, narrative, and didactic features of the books. The next chapter examines Kings as narrative literature. Provan begins with a discussion of the complicated questions of authorship, editing, and composition and, after noting that "traditional" critical scholarship has rarely read Kings as a coherent narrative, reviews the contributions of newer narrative approaches (illustrating the value of these by applying them to three difficult texts). The third

chapter considers the issues of history and historiography, prefacing the review of issues with a short but insightful reflection on the nature of historiography. A related issue, the contention that the writers of Kings have distorted reality when presenting Israelite religion, constitutes the focus of the fourth chapter. Provan reviews the issue in detail and cogently points out that much of the tension derives from a scholarly community that has developed its own views about the religion of Israel (and religious life in general). The fifth chapter elaborates larger themes in Kings (the God of Israel, true worship, a moral universe, and divine promise) and explores the extent to which the books are configured by a Deuteronomistic perspective. The final chapter places Kings in its canonical context and continues the discussion of the essential role of perspective in the book's canonization and later interpretation.

Both of these fine volumes succeed as "guides" on a number of levels. First, they engage relevant scholarship and offer judicious assessments of the contributions of various scholars and approaches. For those who wish to read more, the authors provide select bibliographies at the end of each chapter, often (though not always) with annotations. On another level, they provide overviews which enable the introductory reader to gain a sense of each book as a whole. Finally, they engage their readers in the task of interpretation itself by pointing to specific issues raised by the biblical text and presenting ways of addressing them. For those wanting to engage in deeper study of Numbers and Kings, these volumes offer a good place to begin. L. Daniel Hawk

J. Cheryl Exum (ed.), *The Historical Books: A Sheffield Reader*, The Biblical Seminar 40, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, 383 pp.

This latest volume in the Sheffield Reader series collects twenty of the best articles on the Historical Books published in the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* between the years 1976 and 1996. These are grouped into three divisions- 1) Joshua, Judges, Ruth; 2) Samuel, Kings; and 3) Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah—with half the essays dealing with Samuel and Kings. The entries illustrate a wide range of methodological approaches, with particular emphasis on literary and social-scientific studies.

Keith Whitelam's important article ("The Identity of Early Israel: The Realignment and Transformation of Late Bronze-Iron Age Palestine") opens the volume with a radical challenge to approaches which place too much reliance on the biblical text to explain the complex transformation and realignment of Late Bronze-Iron Age Palestine. George Coats ("The Book of Joshua: Heroic Saga or Conquest Theme?") appropriates a form-critical approach to argue that the story of Joshua, like the story of Moses, is cast in the form of a heroic saga, suggesting stronger connections to the Pentateuch than to Judges. Lori Rowlett ("Inclusion, Exclusion and Marginality in the Book of Joshua") adopts an ideological approach which views Joshua as an instrument of power which defines inclusion in terms of willingness to submit to the voluntary power structure represented by Joshua. W. J. Dumbrell ("In Those Days There Was No King in Israel; Every Man Did What Was Right in His Own Eyes": The Purpose of the Book of Judges Reconsidered") asserts that Judges illustrates YHWH's commitment to Israel despite the latter's repeated intransigence, thus giving hope to the exiles who had

seen the monarchy fall. Jon L. Berquist's essay ("Role Dedifferentiation in the Book of Ruth") concludes the first section with an exploration of the ways in which role reversals in the book deconstruct social roles.

The second section begins with an essay by Frank Anthony Spina ("Eli's Seat: The Transition from Priest to Prophet in 1 Samuel 1-4"), which employs a close reading to demonstrate that Eli's "falling from the seat" intimates the deposition of one form of leader (priest) and its replacement by another (prophet). Lyle Eslinger ("Viewpoints and Point of View in 1 Samuel 8-12") challenges the historical-critical tendency to neglect the narratorial perspective which stands behind the story and serves as guide through the textual complexities. Thomas R. Preston ("The Heroism of Saul: Patterns of Meaning in the Narrative of the Early Kingship") sees a common pattern in the stories of Samuel, Saul, and David ("rise of the lowly, fall of the might") which elevates Saul as a heroic king in contrast to David. James W. Flanagan ("Chiefs in Israel") applies sociological models on the rise and character of chiefdoms to elucidate the transitional period of the reign of Saul and the early years of David. Leo G. Perdue ("Is There Anyone Left of the House of Saul . . .?": Ambiguity and the Characterization of David in the Succession Narrative") describes the manner by which the Succession Narrative constructs an ambivalent portrait of David (both compassionate and ruthless). Hans J.L. Jensen draws on the work of René Girard to elaborate the thematic interaction of mimetism, desire, rivalry, and violence that configures the Succession Narrative.

The essays on Kings focus mainly on Solomon. Hugh S. Poyer ("Judging the Wisdom of Solomon: The Two-Way Effect of Intertextuality") reads the story of the cannibal mothers (2 Kings 6) against the story of the two prostitutes and Solomon (1 Kings 3), revealing the glory and shame of human nature and the failure of the monarchy. Stuart Lasine ("The Ups and Downs of Monarchical Justice: Solomon and Jehoram in an Intertextual World") offers an excellent discussion of the concept of intertextuality and narrative analogy in response to Poyer's essay. K.I. Parker ("Solomon as Philosopher King?: The Nexus of Law and Wisdom in 1 Kings 1-11") argues that the story of Solomon, both positively and negatively, illustrates that Wisdom must be bound to Torah. Richard Coggins ("On Kings and Disguises") explores stories which share the common motif of disguise, by or in the presence of the king.

An essay by Sara Japhet ("The Historical Reliability of Chronicles: The History of the Problem and its Place in Biblical Research") opens the last section with a thorough overview of scholarship on the topic. Donald F. Murray ("Dynasty, People, and the Future: The Message of Chronicles") considers three key passages and concludes that the books of Chronicles do not look to the restoration of the Davidic monarchy but to a future open to new possibilities through temple and worship. David Kraemer ("On the Relationship of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah") appropriates literary methods to argue that Ezra and Nehemiah constitute two distinct works with divergent ideologies. Kenneth D. Tollefson and H.G.M. Williamson ("Nehemiah as Cultural Revitalization: An Anthropological Perspective") define and apply a model of cultural revitalization to the Nehemiah material, concluding that the general sequence of events follows the model and reflecting on implications for issues of composition and history. Tamara C. Eskenazi ("Out from the Shadows: Biblical Women in the Post-exilic Era") draws on biblical texts and the Elephantine documents to make the women of this period more visible.

The articles offer a superb cross-section of contemporary approaches and issues, and all make stimulating reading. The collection will therefore be of particular value to those who are looking for a way into contemporary scholarship on the Historical Books or who enjoy being challenged by new perspectives and insights. L. Daniel Hawk

Richard D. Nelson, *Joshua*, Old Testament Library, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1997, hb., 309 pp.

Richard D. Nelson's commentary on Joshua is the latest volume in the highly esteemed Old Testament Library series. The commentary proper is preceded by a select bibliography of commentaries and special studies related to the book of Joshua (pp. xiii-xviii). Thereafter Nelson launches into the usual study of introductory matters, discussing issues like the historical significance of the book of Joshua, the genesis of the biblical book, its genre and literary style, key theological themes, and the book's portrayal of the figure of Joshua (pp. 1-24). Following the pattern of most volumes in this series, after the introduction the author provides separate treatment of each literary unit in the book. For each unit Nelson offers his own fresh translation of the Hebrew original (often with a parallel translation of the Greek variant), extensive textual notes, synthetic comments on the style and intention of the unit, and finally paragraph by paragraph commentary. At the back Nelson provides a helpful Appendix listing modern site identifications of places named in Joshua (pp. 285-89), an index of biblical references and other ancient sources, and an index of subjects. The reader misses an index of secondary authors cited in the book.

Like most critical scholars today, Nelson views Joshua as one portion of the larger literary complex encompassing Deuteronomy to 2 Kings, commonly known as the Deuteronomistic History (DH). Nelson attempts to reconstruct the evolution of this book by exploiting apparent tensions in the text. He grants that some of the stories (like Rahab) existed independently earlier, but these were incorporated into the Deuteronomistic work in the late seventh century B.C. Convinced that some portions of the book presuppose the exile, Nelson proposes a second redaction of the book during the exile.

Operating from a radical hermeneutic or suspicion, Nelson finds the book of Joshua to be virtually worthless as a source for understanding the late second millennium B.C. events and times it purports to describe. In his own words, "Joshua's true historical value consists in what it reveals about the social and ideological world of those who told these stories, collected and redacted them, and then read the resulting literary product. Joshua is a historical witness to what later generations believed had happened to their ancestors." (p. 4). It matters not a whit to Nelson whether or not the Israelites were deluded in their beliefs. Influenced by N. K. Gottwald, he rejects the notion of an ethnically distinct Israel taking over the land of Canaan. Rather, the people who came to call themselves "Israel" represented "elements of the indigenous population of Palestine attracted to new economic opportunities in the highlands and/or disaffected by life dominated by the economic and political opportunities in the highlands and/or disaffected by life dominated by the economic and political power of the Canaanite city-states" (p. 4). According to Nelson the toponym and boundary lists in chapters 13-21

represent “literary exercises in cognitive mapping, performed for social and ideological purposes,” which, like the conquest stories in the preceding chapters “strengthened national identity and assured Israel’s secure possession of its ancestral lands” (p. 12). The literary figure of Joshua “serves as a forerunner for the ideological role played by later kings, and especially for the expansionistic and reforming policies of Josiah” (p. 22).

In a commentary of almost 300 pages Nelson offers many insightful exegetical insights, particularly on literary features of the text. While some will question his high view of the Old Greek textual tradition, his juxtaposing of translations of the Masoretic text and Old Greek variants is very helpful. However, with the minimalist perspective adopted by Nelson, too much time is spent speculating about the evolution of a particular text and not enough on answering the questions which most readers of the book of Joshua actually ask. But some will recognize a certain irony in this commentary, which encourages them to interpret it with the same hermeneutic of suspicion with which he approaches the book of Joshua. For, having read through the volume, one wonders if its value does not lie more in what it reveals about the social and ideological world of those who comment on biblical books than in the meaning and message intended by the authors of biblical books. Alongside this volume a student of the book of Joshua should read the commentary by Richard Hess (*Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996], which appeared one year earlier and offers a much more positive view of the book’s historical significance. Daniel I. Block, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Barnabas Lindars, S.S.F. *Judges 1-5: A New Translation and Commentary*, A. D. H. Mayes, ed., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, Ltd, 1995, 302 pp.

At the time of his death in 1991, Lindars was preparing a new volume on Judges for the International Critical Commentary. The volume under review represents his work on the first five chapters of the book, with minor editorial modifications and a brief introduction by A. D. H. Mayes. To use the word “encyclopedic” with reference to the commentary would not be an exaggeration. Lindars works through these chapters with a meticulous attention to detail and offers informed and thorough discussions of every feature of the text. Following the focus of the ICC, his comments are heavily weighted towards conventional historical-critical concerns. Each section opens with an analysis of sources and redaction before moving to an elaboration of the respective verses, with attention to the grammar and vocabulary of the text.

The commentary makes its most valuable contributions when addressing historical, geographical, lexical, and text-critical issues. Most distinctive is the attention given to comparisons of the Septuagintal and Masoretic versions of the book, both of which Lindars regards as authentic witnesses to the original text. The depth of discussion on these issues is well beyond what one may find in any other commentary. (The section on Judges 1 takes up 85 pages!).

Lindars is skeptical of the historical reliability of much of the material in the book. He follows mainline scholarship in viewing Judges 1 as a “pastiche” of materials drawn from various sources and brought together at a late date. While the stories of the judges

themselves probably constitute older material, he nonetheless believes that the sequence in which they are told is a creation of the redactor, who is also responsible for fabricating transitional material. From this perspective, Lindars holds the opinion that "the historical value of the Prelude" (Judges 1) "is slight," (p. 7), while the story of Othniel displays a "patently artificial character" (p. 129).

Lindars' exposition is marked by clarity and precision, but it presumes a well-informed reader willing to follow complex arguments on composition, transmission, and history. The commentary will therefore be most welcome in an academic setting and may not serve as well the interests of those seeking a ready homiletical or theological resource.

L. Daniel Hawk

Kirsten Nielsen, *Ruth, The Old Testament Library*, trans. Edward Broadbridge. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, 99 pp. \$16.99.

Recently, the book of *Ruth* has become quite a fashionable focus of female scholarship. Interestingly, however, in all the scholarly material around, this is the only commentary of *Ruth* written by a woman. Besides simply affirming that *Ruth* is a good story, Nielsen has two basic purposes in this delightfully concise and succinct commentary. First of all she interprets the book of *Ruth* in intertextual relation with the matriarchal sagas and secondly, she accepts the inevitable reality that the book of *Ruth* is a political statement in defense of the Davidic monarchy and its claims to the kingship. Thus, for Nielsen, the focus of the book of *Ruth* is the genealogy.

In a protracted introduction, the real focus of the commentary, Nielsen elaborates her methodology. She is concerned to examine the text of *Ruth* closely in order to ascertain its structures - the various ways in which the book can be outlined, the repetition of key concepts, the retelling of events, the way in which conclusions become, or serve as, beginnings. It is through these structures that she can later compare *Ruth* and the matriarchal stories. She delights in the resonances between the *Ruth* text and the Joseph and Jonah narratives as she explores the genre of *Ruth*, suggesting a possible intertextuality there. Nevertheless her main intention is to explore the text as it connects with the matriarchal stories.

Drawing upon postmodern trends in textual analysis, Nielsen first premises that language does not have a fixed meaning, but is multiple in meaning, changing as individual experience changes the reader. This makes demands of the reader, whose interpretation of any text is ongoing and continuous, influenced by the many contexts in which reading takes place, the variety of reading experience, indeed one's reading history. These all provide an intertextuality for interpretation. From her perspective, this is Nielsen's reading of the text, and because of that the reader is engaged in a lively and vigorous dialogue with Nielsen. Furthermore, Nielsen has read extensively. Her bibliography reveals her engagement with other scholarship.

Then, Nielsen offers likely, possible and reasonable interpretations based on the network of texts which gave rise to the book. The text of *Ruth* itself points to intertextualities. Thus, when the writer of *Ruth* makes specific reference to the matriarchs Leah and Rachel and Tamar, then the writer is inviting the reader to explore *Ruth* in relation to those texts. As a story of barrenness being overcome by divine

intervention, *Ruth* can be read alongside the stories of Rebekah and Sarah. Nielsen reads *Ruth* with the stories of the matriarchs, because Ruth is a matriarch!

Nielsen acknowledges the problems with the genealogy which concludes *Ruth*. For some scholars the genealogy is considered an addition, suggesting that the Davidic dynasty appropriated this congenial story to support the monarchy's diplomatic/political alliances. For Nielsen, the genealogy is integral to the story and, more than likely, the reason why *Ruth* the book was written! If, as Nielsen argues, Ruth is a variation of the matriarchal narratives, then the writer's aim would be to connect David via Ruth and Boaz to the early history of Israel, thereby defending David's claim to the throne and suggesting that David is a new patriarch, or even the ultimate patriarch, chosen by God. Thus, the genealogy becomes a conclusion to the period of the story of Ruth and marks a beginning to the saga of the monarchs.

This discussion of the genealogy in relation to the story of *Ruth* is fascinating. Nielsen examines the ideological manipulations of these family histories within a historical and literary framework, suggesting that the election of Ruth as David's ancestress may point to the division of the kingdom as a possible date of writing. Again, Nielsen points to possibilities and doesn't make assertions.

Nielsen admits the canonical problem with *Ruth*. The LXX places *Ruth* between Judges and Samuel; the BHS has *Ruth* among the writings and associated with specific religious festivals. How this influences reading is of course an issue, particularly for reader-response critics, canonical criticism and within socio-cultural studies, but Nielsen's interest is intertextual criticism here.

Despite being short, this commentary is richly packed, offering an invitation to the student to explore the text from a variety of perspectives. The value of Nielsen's approach is that she invites dialogue, points to possible intertextualities, and challenges the student to re-read the text from her perspective of intertextual relations. She encourages the student to explore the meanings available in the text, to make conscious connections between texts and to discover the continuity that exists in biblical writing. It is, therefore, a commentary which fulfills Nielsen's personal aims yet provides only a small detail of Ruth.

Dorothy Penny-Larter

Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, The New American Commentary, Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995, 432 pp.

Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings*, Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry, Collegeville, Minn: Michael Glazier, 1996, xxi + 393 pp.

Since the books of Kings constitute primary source material for reconstructing the history of Israel, the study of these books has been devoted mainly to addressing the difficult historical problems they raise. Commentaries on 1-2 Kings generally follow this focus and concentrate on reconciling the books' internal chronologies, setting biblical events within the framework of ancient Near Eastern history, delineating sources and forms, assessing the historicity of the contents (especially the so-called prophetic narratives), and accounting for the composition of the books. The two commentaries reviewed here take different stances and focus on the canonical form of the texts and the message rendered by the author/narrator. They therefore represent a welcome addition

to the commentary literature on these often-overlooked books.

The New American Commentary series offers commentary based on the NIV translation of the Bible and addresses a wide readership: scholars, pastors, and laypeople. Its aim is to provide concise, readable commentary from an “unapologetically confessional” perspective that holds to the inerrancy of scripture and values the theological integrity of the biblical text.

Paul House’s commentary on 1-2 Kings follows this agenda closely and is marked by solid exposition of the biblical text and a user-friendly format. The commentary begins with a preface that summarizes the components of his integrated approach (historical details, literary details, canonical details, theological details, and applicational details) and explains their interrelationships. A lengthy introduction then elaborates each of these components. The discussion of historical details begins with a cogent and comprehensive summary of views on the authorship and composition of the book. (House holds the view that the books were composed by a single author, influenced by Deuteronomy, as parts of a larger work.) The next section deals with the troublesome issue of chronology and offers a less substantial overview of scholarship; House gives a brief overview of the problem before endorsing the conclusions of Thiele and does not offer an analysis beyond an assertion that the difficulties can be explained. Subsequent sections offer an overview of the political situation, as well as excellent arguments for the primacy of the Masoretic text over the Septuagint and the historicity of the so-called prophetic “legends.”

The second main section offers an introduction to literary issues (by which House seems to mean attention to the poetics of the text) which follows the lines of conventional formalism (structure, plot, character, point of view). A brief discussion of canonical criticism and the canonical placement and function of 1-2 Kings follows, and this in turn gives way to an identification of key theological issues: monotheism vs. idolatry, central worship vs. the high places, covenant loyalty vs. spiritual rebellion, true prophecy vs. “lying spirits,” God’s covenant with David vs. dynastic disintegration, and God’s sovereignty vs. human pride. The introduction concludes with principles which guide the pastor and teacher in the task of applying the texts.

Commentary on the text itself follows an accessible format. Each main section begins with an outline, followed by a summary of historical context and specific issues raised by the text. The commentary then works through the section passage by passage, beginning first with a quotation of the biblical text (in boldface) and proceeding to an exposition of the passage. At the conclusion of each section House offers theological and canonical reflections on key aspects of the text and concludes with their “applicational implications.” The preacher and teacher will especially appreciate these latter sections, which provide solid and balanced reflection for preaching, teaching, and personal study.

Given the scope and format of the project, there are inevitable trade-offs. Whether for the sake of brevity or of remaining within confessional parameters, some particularly thorny issues receive only a cursory treatment. On the difficult issues of chronology, House is often content to rest on previous scholarship without engaging opposing perspectives. The chronology of Hezekiah’s reign is a case in point. The regnal dates for Hezekiah seem to conflict with those of his Northern contemporaries and with Assyrian annals. Furthermore, the account of his reign seems to contain two accounts

of an invasion by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13-18; 18:14-19:37), one resulting in the payment of tribute and the other in the destruction of the Assyrian army. This leads to the question of whether the Bible recounts one long campaign, conflates two versions of one campaign, or recounts two separate campaigns. House acknowledges that scholars debate the sequence of events and then briefly states his own position (one long campaign), with a footnote to two supporting sources. Since the commentary affirms the inerrancy of scripture and the vital importance of discerning historical details, it is somewhat disappointing that it does not engage this debate and others (e.g. the identities of Ben-Hadad and the "anonymous" king of the Elisha narratives) more substantively.

These minor misgivings are more of a concern to scholars than they will be to the pastors and laypeople toward whom this book is oriented. These readers will find the commentary to be an excellent and usable resource for the study of 1-2 Kings. The exposition of texts is lucid, straightforward, and well-informed, allowing the reader to benefit by a theologically-sensitive explanation of the text, unencumbered by digressions or discussions of academic fine points. The summaries of history and theology present the essential points necessary for understanding the exposition, and discussions of application draw connections to the concerns of the contemporary church. The commentary will therefore make a fine addition to church libraries and to the personal libraries of those who preach and teach.

Jerome Walsh's commentary on 1 Kings takes a completely different tack. Employing narrative criticism in the service of a close reading of the text, Walsh focuses specifically on the literary dimensions of the book; that is, how the biblical narrator shapes the story of Israel's kings and prophets. The volume is the first in a new series which focuses on the literary character of the biblical texts in their final form. Contributors represent a variety of backgrounds and approaches, but all are united by the desire to explore the literary artistry of scripture.

Walsh's reading reveals a narrative of extraordinary sophistication and power. The commentary is divided into four main parts which elaborate the stories of Solomon (1 Kings 1-11), Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:26-14:20), Elijah (1 Kings 17-19), and Ahab (1 Kings 20:1-22:40). Each part contains a series of chapters which work through the narrative blocks in sequence before concluding with a chapter that provides an overview of the whole story. The chapters typically break down these blocks into smaller sections and comprise an exposition of the text followed by discussions of such elements as characterization and narrative effect. The format is rather fluid, and while this causes some confusion at points, it ultimately works to the reader's benefit by allowing the exposition to follow the flow of the narrative itself.

Walsh not only gives the reader a deeper sense of the stories themselves but also of the way that the narrator shapes the presentation of the events. He helps the reader appreciate the narrator's artistry through the identification and explanation of various structural symmetries (e.g. chiasm, parallelism, inclusion) and discussions of the how the biblical narrator presents the characters of the story. Throughout the commentary, he uncovers the subtle craft of the biblical storyteller through meticulous attention to the language of the text (as when, in the story of the two prostitutes before Solomon, the true mother calls her child a *yālūd*, a presumably more intimate term than the more common *yeled*). Each chapter of exposition is filled with discoveries and insights, while the summary chapters offer suggest larger connections. (Especially provocative are the

allusions between Elijah and Moses which link the two great figures but intimate that Elijah does fails to meet the standards Moses set.) Best of all, he writes in an engaging style that is provocative enough to satisfy the scholar but simple enough to engage the reader with little knowledge of Hebrew.

This is a new kind of commentary, one that shapes its exposition to the genre itself. While other commentaries atomize and compartmentalize the narrative, Walsh is content to let the story tell itself, serving as the reader's guide into the strange and marvelous world that it presents. Moving away from dry exposition, he displays the storyteller's flair and thus draws the reader into the intricate interplay of events and characters. In so doing, he releases the narrative's power to work on its reader. And that, ultimately, is what a commentary on I Kings should do. L. Daniel Hawk

Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997. 122 pages.

In *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter*, Nancy deClaissé-Walford examines the Psalter from the standpoint of the entire book being a literary unity. She first explains her understanding and use of the canonical method, demonstrating that her basis is James Sanders's method of "canonical criticism." In chapters two, three, and four, she presents a history of the canon, a history of the shaping community (the believers who formed the canon through their recognition and use of Scriptures), and a brief history of the process by which the Psalter attained its final shape. In the following six chapters, she analyzes the five "books" of the Psalter with an excursus on the importance of kingship in the ancient Near East. Chapters eleven and twelve conclude her study in which she proposes that the canon was the means by which the canonical (believing) community survived as an identifiable entity in a world in which multiple ethnic groups and cultures were absorbed into Greek and Roman culture.

DeClaissé-Walford presents a strong case for her argument that Yahweh's Torah and the Kingship of Yahweh are the overarching themes of the Book of Psalms. They are interwoven throughout the Psalter and serve to tie the various collections and the five "books" together. The five books tell the tale of Israel for the Jews of the postexilic period. Books I and II present the golden age of Israel under David and Solomon, while the themes of Book III are the destruction of the northern and southern kingdoms and the Exile.

Psalms 90, the initial psalm of Book IV, plays a pivotal role in her analysis. The only psalm attributed to Moses "performs the literary role of sending the reader/hearer back to the beginning of the Psalter, back to Psalms 1 and 2 and the ideas of YHWH's Torah and YHWH's kingship" (86). After the presentation of the collapse of the Davidic monarchy, Psalm 90 points the readers back to their beginning as a nation and the chosen people of God. From this focal point to the end of Book V (Ps. 145) and the conclusion of the Psalter (Psalms 146-150: the final five praise hymns), the readers/hearers repeatedly are reminded and encouraged to act on the assurance that Yahweh is still king, despite their present position of being a people without a country and without an earthly king.

With her proposal of the pivotal nature of Psalm 90 for the canonical community, looking backward to Torah and forward to the kingship of Yahweh, DeClaissé-Walford

reflects the perspective of an earlier work of Walter Brueggemann ("Response to James L. Mays, 'The Question of Context,'" in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, ed. J. C. McCann, JSOTSup 159, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993). Brueggemann suggests that Psalm 73, following 72, is the pivot point of the Psalter. "We are permitted to see the Psalms as a dramatic struggle from obedience (Psalm 1) through dismay (Psalm 73 after 72) to praise (Psalm 150)" (41).

DeClaissé-Walford's concurs with Gerald Wilson (*The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, SBLDS 76, Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985) in his finding significant clues to the shape of the Psalter in the five psalms which close each book. In her examination of the macrostructure of the Psalter, she analyzes the first and last psalms of each book, demonstrating how they convey the themes of the entire book. She suggests that "other clues to the shaping of the Psalter also exist—clues that can be discovered by understanding the historical backgrounds and hermeneutical underpinnings of the postexilic community" (34). Her primary contributions to the discussion of the shape and shaping of the Psalter are her presentation of the dual themes of the Book—Yahweh's Torah and Yahweh's kingship—and her conclusion that the canon was the means through which Yahweh's covenant people survived (and continue to survive) as a unique believing community. When believers are overwhelmed by the difficulties of life, whether exile caused by the Babylonians or the trials and tribulations of twentieth century western culture, reading from the beginning of the Psalter and continuing on until they reach the end leads them to the inevitable conclusion that Yahweh was and *still* is King.

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Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah, Part 3, Volume 2: Isaiah 49-55, Historical Commentary on the Old Testament*, Leuven: Peeters, 1998, xxv + 454 pp.

The series to which this commentary belongs is beginning to establish itself as a major resource both for scholarly understanding of the text of the Old Testament and for responsible exegesis to undergird exposition and preaching. Although ultimately the team of contributors will be internationally representative, the early volumes to have appeared are by our Dutch colleagues (the present one being the translation of a contribution to the 'Commentaar op het Oude Testament' series). This is especially welcome, as otherwise their valuable work is all too often available to only a handful of specialists.

In conscious distinction from many newer forms of interpretation, the series is firmly historical in orientation, and this is based squarely on a theological understanding of the Bible as God's word originally imparted at specific times and places. Traditional forms of critical scholarship are thus required in order to hear it aright in the modern world. The series is intended to serve the church and the scholarly communities by paying attention both to the historical specificity of the text and to the history of its interpretation through the ages.

To meet this challenging agenda, each paragraph of the text is studied under several headings. In the present volume, a new translation is followed first by an introductory discussion of 'essentials and perspectives'. Here, a simplified running exegesis incorporates copious references to the New Testament, and occasionally to later

Christian and Jewish interpreters as well. It is this section which will be of most help to pastors and preachers.

Two sections of 'scholarly exposition' follow, and they are understandably longer and more technical. The first is of an introductory nature, treating such issues as the connection of the paragraph to its wider context, form criticism, and the literary structure of the passage. Finally, and fullest of all, there follows a verse-by-verse 'exegesis', which treats the Hebrew text in great detail, with a battery of references to secondary literature and seemingly no stone left unturned.

Being the second of Koole's projected three volumes on Isaiah 40-66, the present work has no introduction (that having been included in the volume on chapters 40-48, which appeared in 1997), but starts straight in at 49:1-6.

On the whole, Koole's commentary may be characterized as decidedly traditional, but not in any obscurantist sense. He accepts that with chapter 40 a new voice from the Babylonian exile is heard in Isaiah, but he is conscious too of the links between the various parts of the book as a whole. Beyond that, however, he argues in dialogue with the whole range of modern opinion in favor of the unity of 40-55. Thus, for instance, no major break is allowed, as some have maintained, between chapters 48 and 49, and similarly he rejects theories of redactional layering in the text, which have become widespread in recent years; even the unity of 50:10-11 with the remainder of chapter 50 is stoutly defended.

In terms of text and philology, too, Koole is highly conservative. Many proposals in both spheres have, of course, been advanced over the years, and not the least value of this commentary will be that Koole has collected and evaluated these with great diligence. His conclusions begin to become predictable, however, as time and again he defends the superiority of the Masoretic text. Caution is certainly welcome in this sphere, where sometimes in the past conjecture has been allowed to become rampant. Nevertheless, the fact of the matter is that we know from manuscript evidence that errors did sometimes occur in the course of textual transmission, and there are places where emendation, especially if it is supported by the ancient versions or the manuscripts of Isaiah from Qumran, may well be preferable to the defense of a reading where meaning can scarcely be extracted without special pleading. Similarly, there are occasions where the meaning of a Hebrew word may have been lost over the course of time and where comparison with related Semitic languages may be illuminating. Naturally, there are proper methods to be followed in this, and it is unfortunate that failure to attend to these in the past has given the exercise a bad name, but that should not prevent so cautious a scholar as Koole from appealing to it when it clarifies an obscurity. There are examples of both these approaches to the text where in my opinion Koole seems unnecessarily to sidestep any such departure from tradition.

Finally, the results of the exposition are also traditional. Not least, it may be noted that, very much against the tide of current scholarship, he defends an interpretation of the servant figure in (so far as this volume goes) 49:1-6, 50:4-9 and 52:13-53-53:12 as a future savior figure. This allows him, of course, also to ascribe these passages to the same author as the rest of the material.

Koole's commentary is not one, therefore, which breaks significant new ground, and in some respects this is no bad thing. It is likely to be valued most in the long run for the thoroughness with which it collects, categorizes and describes so much previous

scholarship. Even if his own conclusions are not always convincing, his work will serve as a major resource for anyone wanting to deal in detail with these significant chapters of Isaiah.
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Gerald L. Keown, Pamela J. Scalise, and Thomas G. Smothers, *Jeremiah 26-52. Word Biblical Commentary 27.* Dallas: Word, 1995

Philip J. King, *Jeremiah: An Archaeological Companion.* Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1993.

J. G. McConville, *Judgment and Promise: An Interpretation of the Book of Jeremiah.* Leicester, England/Winona Lake, IN: Apollos/Eisenbrauns, 1993.

William McKane, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah, volume 2, International Critical Commentary.* Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996

Beginning in the early 1980s, we witnessed a remarkable amount of scholarly interest in the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, which has shown no sign of abatement in recent years. The editor of this journal kindly asked me to review these four volumes as a sequel to my critique of developments on the study of Jeremiah since 1980 (see my "Recent Trends in The Study of Jeremiah," *Ashland Theological Journal* 25[1993], 75-95). There I summarized the new works in light of their contributions to five of the most important exegetical issues in Jeremiah: authorship and composition, historical background, the book's relationship to Deuteronomy, textual problems in Jeremiah, and theological contributions. This brief review provides an opportunity to supplement that presentation.

Two of the volumes under review here are companions to works reviewed in the 1993 article: McKane's International Critical Commentary volume 2 as well as the Word Biblical Commentary series second volume, which completes the work of Craigie, Kelley, and Drinkard (WBC 26, 1991). McKane's second volume gives him a venue for elaborating on his "rolling corpus" approach to Jeremiah, which puts him at variance with the regnant Duhm-Mowinckel source theory. The evidence from the second half of Jeremiah leads McKane to conclusions similar to the ones detailed in his volume 1. The corpus of texts in Jeremiah is "the product of a long growth extending into the post-exilic period" (p. clxxii). The prose of chapters 26-29 and 34-45 is, in McKane's view, a combination of a Baruch core and Deuteronomistic redaction. He believes that ancient principles determining the shape of prophetic books dictated the inclusion of promises of restoration and threats against foreign nations as essential constituents of such books (as in Isaiah 13-23 and Ezekiel 25-32 and elsewhere). Thus Jeremiah 30-33 (the Book of the Covenant) and 46-51 (oracles against the nations) were necessary to round out the "book" of Jeremiah. Such an approach complicates the view that these texts have close associations with Jeremiah himself, and McKane traces only isolated sayings to the sixth century BC. Like the rest of the book, these prophecies contributed to a literary and theological portrait of Jeremiah, which were intended to serve a wider religious function within the exilic and postexilic Jewish community. McKane concludes that the shorter text of the Septuagint is a witness to a more original Hebrew text than that of the Masoretic Tradition. As in the first volume, McKane intentionally eschews theological interpretation.

After the untimely death of Peter Craigie in 1988, the editors of the Word Biblical Commentary series decided to use multiple authors to complete his work on Jeremiah. Craigie's work in the first volume comprised the introduction and commentary on the

first seven chapters of Jeremiah. The second volume contains no new introduction materials, but completes the commentary proper (Scalise contributed the commentary for chapters 26-34, Keown for chapters 35-45 and 52, and Smothers for chapters 46-51). The authors are to be commended for providing a useful volume, fittingly dedicated to the memory of Professor Craigie, whose death at age 50 is still a distinct loss in the evangelical scholarly community. The inevitable degree of disjointedness in such a composite work is kept to a minimum and is not distracting from an otherwise useful commentary.

The impressive book by McConville addresses in particular one of the five exegetical issues related to interpreting Jeremiah, namely, its relationship to Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. Scholars are divided between those who see the book as essentially a Deuteronomistic product (the majority opinion among scholars), and those who see the book as coming largely from the prophet himself. McConville contends that "the characterization of Jeremiah as Deuteronomistic obscures its individuality and vitality, and retards rather than furthers the task of its elucidation" (p. 11). His compelling argument relies on the identification of a governing concept in the book, which organizes the diverse materials. The concept has the theology of new covenant at its center, and marks the book as distinct from the driving issues of the Deuteronomistic History. He believes further that the book was produced during the lifetime of the prophet himself through repeated communications with the exiles, perhaps in the context of the prophet's latter years. McConville combines a helpful summary of the scholarship on Jeremiah with a genuinely fresh approach, which all future interpreters of the book will need to address.

The volume by Philip King is a genuinely unique contribution. Rather than a commentary proper, the volume presents archaeological artifacts and texts of the late seventh and early sixth centuries BC in order to elucidate the text of the book of Jeremiah. Fortunately for those of us interested in Jeremiah, this period is one of the best attested periods in Israel's history. King's volume presents artifactual and inscriptional evidence touching on nearly every aspect of the daily life of Judah in Jeremiah's time. After brief chapters on the book of Jeremiah itself, its historical and geographical setting, the author systematically presents archaeological evidence on a variety of issues, including literacy, worship, funerary customs, agriculture and crafts. Richly illustrated, this volume is a welcome supplement to the many commentaries now available on Jeremiah, and will be especially useful to non-specialists in archaeology.

In sum, the intense scholarly interest devoted to the Book of Jeremiah has continued and these new volumes make their own unique contributions to the work.

Bill T. Arnold

Brian B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead: Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 400 pp., 1994.

The past decade or so has witnessed a remarkable recrudescence of interest in ancestor worship and the possibility of cults of the dead in the ancient Near East in general, and in early Israel in particular. The biblical evidence is scant and open to a variety of interpretations, which makes it difficult to place in its ancient Eastern context.

Whereas previous scholarship tended to deny the presence of ancestral worship in ancient Israel, it is now generally agreed that normative Yahwism battled against the practice of necromancy and other death rituals, such as self-laceration and offerings to deceased ancestors (see for example, Theodore J. Lewis, *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* [HSM 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989], and his distinction between the "Yahwism which became normative" and "popular religion," pages 1-2). As with such practices in the comparative cultures, it is generally assumed that Israelite cults of the dead sought to appease the dead or secure favors from them.

In this new research, something of a consensus has emerged. Ancestor worship in Egypt and Mesopotamia is generally well attested and was thought to be an effective way to gain the favor of the dead, who it was believed could either bestow blessings or act malevolently on behalf of the living. Based largely on re-evaluation of several important texts from Ugarit (which now appears to have had a vibrant cult of ancestor worship comparable to that in Mesopotamia and Egypt), the prevailing opinion is that on this topic, Israel shared a cultural continuity with her neighbors. It is now widely believed that early Israelite Yahwism borrowed many Canaanite motifs while rejecting others. Though early Yahwism is difficult to distinguish from Canaanite religion, a normative Yahwism gradually emerged, which is reflected in the prophetic and Deuteronomistic literature. This normative expression of Israelite religion consistently condemned ancestor worship and death rituals. Vestiges of ancestor worship and necromancy persisted in the textual witness (for example, 1 Samuel 28), which probably reflects on the veracity of these textual traditions because the editors would have sought to expunge such reflexes from the written record. The new scholarly consensus assumes an ongoing battle throughout Israel's history between normative Yahwism and practitioners of death rituals in the popular religion.

In the impressive monograph under review here, Brian Schmidt demurs. Schmidt believes interest in the dead developed first in the ancient Near East (especially the Neo-Assyrian empire), and entered Israel only in the late eighth and seventh centuries because of Assyrian influence.

This is a most impressive piece of scholarship, which analyzes biblical and extra-biblical texts from Ebla, Mari, Ugarit, Emar and others. Schmidt is adept at handling all of the languages required to do such research, and has produced an important volume, both for its innovative interpretation of the evidence, and for his extensive documentation and bibliography. With regard to Schmidt's particular arguments, I am drawn to much of his analysis of the earlier materials. He has demonstrated the precariousness of arguing for ancestral divination in ancient Israel based on the "gods of the fathers" references, and comparisons with Ebla and Ugaritic king lists. However, his treatment of the important text concerning Saul's necromancy at Endor (1 Samuel 28) leaves us less satisfied. He argues for its late or post-deuteronomistic origins as a means for discounting the practices described there in early Israel. I find such an assumption difficult to square with the way in which the traditions of the Deuteronomistic History were preserved and compiled.

In sum, this is a helpful and scholarly corrective to those who assume too much presence for ancestral worship and cults of the dead in early Israel. However, definitive answers to some of our questions will have to await future research on these extremely difficult texts.

Bill T. Arnold

Morna D. Hooker, *Beginnings: Keys that Open the Gospels*. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1997. 94 pp., paper, \$12.00.

Professor Hooker of Cambridge University presented the John Albert Hall lectures in Victoria, British Columbia. These lectures are the text of this book dedicated to analyzing each of the four "beginning" gospels of the New Testament. One might find this format to be a stimulating teaching series as we "begin" the new millennium. There is so much foreboding at the threshold of the new millennium and this could be a way of presenting the "good news" of the gospel in an interesting manner.

Each of the gospel introductions is described by the author as a "key" to unlocking its meaning. Luke's key does not do well unlocking the truth of John's gospel and vice-versa. Luke, for example, seems to be undecided about where and how he wants to begin...so he writes several introductions which bring us into the truth of his gospel. And, yet, each of these introductions by Luke have a link with one another that is important to explore. The link we discover is the key to the introduction of Luke's Acts of the Apostles.

One has the impression that this series of lectures is only a preliminary introduction to the reader's own study of the gospels. In this sense the book is quite attractive as it beckons one to read more and to think about what the "beginnings" say about the "endings."

"What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning"

T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets, Little Gidding V

Cliff Stewart, Abilene, Texas

T. Dwyer, *The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, 243 pp., \$58.50.

With this work, Dwyer presents a revised Aberdeen University Ph.D. dissertation on the meaning and significance of "wonder" and "amazement" in Mark.

Dwyer's thesis is that wonder and amazement in Mark signify a *necessary* and *engaged* response to divine intervention in creation, a response to God's all-encompassing Kingdom rule and salvation through Jesus (198). Wonder may reflect a positive response to - or rejection of - God's deeds in Jesus.

Following some reflections on methodology (Chapter 1), Dwyer sets out to explore the Greco-Roman (Chapter 2), Early Jewish (Chapter 3), and Early Christian (Chapter 4) concept of "wonder." The results are then compared (Chapter 7) with his comprehensive but not too detailed analysis of "wonder" in Mark (Chapters 5 and 6). His use of primary and secondary literature in these chapters is informed, and includes a substantial number of French and German works.

One or two comments on methodology are necessary before we evaluate the content of Dwyer's thesis.

Dwyer assumes literary dependency among the synoptic Gospels as well as Markan priority. He follows the redaction-critical approach and attempts to relate this methodology to narrative criticism. Dwyer still believes in the possibility of being able to separate tradition and redaction, the latter being primarily identified by Peabody's

'recurring phraseology' criterion. Identifying a motif in the narrative also follows a 'frequency' criterion (i.e. intentional) as well as the 'avoid ability' of the motif (i.e. the appearance of the motif in unlikely contexts; Freedman). Compared with classical redaction-critical works it becomes readily apparent, however, that Dwyer does not want to go through the meticulous rigors of *demonstrating* at each point whether he is dealing with redaction or tradition. Thus his redaction-critical comments often sound merely apodictic. Using both redaction criticism and narrative analysis, Dwyer hopes to pay attention to detail (redaction criticism) and the whole (narrative analysis). This sounds impressive. Only: the fact that Dwyer naively believes that a mere 'recurring phraseology' can be *purely* redactional and thus represents a creative *addition* to the material by the writer already sets him against the possibility that Mark may simply focus on the reliable report of a *historical phenomenon of wonder* among those who responded and reacted to Jesus. If that were so, then Mark's 'redaction' would have to give way to Mark favoring a particular historical motif (compare the *historical motif of Jesus' care for the outcast* in Luke), and nothing else! In that case, the word 'redaction' would be utterly misplaced (especially if one *really* understands the anthropocentric, Cartesian underpinnings of the thoroughly skeptical and ahistorical principles of 'redaction criticism' in the milieu of Troeltsch's historical criticism, Bultmann's form criticism and Marxsen's redaction criticism). The word 'compositional emphasis' would then be more appropriate. Is Dwyer aware of the fact that he walks hermeneutically over hot coals as he desires to present a tidy methodological *modus operandi*?

According to Dwyer, the motif of wonder is uncommon in *miracle stories* in Greco-Roman, early Jewish and early Christian literature (including divine-man literature [196]); infrequent in biographical literature and stories of esteemed teachers. Rather, in Greco-Roman literature, wonder flinctions in connection with "signs, portents, dreams or *divine interventions* in general" (196, italics HFB). They are not associated with miracle workers as such. Similarly, Jewish end-time expectation is that God would "'amaze' Israel" (cf. Hos 3:5; 196). At times "wonder" is associated with Messianic hopes.

Early Christian literature often indicates that wonder is "*a necessary* experience," (italics by the author; 197) conveying either a positive response or a form of rejection and may be part of taking notice of that which may lie beyond the natural, visible world (cf. Mk 5:33).

The synoptic comparison yields the observation that Mark uses the motif of 'wonder' "with an intensity, frequency and mystery that surpasses the other synoptics. The Markan use of wonder is continually softened by Matthew and Luke." (196). Dwyer shows that "wonder" is not so much an expression of disbelief and "defective response" as it is in various ways an *engagement* with the *surprise* caused by what Jesus does and says (contra Stacy, who identifies 'wonder' and 'fear' as defective responses to Jesus, Kelber, Wrede, and Kingsbury). 'Wonder' as a reaction comes from many different groups identified in Mark: "Reactions of wonder come from friend, enemy, Jew, Gentile, people, leaders, those 'on the way' and those opposed, as co-existent with faith and understanding, and as co-existent with murderous opposition. Wonder in Mark appears to be a multivalent motif which resists paradigms and simplified categories. If anything, the reaction is necessary and essential as God breaks in to rule and save with power." (198)

Dwyer ably shows that the motif of wonder (over God's surprising and awe-inspiring acts in Christ) continues through the passion narrative and thus indicates that God is still intervening in history by means of the *suffering* Messiah. The christological import of Dwyer's study focuses on the fact that "wonder" highlights Jesus as "the spirit-anointed agent of the kingdom" (199). With his rule, God breaks into the visible world by means of Jesus and thus triggers "wonder."

Despite his tentative methodology, Dwyer draws attention to a motif which definitely plays an important part in Mark's narrative. Dwyer's thematic contribution to 'wonder in Mark' is convincing and theologically helpful.

Corrigenda:

1. Franz Mussner, not Müssner! (e.g., p. 19 fn 24; p. 216; 241)
2. p. 214: Linnemann: "Der wiedergefundene Markusschluss"
3. p. 28, fn.6: Barry Blackburn's Ph.D. thesis was published as *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Tradition*. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991
4. p. 28, line 3 from bottom: (1986)
5. p. 213, line 4 from bottom: IO.1?17-31'
6. p. 141 n. 203 *Verklärungserzählung*
7. p. 200, fn. 1: ...für den neutestamentlichen Begriff...
8. p. 202 "Mark's story is indeed a story"

Hans F. Bayer, Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis

Rebecca I. Denova, *The Things Accomplished Among Us. Prophetic Tradition in the Structural Pattern of Luke-Acts* JSNTSup 141, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

In this work, Rebecca Denova argues that, the view that Luke used the Scriptures of Israel strictly as an apologetic device flounders over the problem of Luke's continued use of the prophetic tradition for a story that would have had no relevance to his Gentile church community. Denova views her work as innovative in part because it focuses on the structure of Luke-Acts in relation to prophetic fulfillment and not simply the content of Luke-Acts. She argues that "what has been significantly overlooked in studies of Luke's 'fulfillment of prophecy' is that all the events which involve Jesus and the community are eschatological events, manifesting the literal fulfillment of prophetic oracles concerning 'the last days.'" That is, all the events prophesied for "the last day" have been accomplished among us.' The prophets are not fulfilled in the light of the "church" or "Christianity" but in the light of what was promised to Israel in the Scriptures (p.20). Previous treatments of the "fulfillment of prophecy" do not account for the place of Acts 16-28 in Luke's use of the Scriptures of Israel, and Denova considers this lacuna unsatisfactory. For Luke, much of the "fulfillment of prophecy" can only take place in the story of the disciples in Acts. In fact, the validity of Jesus' claim to messiahship is inadequate without the events narrated in Acts. Luke used scriptural typology throughout Luke-Acts, rewriting the story of Jesus and the early Church in light of the story of Israel. Luke's use of the Scriptures should not be limited to explicit citations, which would leave most of the last half of Acts without any scriptural

component. In fact, it is a "fundamental misconception" according to Denova, to imagine that scriptural content and structure has fallen away in the second half of Acts (p.24).

Denova approaches Luke-Acts through narrative criticism. It is necessary to ask about the structure and content of the text before asking questions about genre or history. She argues that it is necessary to find the relationship between the prophetic tradition which Luke claims is fulfilled, and the unified narrative of Luke-Acts. Establishing this unified narrative requires identifying the structural pattern of the entirety of Luke-Acts. Denova contends that the view that Luke-Acts reflects a shift from the first Jewish disciples to a Gentile church which the Jews oppose is without warrant in Luke-Acts. She argues that the combination of a "prophetic structural pattern and biblical typology" illustrates the author's point of view, which is the same in both the Gospel and Acts (p.25).

The bulk of the book traces this prophetic tradition and its relation to the sequence of events in Luke-Acts through a narrative-critical reading. This differs from other treatments of the "fulfillment" motif in Luke-Acts which generally focus on direct citations with citation formulas. Luke's grand design for the structural pattern of his two-volume work was to continue the story of Israel into the life of Jesus and his followers" (p.26). Denova argues that the structural pattern Luke used for Luke-Acts came from the text of Isaiah. The author of Luke-Acts employed three main literary devices to show the relationship between events in the story: scriptural citation, biblical typology, and narrative parallelism. Denova develops this relationship most fully in chapter 3. Denova argues that for Luke, every event fulfills the Scriptures of Israel in some way, with or without a citation. Denova argues that a type may be present if there is a coincidence between events in Luke's narrative and parallel passages in the Scriptures of Israel. One isolated instance does not show typology. Also, the context in Luke-Acts should have an association with the context of the parallel passage. The proposed typology in Luke-Acts also must demonstrate a relationship between the message of Luke-Acts and the parallel passage. The rejection scenes in Luke-Acts are clearly typological. Denova concludes that allusions to the Scriptures of Israel link the community to Israel in both Luke and Acts. Luke's theological understanding of the Scriptures of Israel and how he reads them is consistent from Luke's Gospel to Acts. Denova seeks to show that Luke-Acts reflects the work of a Jewish author presenting arguments to other Jews that the prophets have been "fulfilled," rather than reflecting a second century "Gentile Christianity."

Denova argues that Luke 4:16-30 serves an important role overlooked by scholars. Most scholars view it as programmatic for the initial rejection of Jesus and later the rejection of the Jews. Robert Brawley suggests that it legitimates Jesus. Denova argues that this passage is a "programmatic model for the legitimation of all God's agents in Luke-Acts," which she develops in chapters 4 (Luke) and 5 (Acts). This passage is not merely about rejection but describes how the entire story in Luke-Acts unfolds. This passage shows that the inclusion of the Gentiles does not involve the exclusion of the Jews, as this would be "inconsistent with prophetic tradition" (p.153). This positive evaluation of Luke-Acts vis-a-vis the Jews is convincing and commendable. Denova continues tracing elements in Luke 4:16-30 in Paul's activities in Acts, focusing on the eschatological themes of the inclusion of the Gentiles, the rejection of the unrepentant (both Jewish and Gentile non-believers) and the restoration of Zion. Denova concludes

that Luke created the portrait of Paul in Acts through the use of prophetic types, especially Jonah, the rejected prophet.

Some readers will be disappointed with Denova's evaluation of Luke as an historian. She argues that all the historical details in Luke-Acts exist only to show the relation between prophetic oracles and events in the lives of Jesus and his early followers. Luke is not trying at all to present a coherent chronological account. Historical data serve a narrative function and Luke has no interest in them as historical information. This dichotomy Denova has created is unnecessary. In chapter 2, she describes the genre of Luke-Acts as "typological history." Her view is similar to Goulder's and open to the same objections.

Nevertheless, those interested in the use of the Scriptures of Israel in Luke-Acts, the "fulfillment of prophecy" motif identified by many in Luke-Acts, and critical questions of genre, dating, author and audience will want to read this book. Readers will be aided by Denova's fresh approach to old problems through a narrative-critical approach and her treatment of subjects without assuming the consensus on many issues. Her study departs from previous treatments of the "fulfillment of prophecy" motif such as those of Rese and Bock, by focusing on the narrative structure of Luke-Acts and on "intertextual" features beyond direct quotations of the Scriptures of Israel to understand Luke's notion of "fulfillment". Denova has made a helpful, engaging contribution to Luke-Acts scholarship.

Kenneth D. Litwak, University of Bristol

Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John, A Theological Commentary*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

In his preface Herman Ridderbos states that his interest is in presenting a "theological exegesis of the Gospel, that is, in dealing with the significance of the gospel message that the Evangelist had in view as he wrote" (p. xiii).

Interested readers of the Fourth Gospel can be grateful to Ridderbos for both this intention and its achievement in this lengthy, stimulating and satisfying commentary.

Eschewing treatment of the plethora of preliminary questions that cluster around study of this gospel Ridderbos begins by presenting a sustained examination of the "Peculiar Character of the Fourth Gospel." He adroitly addresses the issue of the relationship between history and revelation with respect to the questions of authorship and the narrow focus of the gospel on Christology concluding that, "The point at issue is always what Jesus said and did in his self-disclosure on earth, but it is transmitted in its lasting validity with the independence of an apostle who was authorized to speak by Jesus and endowed with the promise of the Spirit" (p. 16).

From this starting point/conclusion the commentary proceeds to elucidate with insight John's account of Jesus. Taking this concern seriously produces an exposition focused on answering the question "Who is Jesus?" The result is an account that takes the historical person of Jesus seriously (but not naively so) and one that keeps in focus the stated historical purpose of Jesus' coming--to bring life through his sacrificial death. On both counts there is enormous benefit for the reader.

Ridderbos' concern to exegete in line with the stated purpose of the gospel is welcome in that he takes the author's own statement in John 20:31 seriously; although

the understanding of that purpose may be more evangelistic than Ridderbos allows.

In the midst of so much scholarly material concerning the gospel it is refreshing to read a commentary that is focused on the text and keeps secondary literature discussions to a minimum. Having said this, Ridderbos is not unaware of the contemporary scholarship and interacts judiciously affording insight into European scholarship in particular. Perhaps due to the date of the commentary there is a lack of interaction with more modern literary approaches--one suspects to the detriment of the exposition at points; although Ridderbos' generally 'relaxed' approach to issues of structure will be appreciated by many who find the intricacies of some such analyses difficult to follow.

The many issues in Johannine theology are not ignored but dealt with along the way, again in succinct and insightful fashion, with a final collection of statements addressing issues of authorship and the presence of a Johannine 'circle'.

Various extended discussions of topics occur along the way--notably on the various possible interpretations of John 6, the problem of the identity of the Jews, Flesh and Spirit, The Paraclete--but one wishes that even more such discussions and syntheses were present.

For all its theological intention, the format of the commentary with its measured procession through the text leaves some important theological themes embedded in piecemeal fashion through the exposition when the reader may have benefitted from a gathering together of material and more extended theological reflection.

Two areas come immediately to mind. The nature of the 'kosmos' and the nuanced portrait offered in the gospel concerning the interaction and relationships between the Father, Son and kosmos is worthy of further sustained reflection. So, also, is the question of the tension between the notions of 'determinism/predestination' and 'belief' in the Gospel. Ridderbos seems uneasy with any notion of predestination in John but it is difficult to get a grasp on the whole of this thought on this particular topic due to the scattered nature of the comments.

There are other issues and themes that could have had similar treatment but perhaps we wait in hope for a Johannine theology to explore these at greater length?

We are in the debt of both Ridderbos and his translator for a weighty addition to the ever expanding body of literature on John's Gospel. One leaves this commentary thankful for a careful exposition focused around the question--Who is Jesus?; an exposition which allows the text to speak on its own terms, giving the reader food for thought and the preacher much to say.

W.H. Salier, Moore Theological College, Newton, Australia

Ajith Fernando, *The NIV Application Commentary: Acts*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1998. 464 pp., \$24.99.

The author of this commentary, a graduate of Asbury and Fuller theological seminaries, lives and works in a missionary situation as National Director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka. As an Asian theologian he has a rich experience on which to draw when he seeks to expound the contemporary significance of the book of Acts. What we have is a missionary commentary on a missionary book. So very early on when he deals

with the opening verses of the book we get a discussion of truth and postmodernism [58-63] a theme we return to more than once. He shows particular interest in evangelism and what he calls 'follow-through care' of converts and various aspects of the leadership of believers. He suggests that 'the biggest crisis facing the evangelical church today is a spiritually weak leadership' and quotes with approval a dictum of Spurgeon's about the need for people who 'talk in scriptural language' [176]. He also addresses issues in relation to non-Christian religions, for example, the difficulties Jews, Muslims and Buddhists have with the crucifixion of Christ.

The structure of this series of commentaries consists of an exposition of the original meaning of the text, a section headed 'bridging contexts', and then a third section on contemporary significance. Fernando confesses that he does not find this format congenial and that he struggles to contain his exposition within the appropriate categories. He would have preferred to integrate the three sections into one discussion. This becomes evident when for example the same topic is addressed in both the bridging section and that on contemporary significance (so baptism in the Holy Spirit), or when the question, Are signs and wonders for today? is addressed in a bridging section.

In his exposition of the original meaning Fernando draws on the arguments of Ramsay, Bruce and Hemer to argue that the book of Acts is historically reliable. There is little room here given to German scepticism. The Gospels were also 'written as history' and one of the most important responses we can make to pluralism with its relativism and subjective views of truth is to point to 'the evidence for the objective historicity of the Gospels'. Although the author regrets that he had inadequate access to journals writing in Sri Lanka, he nevertheless gives an excellent guide to the literature with which he is in sympathy. At the same time he is prepared to go beyond respected evangelical teachers such as Fee and Stott and argue that narratives can embody Christian principles for today even when the text does not explicitly say so. He concedes that this hermeneutic needs to be employed cautiously [39-40, 556].

There are weak passages in the exposition from time to time. For example he works with a single messianic expectation among the Jews but it is now clear that there was a spectrum of differing views [e.g. *Judaisms and Their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era*, ed. Jacob Neusner et al Cambridge University Press 1987]. On Peter's speech in Acts 2 he does not comment on the moment when Jesus was made Lord and Christ [v.36] and what this implies about his messianic status before this. He makes no reference to the 'missing words' of 8:36-37. While he has some important comments on contextualisation in relation to Paul's speech to the Areopagus he does not expound the significance of the words Paul quoted from the Greek poets [17:28]. In fact he clearly attributes more importance to the significance of the text for today than to the exposition of its original meaning. At the same time he comes out with striking phrases such as 'suffering in an aspirin age' [157-59] and he has some excellent comments of the 'no other name' text of 4:12 [163-66]. He may take an unpopular line in arguing that the early church was right to share resources [182-85] but we probably could have been spared his notes on a talk about biblical unity [185-89].

So a mixed bag: some excellent discussions of the relevance of Acts for mission and evangelism today but readers seeking more detailed exposition of the text will need to refer to some of the commentaries Fernando used.

Arthur Rowe, Spurgeon's College, London

Howard Clark Kee, *To Every Nation under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles (The New Testament in Context)*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.
Paul W. Walaskay, *Acts (Westminster Bible Companion)*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

Kee and Walaskay have both produced commentaries for the general reader. Kee's commentary is part of the series "The New Testament in Context," which emphasizes sociological analysis of New Testament documents. Kee begins with a brief overview of "introductory" issues, such as the origins of Acts, the theology and genre of Acts, and the main emphases of the commentary. According to Kee, the focus of the commentary is on "meaning in the historical context rather than on the modern quest for what is perceived to be objective historical factuality" (p. 13). Kee bases this focus on the view that what is important in analyzing an historical document is its intended meaning, not the certainty of the events it records. So, Kee aims to "consider the various facets of the context in which the writer and his initial readers lived and thought: the religious assumptions, the political framework and structures of power, and above all the sociocultural features of the author and the initially intended readers" (p. 13). After briefly noting traditional and recent views on the authorship of Acts, Kee states that the primary focus of his commentary is on the "special aims, concepts and strategy of its author, rather than on his identity" (p. 2). Kee follows this with a brief section on the history of the interpretation of Acts, highlighting the benefits available from sociocultural analysis of Acts, while criticizing the work of some scholars for trying to force the data into artificial categories like "honor and shame." In asking about "Acts as history," Kee argues that what is of paramount importance when reading an historical work is not to ask, "Is this what really happened?" but, "What meaning is this report seeking to convey?" (P. 13). Kee argues that the genre of Acts is apologetic historiography, with some influence from ancient romances as well. Kee then summarizes the theology of Acts, including brief sections on "The Sovereign God," "Jesus the Messiah," "The Holy Spirit," and "The New People of God."

The commentary itself has a straightforward format. The text of a portion of Acts is given, followed by a summary of the passage, most valuable for the geographical, historical or linguistic details Kee supplies. The translation Kee provides for commentary is idiosyncratic at times, and Kee does not alert the reader when he deviates significantly from more standard translations. Along with this, Kee refers to specific verses in his commentary, but since he provides no verse numbers in his translation, the reader either needs to have the verse numbers memorized or must consult another translation to follow Kee's discussion. Following the commentary Kee supplies a select bibliography, divided into multiple sections, such as "Historical and Sociological Method" and "Paul in Acts" (pp. 338-44) plus indexes of scriptural references, ancient and modern authors and subjects. The bibliography seems generally balanced in the perspective of the works cited, if somewhat modest. Kee also provides additional references in the endnotes.

Although Kee's avowed approach would make for an interesting commentary, he rarely addresses the aims, concepts or strategy of the author. He notes on occasion that the author has crafted his narrative to show that the Way is still part of Judaism and therefore lawful to the Romans and that Christians are no threat to the Roman

government. Beyond this, most of the concepts that may be present in Acts are treated briefly at best. When Kee does treat a concept, he includes material from outside of Acts, including material that post-dates Acts by over a century. Kee does occasionally seek to inject sociological observations into the discussion, noting especially occasions where the church is pictured as unified or when something threatens that unity. Kee repeatedly describes baptism as a rite by which one enters the community of believers, but never addresses its relation to repentance or faith. After attacking those with a different approach to social-scientific criticism, one would expect Kee to do more in the way of presenting an alternative approach that is not so reductionistic.

The best part of the work are the numerous excurses sprinkled throughout the commentary, especially in the section dealing with Paul's third missionary journey where Kee provides geographical descriptions for every city to which Paul traveled. These excurses range from the first, which focuses on the meaning of "apostle" everywhere in the NT except Acts (p. 32), to one on Paul's lodging in Rome (p. 297).

In one excursus, Kee argues that when Luke states that the apostles were gathered in Acts 1, "fully devoted" to prayer (*proseuche*), this actually refers not to the act of prayer but to the place of prayer (pp. 37-38). Many of the excurses, such as the geographical descriptions, are similar to what may be found in a basic Bible dictionary. Others deal with more theological or historical issues, such as the make-up of the Sanhedrin or the issue of the pre-70 A.D. synagogue.

These features make it difficult to determine for whom this book is written. On the one hand, the book assumes the reader is knowledgeable in New Testament studies—including, e.g., an understanding of what is meant by the "Q tradition." The commentary, however, largely restates what the text of Acts already says. Thus, Kee does not really add significantly to a basic understanding of Acts. Were it not for the specialized knowledge presumed, this would be most suitable for a beginning student or non-scholar wishing to understand Acts better.

Paul Walaskay states at the outset of his work that it is for interested lay persons, like Bible study leaders. This volume is part of the Westminster Bible Companion series, a series intended to "help the laity of the church read the Bible more clearly and intelligently" (p. Xi). In keeping with this intended audience, Walaskay avoids technical jargon. Instead, he explains exegetical issues in a simple manner and often offers practical applications or devotional thoughts along the way. The commentary uses the NRSV for a translation, which Walaskay augments by noting when the translation is inadequate or when important textual questions come up, such as at Acts 20:28.

Walaskay begins his commentary with an introduction that covers basic questions like, Who wrote Acts? When was Acts written? To whom was Acts addressed? In addition to these basic questions, the introduction raises other, more contemporary matters. For example, Walaskay discusses the purpose of Acts with regard to Luke's apparent anti-Semitism (pp. 14-16). There is also a section in the introduction entitled "The Book of Acts in the Lives of Contemporary Christians" (p. 21).

The commentary takes a straightforward approach. First, there is a block of the text of Acts (with verse numbers!). Then, Walaskay provides an explanation of this section. While Walaskay's interpretations of each passage are not detailed exegesis, they are in general more informative about the meaning of the text than Kee's. Walaskay generally incorporates scholarly discussion within the course of the commentary but

occasionally treats important matters in a separate section, similar to Kee's excurses. For example, Walaskay provides "Some Concluding Observations regarding Luke's Narrative and Paul's Recollection of the First Christian Council" (pp. 150-51). Walaskay suggests that, rather than the two most common solutions to the apparent differences between Acts and Paul's letters, it may be best to see the two accounts as both "ancient, authoritative and sometimes conflicting" (p. 150). Most probably the "real Paul lies somewhere between Paul's self-disclosures and Luke's portrait" (p. 151).

Walaskay concludes the commentary with a very short bibliography that is not as balanced as Kee's. Unlike Kee's commentary, there are no indexes or endnotes. While this lack may be explained on the basis of the intended audience, the commentary could be helped by having at least an index of subjects. This would be an aid to the Bible study leaders for whom the commentary series is designed.

Along the way, Walaskay discusses important topics in critical scholarship on Acts. For example, in treating Acts 2, Walaskay discusses the source of Peter's speech, Luke's use and creation of speeches and the use and creation of speeches in accounts of the past in Hellenistic times in general (pp. 36-38). Walaskay's discussion of speeches provides an example of just how "contemporary" he seeks to be. This is certainly the first treatment of the speeches of Acts based on the analogy of soap operas that I know of. Such references do, however, somewhat limit the audience for this commentary on cultural grounds.

Walaskay has set himself the task of explaining the text of Acts to educated lay persons, particularly those who are Bible study leaders. He has achieved that goal, while neither ignoring completely important critical issues nor getting involved in overly-technical discussions outside the intention of the commentary. As such this could be a helpful book for group study. Some readers, however, will want a commentary that has a more positive appraisal of Luke as an historian, such as I. Howard Marshall's Tyndale commentary on Acts. Others may find Walaskay's discussions of critical matters, such as ancient speeches, irrelevant. Educated lay persons who want to be aware of these sorts of issues will find this a helpful commentary.

Given the fairly general nature of both commentaries, Kee's and Walaskay's, readers would probably do better with Walaskay's commentary for understanding Acts. Those who want to go into depth on Acts and fully engage critical issues will need to look elsewhere.

Kenneth D. Litwak

Ivoni Richter Reimer, *Women in the Acts of the Apostles. A Feminist Liberation Perspective.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995.

Going beyond the observation, which others have made, that Acts has a focus on the role of women in the early church, Ivoni Richter Reimer seeks to analyze what Luke says and does not say about women in the book of Acts. After an introduction which outlines the author's perspective and aims, there follow chapters on individual, named women in Acts as well as a chapter on women mentioned briefly or not at all in Acts. This is followed by a summary practical application of the results. Through the stories of women and their struggles in Acts, the author desires that women and men in the present will be inspired and strengthened "in their struggle against oppression and for liberation" (p. 267). It is evident from many such statements throughout the book that the author

wishes her book to be much more than simply academic research.

Richter Reimer seeks to reconstruct the stories of women in Acts from the perspective of Latin American liberation theology and “its clarification through feminist liberation theology” (xix). Richter Reimer gives three reasons to examine the “women” passages in Acts. First the stories and experiences of women in Acts are of particular interest to Latin American liberation theology. Second, up until this book, there has been no thoroughgoing study of the “women” passages in Acts. Third, Acts was chosen because “women, then as now, have a central position in those churches or base communities... (xix). This book is a commentary on the passages which speak of women in Acts. It is not a verse-by-verse commentary as such, but deals with issues specific to the women in the narrative. Richter Reimer focuses particularly on those points at which she finds the “dominant exegesis” unsatisfactory, i.e., interpretations which are patriarchal, oppressive or which diminish or omit the role of women in the narrative and in early Christianity. For example, New Testament exegesis has neglected women’s “material” work. In fact, one “gets the impression that women were constantly shoved into the ‘sacred’ niche in the patriarchal family and taken care of by their men” (xx).

Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) is the subject of chapter 1. Richter Reimer argues that Sapphira, while not free of guilt, is not guilty of the same sin as Ananias. Richter Reimer first seeks to show what the sins of Ananias and the sin of Sapphira were. After a lengthy treatment of common property within the first Christian community, the author concludes that the property being sold belonged to Sapphira, for otherwise, she would not have to be involved in the sale. Ananias’ sin involved deception in keeping back part of the price of the money, violating the well-being of the community. Sapphira, while guilty of sin, is guilty of a different sin. She was an accomplice to Ananias, but her sin was in not exposing Ananias’ sin, not for agreeing with Ananias to keep back part of the price. Rather than seeking the help and protection of the community, Sapphira acceded to the “violence of a patriarchal marriage that in fact was already overcome, or should have been overcome, within the community of the saints” (15). Sapphira’s “guilty shared knowledge can only exist in the presence of degenerate structures of power...” (15).

In chapter 2, Richter Reimer argues that the story of Dorcas’ revivification is not merely to show Peter as a wonder worker but also to present Dorcas as a role model. She argues further that commentators err in viewing Dorcas as nothing more than a widow making garments. She also participates in spreading the good news, as a committed follower (disciple). Richter Reimer includes a lengthy discussion of views regarding resurrection in early Judaism and Christianity as context for the kind of miracle performed by Peter, which was not a resurrection.

The treatment of Lydia, discussed in chapter 3, is much different from the dominant exegesis of Acts 16. First, Richter Reimer argues that proseuche elsewhere in Greek literature and inscriptions regularly means “synagogue.” She asserts therefore that this usage is also present in Acts 16, and that it is only out of patriarchal ideology that commentators refuse to acknowledge proseuche as a synagogue (90). The author also argues that those who sold purple cloth generally made the purple cloth as well, and suggests that Lydia, far from being part of the upper class, was doing a job despised by the upper class as “dirty.” Instead, Lydia worked alongside other women in her house and managed to make a subsistence living with them.

The mantic slave girl of Acts 16 is wrongly treated by the dominant exegesis as being liberated by Paul. After discussing the manumission of slaves and property rights of slave owners, Richter Reimer argues that it is inappropriate to view the spirit of Python as an evil spirit or demon. Paul's exorcism bears little resemblance to exorcisms by Jesus or by others in Acts. Having Paul cast out the spirit means that the slave girl's lot in life is now made worse because she is now of no value to her masters.

Just as the dominant exegesis has downplayed the importance of Lydia in the synagogue and in the house church in her home, so too has it downplayed the importance of Priscilla. Commentators on the whole acknowledge Aquila as a tent maker and a companion in Paul's ministry but downplay or omit Priscilla. Richter Reimer shows how the Western text has relegated Priscilla to Aquila's shadow and argues that scholars have implicitly done the same.

Richter Reimer provides much valuable socio-historical background for Acts. Contrary to this reviewer's fears, the book is not a sustained attack on Luke for being too patriarchal, though there are such elements in Richter Reimer's analysis. Instead she focuses on the "dominant exegesis" of passages and seeks to show how the dominant exegetical tradition has downplayed or omitted the significance of women in the Acts of the Apostles. The book also has many detailed discussions of issues that illuminate the first century milieu of Acts. At the same time, however, these discussions are often not integrated into the analysis of the narrative of Acts. There are also questions to be asked for further research. For example, how does the judgment by Richter Reimer that Acts is "androcentric" and "patriarchal" relate to the narrative and theological aims of Luke? Why did Luke include a given story about anyone in Acts? So Richter Reimer's analysis needs to ask questions about women in Acts in the larger context of what the purpose of Acts is—an issue she does not address. Kenneth Litwak, Malpitas, CA

W. E. Mills and R. F. Wilson, Eds. *Acts and Pauline Writings*. (Mercer Commentary on the Bible, Vol. 7). Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997. Lxxx+291, pp. \$18.95.

Professors and students engaged in teaching and studying "Acts and Pauline Epistles" will be greatly interested in taking a closer look at Volume 7 of *Mercer Commentary on the Bible* (originally published in 1995). Despite the title of the series, the work consists of both brief commentaries on Acts and the individual books of the *corpus Paulinum* as well as relevant articles ranging from such entries as "Apostle/Apostleship", "Church", "Faith", "Hellenistic World", "Justification", "Wessections", to "Women in the NT". The collection of brief articles and commentaries are reprints from the *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible* and the *Mercer Commentary on the Bible* respectively.

It is the merit of such a book to bring a vast area of study together in one book. The *articles* promise that specialists in various areas (such as D. Aune on "Hellenistic World") will offer a concise and well-informed introduction to the student. Some articles disappoint, however. The entry on "Faith" is too brief and undifferentiated to be theologically helpful. The author (Wayne Ward) presents a shallow understanding of the Reformed view of faith, then claims that faith is a "free acceptance" of God's gift,

i.e. the human “response affirming the work of God”, only to state as a “paradox” later that a human being is “enabled to believe” by the grace of God (p. xxxii; one wonders about the exact nature of Ward’s anthropology). Likewise, the egalitarian view with regard to roles of “Women in the New Testament” (Molly Marshall, pp. lxxvi-lxxx) is not compared with the complementarian reading of the same data. The *commentaries* serve as useful initial introductions to the content of Acts and Pauline epistles. At times, however, they run the risk of merely retelling the contents present in the New Testament in order to maintain brevity.

One methodological note must suffice before we proceed to a general assessment of the book. Having been exposed to - and lived in - the milieu of German historical-critical study for over two decades, the present reviewer frequently observes insufficient *critical assessment* of so-called “critical scholarship.”

In conclusion, the following impression remains: The keen and alert professor will want to “pick the raisins” out of the above mentioned *Dictionary* and *Bible Commentary* and complement them with other significant *journal* articles on key issues relevant to Acts and Pauline Letters. He will reference to diverse and *leading commentaries* wrestling with the literary, historical, and theological issues; he will use relevant *articles* from various *dictionaries* (including the *IVP Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* as well as the *IVP Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*) and thus develop a course that is continuously updated and also reflects diverse theological insights. Despite the merit which the present work possesses, it appears too “ready made” (and in part deficient) to engage the student in genuine literary, historical and theological issues raised by the study of Acts and Pauline epistles.

Pedagogically, it would be useful to include a detailed integrative chart (see only the very brief chart on p. 1x), relating Acts, Pauline chronology and Pauline epistles to each other. Furthermore, for a work such as this, an index would be helpful.

Hans F. Bayer

Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Nashville, TN: John Knox Press, 1997.

Richard Hays, Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, maintains the strong tradition of the Interpretation series of Bible Commentaries. These are commentaries designed for teaching and preaching purposes. Research background includes serious biblical scholarship with an eye for contemporary application. A knowledge of Greek and Hebrew is not required for understanding the commentary’s interpretation. This particular commentary would be appreciated by both the Sunday School teacher and the Sunday morning preacher.

One discovers quickly in this commentary that the author has an interesting view of sociocultural norms and practices of the time. Hays is able to identify thematic links through the sometimes rambling directions of Paul’s writing.

Each major section of the commentary has a portion entitled: “Reflections for Teachers and Preachers.” The well written comments allow interpreters of the passage to use the text as a mirror in which one can find one’s own reflection. For example Hays sees the text of Paul’s letter challenging our habit of thinking of ministry as a “profession” and therefore distorting our concept of the church and our role in it. “Are

we using the church as though it were ours, or as though it were an instrument for the advancement of our own careers or causes? If so, we need to be reminded that the church belongs to God, and that it is God's project, not ours. Are we treating church-building as a business or a competitive sport? If so, we are boasting in something other than the gospel."

Individual commentaries in an particular series of commentaries are likely to stand out as exceptional. You might agree with this reviewer that this commentary on First Corinthians is one of the best in the Interpretation Series. Cliff Stewart

J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians, A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible 33A, New York: Doubleday, 1997, 614 pp. + xxiv.

The letter to the Galatians touches on so many issues central to Pauline studies and the Christian life—the place of the law, justification by faith, the origin and essence of Paul's gospel, the role of the Holy Spirit, and how believers are to live. J. Louis Martyn, Edward Robinson Professor Emeritus of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, has provided us with an excellent commentary on the letter and insightful discussion of the key themes.

The 614-page volume is much more than a commentary. Martyn gives us 52 essays on selected themes as well as his own translation of the entire letter. In many ways, the essays are the most useful and important part of the book. Through these extended comments, Martyn skillfully immerses the reader into his interpretation of the life setting and drama behind Galatians. Martyn is an outstanding writer and explains the difficult and complex themes with clarity.

Martyn contends that Paul wrote the letter after the Jerusalem Council to the churches he planted in the ethnic territory of Galatia, which would include the cities of Ankyra, Tavium, and Pessinus. There were no synagogues and no Jews in this region; the churches consisted strictly of Gentiles. Shortly after Paul left, a group of Messianic-Jewish evangelists who had some connection with Jerusalem paid a visit to these churches. These Torah-observant Christians subverted what Paul had taught by insisting that the Galatian Gentiles needed to embrace and observe the law, starting with circumcision. They argued that there was no conflict between Christ and the law, he came to fulfill it. Appalled by the sinful lifestyle of these Gentile believers, "the Teachers" insisted that the Torah was their principal ally in subduing the evil inclination ("the flesh").

Martyn argues that Paul wrote in response to the impact these teachers had on these fledgling Christian communities. Much of what Paul wrote, Martyn contends, was in direct response to the content of what they taught.

I find much of Martyn's reconstruction quite convincing. Unfortunately, Martyn does not interact with some of the best of recent scholarship defending a "south Galatia" view (that Paul writes to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe) that typically leads to a date for the letter prior to the Jerusalem Council. He ignores the important monograph of Colin Hemer (*The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History [1989]*) and is aware of Stephen Mitchell's volume (*Anatolia [1993]*; see also his *ABD* entry on "Galatia"), but does not interact with his arguments. One may now also find

an able defense of the south Galatia view in Ben Witherington's commentaries on Acts and Galatians. Further consideration of this proposal could lead Martyn out of the quandary he faces in having to say that Paul suppresses certain dimensions of the Jerusalem proceedings (p. 208) and shapes his account quite extensively (p. 209).

As is well known from Martyn's other writings, he interprets Paul's gospel in terms of apocalyptic. Rather than focusing on the *parousia* as the high point of God's apocalyptic triumph (as J. C. Becker), Martyn emphasizes the cross of Christ, which marks God's liberating invasion of the present evil age. Jesus' death was the powerful deed that freed us from captivity to the evil powers of this age. There is much to be said for Martyn's explanation of apocalyptic.

Martyn is quite sympathetic to many of the features of the "New Perspective." He attempts to refute the Reformed perspective on Deut 27:26 (cited in Gal 3:10) whereby it is claimed that anyone who disobeys even the smallest detail of the law is under a curse. The impotence of the law, Martyn contends, is not in human inability to keep the whole of the law without stumbling, but rather the inability of the law to bring justification and life. Essentially, Paul's quarrel with the law is that it is not God's elected means of setting things right and supplying the Spirit. He thus travels far down the road with E. P. Sanders in viewing Christ as the solution and then reasoning back to the plight of humanity (contra F. Thielman).

I find Martyn's translation of *dikaioó* as "to rectify" (and thus, "rectified" and "rectification") unsatisfying. Granted, "justification" language comes with a load of theological baggage to contemporary readers, but given the long history of usage of term, it cannot be jettisoned altogether. "Rectify" comes with its own contemporary set of usages that are not altogether congruent with our Greek term.

This is an outstanding commentary and will have a significant impact on the course of scholarship on Galatians. Because of the clarity and readability, it will be quite helpful to students. Clinton E. Arnold, Talbot School of Theology

Terence Donaldson, *Paul and the Gentiles: Remapping the Apostle's Convictional World*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997, xvii + 409 pp.

How can we explain Paul's desire to engage in a mission to the Gentiles? For most readers of this journal, the answer to that question will seem self-evident. Paul believed that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, were "sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving his displeasure" (to quote the membership vows of many Presbyterian churches). The insight that Gentiles could be rescued from this situation by faith in Christ came to Paul at his conversion on the road to Damascus when God called him to go "far away to the Gentiles" and preach the gospel (Acts 22:21).

In this provocative monograph, Terence Donaldson argues that this traditional understanding of Paul's mission to the Gentiles is wrong. Instead, both before and after his conversion, the pattern of Paul's convictions about the Gentiles follows closely a pattern that we find in Jewish literature from Paul's period: Gentiles who wanted to escape the eschatological wrath of God were required to become Jewish proselytes. The only major difference between the pattern of Paul's convictions about the Gentiles before and after the Damascus event was that prior to his conversion the boundary

marker for God's people had been the Jewish law, but now the boundary marker was Christ.

What prompted Paul to view Christ and the Jewish law as mutually exclusive boundary markers? What caused him, somewhat inconsistently, to maintain even after his conversion that the distinction between Jew and Gentile remained important? The answer to both questions lies in the eschatological expectations of the early Christians, including Paul. Paul believed that in Christ the final age had dawned and that Christ would return shortly. When he returned, only those who believed in him would be saved. Such fervent expectations led Paul to elevate allegiance to Christ over allegiance to the Jewish law as the requirement for entry into the company of those who would be saved from God's eschatological wrath.

At the same time, since Paul expected Christ to come very soon it was possible for him still to speak of Israel as a distinct people and the Jews as a distinct social group. Thus when Paul says that at the eschaton "all Israel" will be saved (Rom 11:26), he means that soon all the ethnic Jews alive during his lifetime will believe in Christ and experience the restoration promised by the prophets. Just as he thought before his conversion, Paul believed that Gentiles who had become proselytes by the final day would be rescued from God's wrath. Now, however, after his conversion, Paul believed that Gentiles became proselytes by faith in Christ, not by "works of the law" and that Jewish belief in Christ would be part of the scenario of eschatological restoration.

The trouble with this reconstruction of Paul's convictions about the Gentiles lies not in its claim that Paul saw Christ and the Jewish law as mutually exclusive boundary markers for the people of God, but in its explanation of passages in Paul that show a continued interest in ethnic distinctions (e.g. Rom 1:16; 9:27; 11:11-32; 15:25-27). It is unclear why such passages cannot refer to the chronological pattern of the gospel's progress from a Jewish context to the Gentile world and back, at the eschaton, to the involvement of Jews. It is true that this matches no previously known pattern of Jewish convictions about the Gentiles, but, if it is unique, it is not the only element of Paul's theology that has no known precedent. Moreover, unless we adopt something like the traditional explanation of these passages, it becomes difficult to account for those places in Paul's letters where Paul envisions Christians—whether from Jewish or Greek backgrounds—as a third entity, "the church of God" (1 Cor 9:19-21; 10:32).

This brief summary and note of caution can scarcely do justice to the thoroughness and care with which Donaldson has argued his case. This is a significant book for Pauline scholarship, and will be widely discussed. If in the end it fails to convince, it nevertheless succeeds in placing a critical issue in Pauline theology back on the discussion table and in raising the debate to a new level.

Frank Thielman, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, AL

Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: the Unknown Years*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997, xiv + 530 pp.

Of Paul's ministry, which spanned some thirty years, we have a degree of knowledge corresponding to only seven of these years (during which he wrote most of his extant correspondence — an important arm of Paul's ministry to which Luke makes

no reference). A significant, and formative, portion of Paul's Christian biography is thus shrouded in comparative darkness, and yet it was during these relatively 'silent years' that the basis of Paul's theology was formed and developed into maturity.

In *Paul between Damascus and Antioch: the Unknown Years*, Hengel explores this formative phase of the apostle's Christian ministry. He outlines the historical, political and Jewish religious environment of Damascus, Arabia, Tarsus, and, at greatest length, Antioch. With regard to these places, Hengel affirms that Damascus was the setting for one of the earliest Christian communities in a Hellenistic city outside Palestine; it is only from Luke that we learn the largely undisputed fact that Tarsus was the birthplace of Paul; it may have been during Paul's time in 'Arabia' that he developed his views on circumcision; and the suggestion, made by Bousset and reinforced later by Bultmann and more recently by Becker, that an early Hellenistic Christian community in Antioch was significant in the development of Paul's own theology is roundly opposed. Furthermore, he argues that the influence of Paul on Antioch was probably greater than any influence the Antioch Christian community may have had on Paul.

The overall picture which emerges from Luke's second account is powerfully and to a large extent corroborated by the Pauline corpus of letters. Any suggestion that Paul was a vacillating thinker whose theology was continually being developed does no justice to the evidence which emerges in a comparison between his earliest and later letters. The years between Damascus and Antioch were extremely important for his later ministry, and it was during these years, well before his first extant letter, that the foundations of his ministry and theology were formed.

Paul's sense of apostleship, specifically to the gentiles, derives from the earliest period following his conversion. This motivation toward mission is prompted by the content of the message, rather than his Jewish background. Furthermore, the foundation of Paul's theology — including his christology and understanding of the rôle of the Torah — stems from his personal encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road. This is the only clear explanation for so radical a conversion in his life. This christology, however, was already a part of the earliest Christian communities, evidence for which is seen in the numerous pre-Pauline sayings and motifs which are incorporated in his later letters. There is development over time, however, in Paul's conception of the geographical scope of his mission.

The subject matter of this book closely overlaps with that of Rainer Riesner's *Paul's Early Period: Chronology, Mission Strategy and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Indeed, Hengel expresses particular indebtedness to his fellow German's investigation into Pauline chronology. Hengel's own contribution is the greater attention he gives to the roots of Pauline theology. To see both of these mammoth works of German conservative scholarship in English translation, however, is of considerable value to future research into the early ministry and theology of Paul.

Repeatedly through the pages of this very readable account, Hengel is highly critical of the scepticism of the old Tübingen school which gives little credence to historical sources. It is unfortunate, however, that a monograph of such thoroughness, detail and length lacks a bibliography, a subject index and an index of ancient, non-biblical sources. These three shortcomings sadly restrict the full value which can be gained from such an extensive and valuable contribution of research.

Andrew D. Clarke, University of Aberdeen

Richard N. Longenecker (ed.), *The Road from Damascus: the Impact of Paul's Conversion on his Life, Thought and Ministry*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, xvi + 253 pp, \$25.00/£16.99.

The series of McMaster New Testament Studies provides a context for selected scholars to contribute papers addressing a New Testament theme which is of particular concern for Christians today. In this second volume in the series, eleven papers have been included which focus on the ways in which Paul's experience on the Damascus road may have influenced his subsequent theology and ministry. Some of the many issues which repeatedly surface through these essays include discussion as to whether Paul's experience should be described as a conversion or a call, whether it should be seen as atypical or normative for later Christians, and the extent to which Paul's theology was fixed from the moment of his conversion or underwent a development, whether minor or more radical, over subsequent years. This latter area is a particularly sensitive issue for conservative Christians who fear that talk of development implies that some of the later New Testament writings should be viewed as a correction of the naïveté of the earliest Christian writings.

The opening chapter reflects on the changing perception of the nature of Paul's conversion as it has been variously interpreted over the centuries in scholarship, literature, culture and art. Has Paul's particular experience been too readily interpreted in terms of an Augustinian-Lutheran crisis of conscience in which God's grace overpowered Paul's arrogance?

The remaining ten chapters consider individual elements of Paul's theology (and ministry): christology, eschatology, the gentile mission, justification, reconciliation, covenant, the Law, the Holy Spirit, women, and ethics (freedom). To what extent was Paul's perspective on these areas modified in the light of his Damascus road experience?

Although the Lukan and Pauline reflections on Paul's conversion differ significantly over what they consider important, the centrality of Christ in this moment of revelation is consistent across all the accounts. From this moment Paul affirmed all that the earliest believers had held true about Christ, although the demands of the gentile mission entailed a gradual modification or contextualization of some of the christological material. In the wake of his Damascus road experience, however, how did Paul respond to the 'delay' of the parousia: do his letters focus more on the first coming or the second coming of the Messiah; and did Paul's encounter with Jesus as Messiah signify the inauguration of a new age? Similarly, did Paul's concern for the gentiles emerge prior to, during, or after his conversion; and was it a rejection of Jewish particularism?

It is argued that Paul's understanding of justification by faith was already a fundamental part of his Jewish upbringing and identity. His experience on the road to Damascus signified, therefore, not so much God's acceptance of him and the resolution of a troubled conscience, but, rather, the realization that the privilege of relationship with God was not restricted to the nation of Israel. The Jewish understanding of justification by faith was not wrong; rather it was too narrow, or particularist. The origins of Paul's understanding of reconciliation may also hark back to Paul's Damascus road experience, which he regarded as God's action of reconciling an enemy to himself. These reflections on reconciliation are then substantiated for Paul by reference to both

the Isaianic Servant songs and Jesus tradition. Prior to his conversion Paul conceived the covenant to be ethnically circumscribed, where obedience to the law was incumbent on all ethnic Jews as the right response to God's covenant righteousness. After his conversion Paul seeks to redefine the boundaries of the covenant in terms of those who are of faith, regardless of ethnic identity, where *pistis Christou* is a reference to the 'faithfulness of Christ', as opposed to 'faith in Christ'. Also discussed is the degree to which Paul's post-conversion conception of the Mosaic Law was consistent with what he had formerly held.

Paul rarely speaks of the Holy Spirit when referring specifically to his own conversion. On the other hand he repeatedly associates the conversion of his addressees with their reception of the Holy Spirit, and then often identifies himself in such experiences. One implication which can be carried forward is that Paul regarded his own conversion in terms of reception of the Holy Spirit. That experience of the Spirit at conversion, however, should characterise all subsequent Christian living. In a similar way, the freedom which Paul experienced at his own conversion, clearly portrayed in Galatians, is something which should characterise all Christian living.

Also addressed within these chapters are the extent to which Paul's post-conversion views on women differed from those of contemporary Hellenistic Jews; whether his Christian theology favoured egalitarianism; and the extent to which patriarchal elements were culturally conditioned.

It is clear that within this volume a wide range of issues of Pauline theology and ministry are raised, but there is refreshingly no forced unanimity of theological perspective, and within its pages key debates, most notably on the 'new perspective', continue to be pursued. The downside is that only occasional instances of 'dialogue' between the contributors emerge through the course of the book. It may, of course, be that much dialogue took place in the process of compiling the essays, and elements of the fruit of this have been invisibly woven into the final fabric. Either way, this is not a significant detraction from what will be regarded as an important work, fully abreast of current scholarship, covering an especially topical subject. Andrew D. Clarke

Romano Penna, *Paul the Apostle: A Theological and Exegetical Study*. Volume 1, *Jew and Greek Alike*. Volume 2, *Wisdom and Folly of the Cross*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press/Michael Glazier, 1996. 325 and 287 pages respectively, paperback, \$34.95 each.

Calvin J. Roetzel, *Paul: The Man and the Myth* (Studies on Personalities of the New Testament; Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1998). 269 pp., hardback, \$34.95.

Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. 347 pages, hardback, \$22.99.

Romano Penna, Ordinary Professor of New Testament Exegesis at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, collects various of his essays from the past twenty years related to the apostle. The first volume consists of historical and exegetical essays. Alongside studies on Paulinism; the city of Rome, the Roman church, and Paul's attitude toward the Jews, there are exegetical treatments of the following passages:

Romans 1:18-2:29, 3:1-8, 3:8, 6:1-11, 8:32; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, 7:29-31, 13:1-13, 15:45-49; 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10, and chaps. 10-13. The second volume is more thematically oriented and includes traditional exegetical-theological subjects (e.g., "Sin and Redemption," "The Blood of Christ," "Paul's Attitude Toward the OT," "Justification by Faith in Paul and James," "Law in Paul's Letters," "Pauline Morality") as well as articles on Pauline spirituality (e.g., "Laicity in Saint Paul," "Pauline Mysticism") and an appendix on "The 'Visio Pauli' and the Apocalyptic Ascents of the *Divine Comedy*."

Penna is excellent at presenting the status of pressing questions in NT studies. For example, What do we know about the Jews in Rome around the time of the writing of Romans (cf. esp. 1: 27-47), and, Who is Paul's foil in the argument of Romans (Jewish Christian advocates of Paulinism, rather than opponents, who have moved in too libertinistic a direction; cf. vol. 1, chap. 7)? Only a few minor errors mar these slightly revised articles (e.g., a missing umlaut [1:15, n.44] and missing closing parenthesis [1:188]) and the oral presentation form is preserved in one place (2:10). The translation is consistently lucid and unobtrusive, but the reader is given no knowledge of the original place and time of publication of the individual articles. Although the promised "organic structure" is hardly evident, serious students of Paul interested in a particular passage or theme will find helpful studies in these volumes from one both sympathetic to Christian faith and engaged in critical scholarship. They illustrate among other things a convergence of Roman Catholic and Protestant exegetical studies, and Protestant readers may be surprised at the serious interaction with Protestant exegetes alongside Catholic ones. Penna even defends Luther against facile Catholic charges of antinomianism from the past (2:129).

Calvin Roetzel, Arnold Lowe Professor of Religious Studies at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, does not give us a "life of Paul" nor an attempt to reconstruct the apostle's theology. Rather this book is a reconstruction of "parts of [Paul's] image that usually fall in the shadows" (1); in particular, Paul the ascetic and the mythic Paul of the second and third centuries. It was Paul the semi-divine wonder worker, celibate, and martyr who was remembered in the following centuries, rather than the consummate theologian and proclaimer of justification by faith. Nevertheless, a number of more standard questions about Paul's life and thought-world are addressed in the early chapters. "The Early Paul" examines what we may know of Paul's childhood and upbringing. As in most of the book Roetzel is skeptical of the information given in Luke's Acts. Thus, Paul grew up in Tarsus rather than in Jerusalem (pace Acts 22:3) and was more influenced by Hellenism than is often recognized, which may explain, in part, his universalistic (i.e., pro-Gentile) outlook. This does not mean that Paul ever rejected Judaism, or being a Jew, but Paul's was a form of Diaspora Judaism which was strongly shaped by his later messianism.

The second chapter ("The Apostle to the Gentiles") looks at Paul's "call" to the Gentiles (not "conversion") and at some developing aspects of Paul's understanding of apostleship: revelation of Christ, founding churches, suffering, miracles, and preaching (here again Acts does not represent what Paul said). Chapter three ("The Letter Writer") gives an excellent survey of the form and function of Paul's letters. Chapter four ("The Theologizer") traces Paul's ad hoc responses to differing situations in 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, and Romans (with excursions on Galatians and 2 Corinthians). According

to Roetzel Paul did not start from a fixed or systematic theology, but had a few fixed presuppositions (e.g., God as the God of Israel) and theologized as necessary. Thus, for instance, in 1 Thessalonians Paul is silent on the implications of incorporating Gentiles into a fundamentally Jewish movement. In Galatians, on the other hand, nonmessianist Jews would seem to be disowned from the divine promises. In Romans he will wrestle further with the place of Jew and Gentile in the one people of God, ultimately leaving Israel's place "wrapped in a divine mystery" (130).

The final two chapters are the most novel and intriguing of the book. Chapter five ("The Model Ascetic") argues that Christian asceticism follows a trajectory from Jewish and Hellenistic models right through Paul on to the later centuries, rather than having to work its way around an essentially non-ascetic Paul. Although Paul allowed marriage in 1 Corinthians, celibacy was his own "better" way. "Thus, for Paul, marriage was an intermediate position between *enkrateia*, or self-control, and *porneia*, or immorality" (147).

Chapter six ("The Mythic Apostle") looks at the images of Paul the celibate, the miracle worker, and the martyr as they developed in the post-apostolic period. While many today wish to see a caricature of the apostle in later works such as *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Roetzel's own highlighting of these aspects of the apostle's career makes the answer more difficult. Although later writings do differ from the canonical portraits (e.g., where is the weak and suffering Paul of 2 Corinthians?), "they offer an imaginative and perhaps a credible interpretation of emphases within the Pauline letters themselves" (176). Building on his more detailed previous studies (e.g., *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World* [1992], *Paul's Narrative Thought World* [1994], *Conflict and Community in Corinth* [1995], *Grace in Galatia* [1998]) Ben Witherington III, Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, provides a view of Paul as a first-century Jewish convert to Christianity. For pastors and serious students of Paul who would like to know the impact of social-anthropological, rhetorical or narratological approaches on the understanding of the apostle this is a good place to start. The author writes for those needing some introduction to these (often complex) issues and the footnotes alert readers to starting points for study of a particular debate.

The first two chapters deal with first-century personality ("On Constructing An Ancient Personality") and with Paul's own sense of identity ("The Trinity of Paul's Identity"). Paul was a group-oriented Mediterranean person and should not be viewed as a self-made man of modern western individualism. Yet, within this context Paul was "a change agent, a deviant, a person swimming against the current of culture" (50). As to Paul's identity Witherington argues that we should stress the newness, or discontinuity. "In the end it is perhaps better to call Paul a Jewish *Christian* than a messianic *Jew*" (69; italics added). While acknowledging that Paul always remained a Jew, he was "converted" from Judaism (Roetzel says "called"). The third chapter ("Paul the Writer and Rhetor") details the type of training received in letter-writing and in public speaking by a person like Paul. In the fourth chapter Paul's major roles of prophet and apostle are sketched. Here, in exonerating Paul from the charge of being a false prophet, Witherington distinguishes between "possible" and "necessary imminence" in relation to Christ's return (136-42). I.e., Did Paul say Christ "may" or "will" return in the near future? If the former as Witherington argues, then Paul did not miscalculate the future and his statements still have considerable relevance for end-of-

the-millennium enthusiasts (though not quite what these last might envision).

Chapters five through eight deal with various aspects of Paul's ethical and theological thought-world. "Paul the Realist and Radical" (ch. 5) examines Paul's approach to social-ethical questions such as church and state, patriarchalism, and slavery. Witherington shows Paul's direction toward egalitarianism, though also acknowledging cultural limitations (174-76), i.e., Paul balanced pragmatism with revolutionary ideals. "Paul the Anthropologist and Advocate" (ch. 6) provides Paul's view of human nature (i.e., the meaning of "heart," "flesh," "body," etc.) and then moves to his view of Christians in community, especially the role of women in family and church. "Paul the Storyteller and Exegete" (ch. 7) focuses on the larger narrative or story-world underlying much of what Paul says and on the ways Paul uses the major repository of such stories, the Old Testament. Finally, "Paul the Ethicist and Theologian" (ch. 8) takes up the nature of Paul's ethical reasoning and reviews recent discussion of the "center" of Paul's theology. A summarizing chapter concludes the book, followed by an appendix on Pauline chronology, a bibliography, and author and subject indexes.

This volume is well-suited as a seminary textbook on Paul's identity and thought within his social context. It will be of less interest to the scholarly community since it, in large part, rehashes material covered in Witherington's earlier works. (This reviewer counted 84 footnotes referring the reader to these earlier works!) Witherington does a laudable job of taking sometimes very complicated developments in Pauline studies and condensing them to understandable summaries. For example, the treatment of advances in anthropological and rhetorical methods of interpretation will help those wishing to look into these issues. The constant references to earlier or later discussions of topics in the same volume (60 footnotes) are neither helpful (since no page numbers are given) nor necessary. The volume contains a few errata ("certain[ly]" [131]; German author and book title [133, n.4]; extra colon [136]; "dogs" are in "Philippi" not "Galatia" [161]; "would [have] remained" [261]; German titles [310, n.17]). A scripture index would have increased the usefulness of the volume.

Kent Yinger

Bruce W. Winter, *Philo and Paul among the Sophists*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 289 pp., \$59.95.

Winter uses first and early second century A.D. Greek, Jewish, and Christian sources related to Alexandria and Corinth to establish the point that the Second Sophistic did not begin in earnest in the second century A.D., but rather in the first century A.D. He then demonstrates that the sophistic movement provides a convincing background for 1 and 2 Corinthians, especially 1 Corinthians 1-4, 9, and 2 Corinthians 10-13.

Winter focuses Part I on evidence for the sophistic movement in Alexandria in the first century A.D. A first century student papyrus letter (*P. Oxy.* 2190) reveals a demand in Alexandria for declamation taught by the sophists. Dio of Prusa (*Or.*) describes sophists in first century Alexandria involved in public declamation and running schools. Philo (especially *Contempl.* 31) provides a critique of sophists and their educational system in first century Alexandria: 1) Whereas *paideia* was supposed to teach virtue, the sophists' lack of virtue promoted vice in their students; 2) rhetorical skills were not taught to present the truth through dialectic but rather to deceive; and 3) motivation was

financial gain and prestige rather than the welfare of the students.

In Part II Winter's surveys all the evidence for the sophistic movement in Corinth in the first and early second century A.D., including Epictetus of Hierapolis in Phrygia, Dio of Prusa, Plutarch of Chaeronea, and Saul of Tarsus. Epictetus' anti-sophistic polemic (*peri kallōpismou*) criticizes the sophists for emphasizing personal appearance rather than virtue, declaiming for show only rather than for teaching virtue, and pursuing praise. Dio of Prusa provides a critical picture of the intense rivalries and arrogance of the sophistic movement in Corinth in A.D. 89-96 (*Or.* 8). In his Corinthian oration (*Or.* 37), Favorinus of Arles demonstrates how much he and other sophists were praised and admired in Corinth in the early second century A.D. Herodes Atticus, a student of Favorinus, was a respected sophist in Corinth as attested by accolades on a statue to his wife and Philostratus' account of Herodes' life. Plutarch of Chaeronea notes the ambition, greed, and rivalries of sophists in Corinth.

Having established that sophists were prevalent in Corinth in the first century A.D., Winter explores Paul's relationship with the Corinthians in light of a sophistic background. From 1 Cor. 2:1-5 and 1 Corinthians 9 Winter argues that Paul adopted an anti-sophistic stance in his initial visit to Corinth in order to avoid being identified as a sophist in message or lifestyle. Unlike the sophists, he did not enter the city and establish his reputation as a speaker by an encomium to the city and a powerful declamation in hopes of garnering wealthy disciples. He preached by appeal to the power of God rather than conviction (*pistis*) derived from sophistic rhetorical techniques, and he worked hard with his hands to support himself rather than take support for instruction. However, the Corinthians adopted a sophistic conception of leadership and discipleship and suffered the inevitable rivalry entailed in such a conception. Apollos' more sophistic approach to preaching caused some Corinthians to follow him as disciples of a sophist and reject Paul who purposely did not measure up as a sophist (1 Cor. 1:10-12, 3:1-5; Acts 18:24-28).

Winter rightly asserts that 1 Corinthians 1-4 is not simply Paul's *apologia* for his ministry. Rather it is a critique of the Corinthians imposition of sophistic values and conceptions on church leadership and discipleship, particularly conceptions of status, imitation, and boasting. Paul challenges the Corinthians as disciples of the crucified Messiah to imitate his own imitation of the shame and suffering of Christ, not the mannerisms and rhetorical techniques of their sophists.

Winter argues that between the writing of the Corinthian letters the Corinthians recruited itinerant Jewish-Christian teachers trained in the sophistic tradition to instruct them. These teachers used key rhetorical categories from Paul's own critique of the sophistic tradition in 1 Corinthians 1-4 and 9 to attack his deficiencies as an orator. From a theology of weakness based on the paradigm of Christ, Paul responds that the Corinthians sophists are ignorant and foolish because they engage in comparison and boasting in status and achievement at the expense of each other. Paul boasts in his failures and hardships in order to parody the boasting of the Corinthian sophists and indict them (2 Cor. 11:22-12:13).

By demonstrating that the Second Sophistic was in bloom in Alexandria and Corinth in the first century A.D., Winter can show that the source of the division in Corinth was primarily sophistic, not theological or gnostic. He defeats the notion that the issues raised and the opponents faced by Paul are distinct in 1 Corinthians and in 2

Corinthians. The book is a model of clarity and readability. It makes a contribution to the study of the Second Sophistic, and greatly clarifies the nature of Paul's opposition in Corinth and the peculiarities of his response. The book must be consulted for a complete understanding of the Corinthian letters. Duane F. Watson, Malone College

James D. Miller, *The Pastoral Letters As Composite Documents*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 93, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, hb., 214 pp. \$54.95.

Miller offers an insightfully sustained argument that the Pastorals were not written by Paul or by a talented pseudonymist. He explains why no single author could have written these documents and then suggests that the best solution to the many riddles present by the Pastoral documents is that they were "composite documents." The Pastorals were produced by a group of editors or school of scribes "charged with the preservation and circulation of Pauline teaching and traditions" (145). Thus, the Pastoral Epistles were composite works that incorporated genuine Pauline notes written to Timothy and Titus. However, meshed into these genuine, brief notes are "blocks of non-Pauline materials" that were editorially woven into the documents over an extended period of time (151, 158). Hence, Miller postulates a third option in attempting to resolve the internal literary difficulties of style, content and structure presented by these Epistles.

In order to make his argument plausible, Miller reviews the authorship debate and shows how neither Paul nor a pseudonymist resolves the literary problems presented by these works. Then he offers some fresh insight into the literary environment from which the Pastorals emerged. This environment produced many "composite documents," within both Jewish and early Christian communities. The author presents a "compositional analysis" of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. The monograph ends by reiterating the main concerns. Miller's work is an important contribution to by reiterating the main concerns. Miller's work is an important contribution to Pastoral studies and the literary environment of the first and second centuries.

If you are interested in exploring Miller's overarching concern of why these documents (the Pastorals) read the way they do, then you may find his argument a plausible solution. This is not a commentary, but instead a technical study concerning the composition of the Pastorals from a historical critical perspective. Ken Archer

Andrew H. Trotter, *Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, Books, 1997, 222 pp.

This most recent addition to Baker's *Guides to New Testament Exegesis* series ably fulfills the stated goal of that series, namely to provide an introduction to appropriate methods of interpreting biblical representatives of a specific genre (in this case, Hebrews) based on, but pressing slightly beyond, Gordon Fee's outline in *New Testament Exegesis* (Louisville, KY: W/JKP, 1993). It attempts to provide neither a commentary on Hebrews, nor a survey of scholarship on Hebrews, but specifically an introduction to reading Hebrews. Part I, entitled "The Background of Hebrews,"

contains discussions of the original audience, date, authorship, genre, structure, textual variants; Part II, called "The Exegesis of Hebrews," moves into discussions of vocabulary, grammar, style, and theology.

The greatest strengths of Trotter's volume are to be found in his chapter on the vocabulary of Hebrews, which begins with an important theoretical discussion on how to avoid fallacious word studies and how to arrive at more reliable insights from lexicography. This is followed by a solid discussion of the author's coined words. The second high water mark is the chapter on Style, which introduces the reader to a host of rhetorical "figures of diction" (e.g., alliteration, anaphora, hyperbaton) and provides examples of how these figures are used by the author of Hebrews. That chapter concludes with an incisive and appropriate critique of Nigel Turner's attempts to define Semitic style and to find Semitisms in Hebrews. Trotter's discussion of the methods of Scriptural interpretation employed by the author of Hebrews is also very well done, especially as Trotter goes on to consider the question of the validity of modern readers applying the same methods to the reading of the Old Testament.

The book, however, is not without a number of problems as well, in terms both of omission and commission. As Trotter discusses the addressees and their situation, he makes the good point that the presence of so much material from the Old Testament cannot be used to demonstrate that the audience was predominantly Jewish since Gentiles, too, would have been familiar with the Septuagint. This is such a persistent misconception in treating Hebrews that Trotter would have done well to develop this point more fully, speaking specifically about how Gentile Christians would have been trained in their new faith chiefly on the basis of the Jewish Scriptures. More serious, however, are the difficulties in his attempts to delineate the audience as a particular sector of the Christian community which has itself split off from the larger group. 10:25 is made to serve this delineation, although that verse is more naturally read not as an indication of where the audience is located with regard to the larger church but as an indication that there are believers who are not coming out to the assembly where the addressees are hearing this letter read. Trotter corroborates this with a questionable mirror-reading of 5:11-14, a passage which upbraids the addressees for still being in need of basic instruction when they should by now be teachers of the faith. Trotter reasons that this letter cannot address the whole congregation, for they could not all be expected to be teachers (the very act of teaching implies another group of those who are to be taught). Though generally attentive to rhetoric in principle, Trotter here misses the probability noted by many commentators that 5:11-14 is an appeal to pathos, an attempt to rouse the hearers to acquit themselves by responding actively and decisively to the author's challenges. It is thus not an appropriate passage for direct mirror-reading into the situation and identity of the addressees.

While much of Trotter's discussion of the genre of Hebrews is strong, the section which attempts to squeeze Hebrews into the genre of the diatribe is unsuccessful. This is because Trotter's definition of what marks diatribe is so wide and generalised as to become meaningless. He appears to make no differentiation between general "reasoning by question and answer," a very common rhetorical technique, and that raising of hypothetical objections in the form of questions and debating with an imaginary conversation partner which are peculiarly characteristic of the diatribe (as seen in Epictetus' *Dissertations* or in Paul's Letter to the Romans). Trotter's suggestion that Heb

7:11 is such an objection is inaccurate. This verse does not offer an objection in the form of a question from an imaginary interlocutor (as does Romans 3:1, 3), but rather poses an argument in the form of a question in support of the author's thesis that perfection was not in fact possible through the mediation of the Levitical priesthood. That is, the author has already established the need for a new priesthood and draws a conclusion in Heb 7:11 about the weakness of the Levitical priesthood in the form of a question. Trotter also points to the presence of arguments "from the lesser to the greater" in Hebrews (notably in the question of 10:26-29) as signs that Hebrews shares in the form of the diatribe, but again that sort of argument is so basic to both Greco-Roman and Jewish logic that it is equally at home in the forensic speech or rabbinic midrash. That 10:26-29 is posed as a question likewise points to common rhetorical strategies rather than specifically to one rhetorical form.

Trotter provides a very handy table of textual variants, but the exegetical payoff is not consummate with the space it takes up. A few significant variants with more detailed discussion of those few variants (why one would favor one reading over another, what difference one reading really makes for the theological issues Trotter mentions too briefly) would have been more useful to students, who then could go to Metzger's *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* and continue the work for themselves better equipped for the task.

This reviewer is highly appreciative of Trotter's attempts to raise awareness of the usefulness of rhetorical analysis. I am left to wonder, however, why Trotter stops himself so short in this regard, preferring to dwell on rhetorical figures of diction (the ornamentation) rather than strategies of argumentation (e.g., discerning appeals to pathos, analyzing enthemes and other appeals to reason -- the sorts of investigations of rhetoric which may really bear exegetical fruit). This is all the more surprising in that Trotter acknowledges that "the subject is so essential to understanding Hebrews" (p. 165), which I take to apply to the larger picture of Greco-Roman argumentation and not merely to the figures of speech which even the rhetoricians relegated to the back of their textbooks (as in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*).

As an introduction to exegesis of Hebrews, the book basically persists in promoting a paradigm of interpretation which suggests that, if one concerns oneself with the words in the text long enough (vocabulary, grammar, style) and looks intently for the ideas contained in the text (theology), one will arrive at a sound interpretation of that text. It does not do enough to point the student to the world around the text -- strategies of persuasion being employed by the author to effect a goal in the audience's setting, the social and cultural world of the audience, the conversations with other texts present in Hebrews, and so forth -- wherein the text comes to life. Vernon Robbins has suggested that the exegetical enterprise, when done in its fullest scope, takes in the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, ideological texture, and sacred texture of a biblical text (*Exploring the Texture of Texts* [Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996]; *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse* [London: Routledge, 1996]; see reviews in this issue); Trotter's volume proceeds as though inner and sacred texture were the main, and perhaps exclusive, areas of concern for the exegete. While, basically, he does very well with those two textures, I would urge the writer of a "guide to exegesis" to push beyond the narrow paradigm of grammatico-historical exegesis to include some of the rich dimensions of reading Scripture described above.

David A. deSilva

R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids, Editors. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997. 1289 pp. \$39.99.

This volume is the third in IVP's emerging 8-volume *Dictionary of the Bible*, a series begun with *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* and *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. The fourth, *Dictionary of New Testament Backgrounds*, is scheduled to appear in 2000, with four volumes on the Old Testament following.

The *DLNTD*, as its name suggests, covers Acts (which was unable to fit either into "Jesus" or "Paul" volumes), and Hebrews through Revelation. Very wisely, the editors decided to extend this focus to include the writings of the apostolic fathers (Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hermas, and others) and other early Christian literature (e.g., the *Gospel of Peter*). This becomes an important bridge volume, then, from "New Testament" history to "Church" history. an introduction not only to the New Testament but also the wider literary world of early Christianity.

The volume contains over 230 articles, arranged alphabetically. As expected, there are "feature" articles on the texts themselves, most often provided by scholars who have already written respected commentaries on the text. The remainder of the entries are dedicated to issues of interpretation (e.g., "Old Testament in Revelation," "Jesus traditions,"), theological and cosmological concepts ("new birth," "eschatology," "repentance," "second repentance," "heaven, new heavens"), early Christian practice ("baptism," "lord's supper," "worship and liturgy"), Christ ("exaltation/enhronement," "Christology"), social, cultural and political realities ("priest," "slave, slavery," "magic," "Greco-Roman religions," "purity and impurity," "Qumran"), literary genres ("apocalypse," "letter, letter form") and many other topics ("Philo," "universalism," "ethics"). Most articles are arranged internally in terms of textual base, so that, for example, the article on "preexistence" first discusses the Hellenistic and Jewish backgrounds of the concept (giving many helpful references to primary sources), proceeds to discuss the appearances and significance of the topic in Hebrews, 1 Peter and Jude, the Johannine Epistles, Revelation, and finally the post-New Testament writings (Ignatius, Hermas, Justin, and *2 Clement*). It is impossible in a review essay to give an adequate sense of the scope covered by this resource.

In the tradition of its predecessors, the *DLNTD* continues to bring the best of scholarship to the pastor, lay person, and seminarian. Some of the most respected names in evangelical scholarship have contributed to this endeavor: R. J. Bauckham, Craig Evans, Joel Green, Donald Hagner, Craig Keener, William Lane, I. Howard Marshall, Leon Morris, Willard Swartley, and Ben Witherington, to name a few. Though written from an evangelical perspective, the volume is thoroughly conversant with scholars both left and right of center, introducing students to the breadth of academic conversation.

Together with the first two volumes, the *DLNTD* forms a biblical reference work of the highest order. IVP is to be commended for its vision and for the excellence of these products: pastors and seminarians will be deeply enriched as they immerse themselves in the world this volume opens up so authoritatively and comprehensively.

David A. deSilva

Steve Gregg, ed., *Revelation, Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, xv + 528 pp. \$29.99.

Rather than promote one particular way of reading Revelation, this volume seeks to expose readers to a variety of interpretations of Revelation held by sincere Christians across many centuries and denominations. Gregg came to the project out of his own experience of teaching Revelation over many years, during which time he came to appreciate the merits of a number of different views and arrived at the conviction that responsible teaching required him to present alternatives to his own view in an atmosphere that would foster mutual respect among Christians of different hermeneutical and millennial stripes, as it were.

An introduction presents a number of critical issues concerning Revelation, among them the genre of the text, authorship, dating, and history of interpretation. This introduction concludes with an overview of the four approaches to Revelation treated in this book, namely the preterist (the prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled, in the main, in the first centuries AD), historicist (the prophecies of Revelation have been in the process of fulfillment throughout church history), futurist (the prophecies await fulfillment in the future), and idealist (the prophecies look not for specific fulfillment in time but speak to the ongoing moral, political, and religious conflicts characterizing the Christian era). The first half of this introduction is marred by a lack of acquaintance with the critical scholarship of recent decades. For example, Gregg simply assumes and perpetuates the idea that "like the other books of its genre [i.e., apocalyptic], Revelation was written during a time of intense persecution of believers" (p. 10, emphasis original). J. J. Collins, A. Y. Collins, and L. L. Thompson, however, have all raised cogent objections to this portrayal of the setting of Revelation in particular and apocalypses in general (see *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, several strata of *1 Enoch*, and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*). Revelation itself, if we are to take it seriously as "predictive prophecy" (p. 2), sees "intense persecution" only in the future (and, one should add, only if the churches follow John's advice rather than the accommodationist gospel of other groups such as the Nicolaitans). The brief history of interpretation and the presentation of the four approaches selected for this book, however, are quite well done.

The "commentary" follows, being organized in different ways for chapters 1-3, 4-19, and 20-22. The bulk of the commentary provides, in four parallel columns, discussions of views representative of the four approaches listed above. One may thus see at a glance the interpretation of the beast from the sea (Rev 13:1-10) among preterists, historicists, futurists, and idealists and compare them across the page. Chapters 1-3 are treated in a single "column," as it were, with important differences among the four camps being discussed in sidebars. The discussion of chapter 20 shifts to three columns — the amillennialist, premillennialist, and postmillennialist interpretations — and chapters 21-22 return to an integrated presentation. However much he or she might desire it, the reader of this "commentary" should not look for evaluations of the respective positions or even of different views held by individual interpreters within the same camp, since this would defeat the author's purpose of presenting these different approaches in a non-evaluative environment.

Gregg has thus provided a volume that is clearly more "open-minded" (p. 1) than most books on Revelation written from the perspective of "predictive prophecy"

overladen with commitments to particular doctrinal positions. It represents a very good first step in this direction and deserves to be commended for breaking through many narrow cinder blocks in the interpretation of this text that have been used to create walls of disrespect between sincere Christians. Nevertheless we can still hear the echoes created by these four voices as they resound off the ideological walls that contain them to the exclusion of other readings of Revelation. Here one arrives at a potentially troublesome drawback of the volume.

The book gives the impression of comprehensiveness, but I have reservations about this impression. This perception is made even stronger by Robert Clouse's foreword and by the "advance praise" page, both of which indicate that one will find in this book "the four major ways to interpret the Book of Revelation" or "the four major approaches." There are, however, equally significant approaches to the interpretation of the Apocalypse that do not fall within one of these four categories. The attempt to label "liberal works" (Walvoord's tendentious label, quoted by Gregg) as a combination of "idealist" and "preterist" (or late-date preterist) readings mistakes appearance for philosophy of approach. The work of L. L. Thompson, for example, does not share either the conviction of idealists or preterists; recent studies of visionary or apocalyptic rhetoric similarly operate from a fundamentally different model of reading an apocalypse, including Revelation.

Gregg succeeds, then, in making "every effort to be fair," but only among those views that stem from the same basic approach to "biblical prophecy." That is, Gregg treats chiefly those views which regard Revelation purely as "predictive prophecy" and which insist that every prophecy be fulfilled at some point (or, in the case of the idealist interpretation, as a vision that articulates general and eternally-valid principles). The assumptions that "biblical prophecy" (as opposed to non-canonical texts) is "predictive prophecy," and that the only "true prophecy" is the one that is confirmed by the working out of history, manifest themselves in numerous ways. Based on these assumptions, Gregg distinguishes Revelation sharply from every other apocalypse, asserting without any defense that it "actually is what it claims to be: an epistle in the apocalyptic mode that predicts events of the future" (p. 12), while other apocalypses only pretend to do so by writing past history in a prophetic mode. Where all its literary characteristics point toward commonality between Revelation and other apocalypses, the author's assumption about Revelation overrides any commonalities and asserts dissimilarity. The author also proceeds as if views are only viable where the nature of Revelation as "predictive prophecy" looking ahead to real fulfillment in history is preserved. Thus he asserts that the preterist view can only be tenable if Revelation was written before 70 AD, that is, before the historical events to which preterists often link the "prophecies" of Revelation.

Most problematic is the way in which Gregg links "a high view of the inspiration of Scripture" (p. 38) with his own basic premise that Revelation constitutes predictive prophecy with historical fulfillment. An alternative approach, well-represented among biblical scholars, is seen as stemming from a low view of inspiration which shows "no respect whatever for the Apocalypse as an inspired writing" and in which "an interpretation that has been falsified by history" is not "on that account inadmissible" (p. 37, using a quotation from Albertus Pieters, *The Lamb, the Woman, and the Dragon* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1937] to make this contrast evident). This is ideologically motivated and tendentious, to say the least: evangelical Christian readers and students

are, in effect, corralled toward agreeing with the author's basic premise out of a desire not to be associated with a "low view" of Scripture. The only refuge, in his model, for evangelicals with a high view of inspiration of Scripture is an idealist reading which, as already noted, is not truly the same as "higher-critical" readings.

But Providence has provided in Jonah an important case study in the nature of biblical prophecy, since Nineveh does not in fact fall in forty days as Jonah "prophesied" quite unambiguously and absolutely. Early Jews, indeed, were well aware of this prophecy proving "false" from the standpoint of historical fulfillment (see *Lives of the Prophets* 10.2-3, in which Jonah leaves his homeland to avoid the taunts of being called a false prophet). Jonah's proclamation shows that God's purposes for a word sent by God (thus fully "inspired") may be different from our assumptions about those words. Prophecy, like any word from God, is sent forth to achieve God's purposes: "my word ... shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Is 55:11), and this purpose is clearly not always what it seems at face value. Jonah is a clear instance of "predictive prophecy" being spoken to effect a change of heart, proving true to God's purpose while proving untrue to rigid standards of historical fulfillment. It would not, therefore, be inconsistent with a high view of Scripture to read Revelation as a vision that seeks to effect a change of heart among Christians seeking roads to compromise and safety (as well as a confirmation of heart for those who seek to preserve their witness and obedience even in the face of mounting difficulties), and to see this as God's purpose for those visions rather than the supplying of a database from which future history (immediate, long-range, or distant future) should be read. In this regard, Gregg's otherwise "open-minded" book perpetuates unfortunate prejudices against evangelical readers of Revelation who do not share his basic assumption.

To be fair to the author, Gregg does note in the introduction that he does not consider "dramatic" interpretations of Revelation, since these invariably pertain to structure rather than an actual approach to interpretation of meaning, and "literary-analytical" studies (p. 3), which center mainly on identifying the sources of Revelation's language or on developing theories of literary composition. This disclaimer, however, has the effect of lumping together all those scholars who do not hold to the view that Revelation articulates purely "predictive prophecy" that will find historical fulfillment as "literary-analytical," which reveals a very narrow exposure to the exegetical study of Revelation that has been emerging during the last two decades. This term, as Gregg describes it, fits the work of R. H. Charles or H. Gunkel perfectly, but does scant justice to scholars who approach Revelation from sociology-of-religion or sociology-of-knowledge perspectives, rhetorical-analytical approaches, or even those who read it as closer kin to other Jewish apocalypses than Gregg wishes to allow (see, for example, the work of J. J. Collins, A. Y. Collins, David Barr, or L. L. Thompson).

In sum, then, Gregg's book is to be appreciated as a compendium of four kinds of interpretative approaches to Revelation, as long as it is understood that those four approaches are neither representative of the full spectrum even of evangelical scholarship, and certainly not of scholarship as a whole. It represents a very positive step forward from pushing one reading as "the" right one, and I admire Gregg's own testimony to personal growth in this area both personally and professionally as he teaches. Room must be made, however, for the theologically conservative who are, nevertheless, committed to a reading of Revelation informed by perspectives on

apocalyptic literature which distinguish it from “predictive prophecies” that are to be taken at face value. David A. deSilva

John D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1997. 271 pp., pb, \$21.99.

James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Traditions*. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 1997. xix+244 pp., hb, \$35.00.

A debate is raging among biblical scholars as to the historicity of Scripture. More foundationally, questions are raised concerning what constitutes evidence for reconstructing history. ‘Minimalists’ would hold that biblical accounts cannot be taken as true unless validated from extra-biblical sources. A more ‘maximalist’ position would hold that the Bible is to be valued as an important source for studying history, and is at times the sole source for some events mentioned in it. While outside validation or attestation would be useful, this view would hold that its lack should not throw uncorroborated statements concerning historical events into question, but should rather lead one to be thankful for the evidence which does exist in the Bible.

Both Currid and Hoffmeier, who teach at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS and at Wheaton College in Wheaton, IL, would find themselves methodologically more at home in the latter camp. Accepting the usefulness of Scripture as a historical source does not preclude bringing extra-biblical evidence to bear on its understanding and interpretation, and that is what these two authors do as regards evidence concerning Egypt.

Currid, who provides the more popular level book of the two, follows the guidelines of his title by looking at Egypt as it impacts the entire canonical spectrum of the OT. After introductory chapters discussing matters of history and method, as well as ancient Near Eastern cosmologies in general, he looks at Egyptian cosmogonies in particular, as well as other pentateuchally related matters as Potiphar, the episode of the serpent (Exod 7) and the ten plagues, the Ten Commandments, the Exodus and the bronze serpent. Of relevance to the historical books are studies of Egyptian influence, mainly military, on the monarchy, with special emphasis on Shishak. Currid also looks at Egyptian wisdom and prophecy as compared to those genres in the Bible.

With helpful illustrations, bibliography and detailed discussion, the general reader will find much of interest as well as challenge. It would serve as a good textbook in college and seminary, and should be on their library shelves.

As Hoffmeier’s title indicates, his is a more specialized and technical study, though still accessible to the committed lay reader. His main question regards the compatibility of the Egyptian evidence with the picture presented in Genesis 39-Exodus 15, a question which he answers in the affirmative. His chapters include studies of recent scholarship on the early history of Israel, the debate about Israelite origins, a study of Semites, Joseph and the Israelites in Egypt, Moses and the Exodus, the Eastern Frontier Canal and the implications which its identification and study have for determining the route of the Exodus, other related matters of geography and toponym (place names), and the problem of the Red/Reed Sea. In his conclusions, Hoffmeier states: “The body of

evidence reviewed in this book provides indirect evidence which shows that the main points of the Israel in Egypt and exodus narratives are indeed plausible" (226). The search through this evidence leading toward this conclusion should fascinate readers of the book. Photographs and detailed footnote information will aid the scholar, while current interest in the subject by lay-people as well would suggest that this volume, as well as that by Currid, would find an eager readership in church libraries as well as more technical collections.

David W. Baker

Eric M. Meyers, editor in chief, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, 5 vols., New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, under the auspices of the American Schools of Oriental Research, 1997, C. 2,600 pp., \$595.00.

This massive work is a valuable resource, providing a survey of the field of Near Eastern archaeology at the dawn of the new millennium. The contributor list of twenty pages is evidence that the editors have drawn on the expertise of numerous authorities, listing those from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and the US.

A helpful, one-page synoptic outline in the fifth volume shows the broader categories into which the entries fall, including: land and peoples- Syria-Palestine, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Cyprus and the Aegean, Persia, Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, North Africa, Semitic East Africa, and Major Empires (ranging from the Hyksos to the Turkish caliphates); writing, language, texts- language families and languages, inscriptions and texts, writing and literacy, writing materials and technologies; material culture- subsistence, trade and society, built structures, artifacts and technologies; archaeological methods- types of archaeology, site typology, artifact analysis, dating techniques, provenience studies, field methods, allied sciences and disciplines (from paleozoology to computer mapping); and history of archaeology- theory and practice, narrative histories, organizations and institutions, and biographies. This is followed by an eight-page listing of individual articles under these major headings. This aid, along with the accompanying index, are vital for being able to find one's way through the great amount of material available.

Individual articles generally include a bibliography. Which is at times extensive. For biographical entries, this includes a list of relevant publications of the one discussed. Some articles are accompanied by black and white photographs, figures of such things as script samples, tables, line drawings of reconstructions, and maps. A set of twelve maps is also included in an appendix, as are chronologies, one in tabular and one in time-line form, and a list of Egyptian Aramaic texts. The latter supplements an entry on the topic, but it is unfortunate that the same could not be done for other textual corpora.

The articles themselves provide good entries into their subject. The nature of an encyclopedia precludes exhaustive treatments, but a fairly good cross-reference system, along with the accompanying bibliographies, allow those whose interest is piqued to pursue topics more fully.

It is important to note the work's title. It is not a biblical dictionary, nor even one

of biblical lands, though discussion of these topics is included. There is no exhaustive, separate index of ancient texts, so tracing discussion of points of biblical interest can be somewhat serendipitous. There are also no separate entries for some archaeological items of more directly biblical interest. For example, there is no entry, nor even an index item, concerning the Israelite Exodus from Egypt, and the entry under 'Sinai' discusses occupation evidence there chronologically, but makes no mention of Israel, most probably due to lack of artifactual evidence of their passage, which receives so much attention in the biblical text.

In light of these comments concerning the scope and interest of the work, students of the Bible will find material to pique their interest and help in their understanding. While not altogether sufficient to understand the Bible in its background, it is a necessary tool for this understanding, and should be in all serious academic libraries, at both religious and secular institutions.

David W. Baker

Mark W. Chavalas, ed., *EMAR: The History, Religion, and Culture of a Syrian Town in the Late Bronze Age*, Bethesda, Maryland: CDL Press, 1996, pp. xvii + 179.

The volume edited by Mark W. Chavalas reunites several papers presented at the symposium on the Syrian Bronze Age site of Meskene held at the annual meeting of the American Oriental Society Middle West Region between 20-21 February, 1994, at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, IL.

The first paper, "Emar and Its Archives" (pp.1-12), by Gary Beckman, analyzes Emar, a Syrian city under the Hittite domination, and its archives. The earliest reference to Emar dates to the 24th century B.C. (Ebla), and the 19th century B.C. (Mari). The Late Bronze city was occupied for 150 years until its destruction in 1187 B.C. Except for an Old Babylonian document (*Emar* 6,536), all the Emar tablets date to the Late Bronze Age (14th- 12th centuries B.C.). Most of them were written in a Peripheral Akkadian dialect replete with West Semitic forms. A small number of documents were composed in Sumerian, Hittite, and Human.

Wayne T. Pitard's "The Archaeology of Emar" (pp.13-23) is an archaeological survey of the Late Bronze city of Emar. The excavations were done by a French team under the guidance of Jean Margueron between 1972 and 1976. Among the findings: the remains of a palace; a pair of temples dedicated to Aštart and Baal, respectively; the Temple M₁ dedicated to an unidentified deity, ^dNIN.URTA, and presided by the "diviner"; a number of private houses with a three-room ground floor. Whereas political and residential architecture shows a Hittite influence, the temples follow a Syrian style.

The third contribution, "Who Was the King of the Hurrian Troops at the Siege of Emar?" (pp.25-56), by Michael C. Astour, focuses on one episode in Emar's history. The author suggests that Emar 6, 42, "the king of the troops of Hum-land mistreated Emar," refers to the siege of Emar under Tukulti-Ninurta I who fought with Arnuwandaš III of Hatti in the thirties of the 13th century B.C. The king of the Hurrian troops who attacked 2 Emar was Qibi-Aššur. "vizier (and) king of Hanigalbat," at that time a Hurrian state under the Assyrian control.

In "Family Values on the Middle Euphrates in the Thirteenth Century B.C.E." (pp. 57-79), Gary Beckman discusses three types of Emar's records: adoptions, marriage

arrangements, and testaments. The welter of detail in Beckman's contribution points to the preeminence of family life at Emar. Thus, the adoptions were adapted to include other aspects of social life (e.g., indebtedness, slavery), the marriages had an inter-family character, and the making of the testaments was concerned with the preservation of the family's wealth.

Daniel Fleming, "The Emar Festivals: City Unity and Syrian Identity under Hittite Hegemony" (pp.81-121), discusses four types of festivals: the installation of the high priestess ⁹NIN.DINGIR (*Emar* 6, 369); the installation of the maš'artu-priestess (*Emar* 6, 370); *zuku* (*Emar* 6,373) the only calendric festival; the *kissu* festivals (*Emar* 6, 385-388). The Syrian identity, so obvious in Emar's festivals, was never stifled by the Hittites who promoted a religious tolerance in dealings with the defeated populations.

"Care of the Dead at Emar" (pp.123-140), by Wayne T. Pitard, treats five of Emar's texts concerning the care of the dead and three legal documents from Nuzi. His analysis argues against identifying *ilāni*, household deities/patron gods of the family, with *etemmu* "ghosts" (Nuzi) or *mēū* "dead" (Emar), based simply on the association of these terms. The evidence itself goes against the deification of the dead at Emar: none of the verbs (*kunnū* "to properly attend to"; *nubbū* "to invoke"; *palāhu* "to serve, honor") accompanying this pair have meanings exclusively or predominantly associated with the dead.

"The Gods and the Dead of the Domestic Cult at Emar: A Reassessment" (pp.141-163), by Brian B. Schmidt, is an assessment of the scholarship treating Emar's mortuary rituals. As does the foregoing paper, the author here deals with the same problem of the deification of the dead. The evidence from Nuzi and Emar rejects any equation between *ilānu* and *mēū* (Emar) or *etemmu* (Nuzi). Moreover, the presence of *kunnū* "to invoke" points to a commemorative rite rather than to summoning the deified dead to a blessing apparition. An excursus on deification of the dead in ancient West Asia (Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syria) wraps up this final contribution.

The volume ends with a "Select Emar Bibliography" (pp.165-172) and an "Index" of personal names, toponyms/ gentilics, topics, and terms (pp.173-179).

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Craig A. Evans & Stanley E. Porter, eds, *New Testament Backgrounds: A Sheffield Reader*, The Biblical Seminar 43, Sheffield: Academic Press, 1997, pp. 335, \$19.95.

This volume is the forty-third in the Biblical Seminar series. It collects what the editors believe to be the best articles on the topic of New Testament backgrounds published in the first 50 issues (1978-93) of *Journal for the Study of the New Testament (JSNT)*.

The essays are: "Hostility to Wealth in Philo of Alexandria," by T. Ewald Schmidt (pp.15-27); "The Paradox of Philo's View on Wealth," by David Mealand (pp.28-32); "A Man Clothed in Linen: Daniel 10.5-9 and Jewish Angelology," by Christopher Rowland (pp.33-45); "The Lamb of God in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*," by J.C. O'Neill (pp.46-66); "The Apocalypses in the New Pseudepigrapha," by Richard Bauckham (pp.67-88); "David Daube on the Eucharist and the Passover Seder," by Deborah Bleicher Carmichael (pp. 89-108); "The Sabbath in the Synoptic Gospels," by

Herold Weiss (pp.109-23); "Popular Prophetic Movements at the Time of Jesus: Their Principal Features and Social Origins," by Richard A. Horsley (pp.124-48); "Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40.1-5 and their Adaptation in the New Testament," by Klyne R. Snodgrass (pp.149-68); "Jesus as Mediator," by D.R. DeLacey (pp. 169-89); "Χάριτι ἅπτι χάριτος (John 1.16): Grace and the Law in the Johannine Prologue," by Ruth B. Edwards (pp.190-202); "The βασιλικός in John 4.46-53," by A.H. Mead (pp.203-06); "Hellenistic Parallels to the Acts of the Apostles (2.1-47)," by Pieter W. van der Horst (pp.207-19); "Hellenistic Parallels to Acts (Chapters 3 and 4)," by Pieter W. van der Horst (pp.220-29); "Moses Typology and the Sectarian Nature of Early Christian Anti-Judaism: A Study of Acts 7," by T.L. Donaldson (pp.230-52); "The God-Fearers: Some Neglected Features," by J. Andrew Overman (pp.253-62); "*Onesimus Fugitivus*: A Defense of the Runaway Slave Hypothesis in Philemon," by John G. Nordling (pp.263-83); "The Pragmatics of Politics and Pauline Epistolography: A Case Study of the Letter to Philemon," by Andrew Wilson (pp.284-95); "and "Confluence in Early Christian and Gnostic Literature: The *Descensus Christi ad Inferos* (Acts of Pilate 17-27)," by R. Joseph Hoffman (pp.296-311). The book closes with indexes of references and modern authors.

The volume serves two purposes: (1) to assist scholars who wish to keep up on developments outside their area of specialist research or who have been away from a topic for a period of time and wish to re-enter the discussion; and (2) to serve as a textbook for undergraduates, seminarians, and even graduate students.

Eric James Gréaux, Sr., Shaw University Divinity School, Raleigh, North Carolina

Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches, The Family, Religion, and Culture*. Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1997, 329pp.

This book is part of a series of books entitled *The Family, Religion, and Culture*. It seeks to provide comprehensive studies on the family in ancient Israel and early Christianity with the hope of bridging the gap to the American family of today. This particular book looks at the various NT teachings on the family in light of the social and cultural context of the Greco-Roman world.

In Part one, *Material and Social Environment of the Greco-Roman Household*, the authors look at archaeology and describe the housing situation in such places as Ephesus, Palestine, Pompeii and Herculaneum. Cultural anthropology is addressed in chapter two in terms of the way people interacted with one another. Topics of honor and shame, gender, and kinship are briefly discussed. Chapter three addresses the social world of that time in terms of such things as gender roles and responsibilities, marriage, education, slavery, children, and family religion.

Part two, *Early Christian Families and House Churches*, deals in more detail with topics such as social location, gender roles and marriage, education, slavery, and family life. Relevant NT texts as well as other types of literature pertaining to the subject matter are dealt with in a clear, readable fashion. Endnotes are provided in the back for those desiring to do further study. A glossary of basic terms is also provided. This book will be an excellent resource for students, pastors, or anyone interested in understanding

the world of the first century.

Melissa Archer

Peder Borgen and Søren Giversen, eds., *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997. (First printed by Aarhus University Press, Aarhus, Denmark, 1995)

This is a collection of papers given at a conference at Aarhus, Denmark, in 1992. It was originally edited by Peder Borgen then completed by Søren Giversen. This volume demonstrates that the study of Hellenistic Judaism is now a mainstream approach to NT background studies. This is a remarkable feat for a discipline which hardly existed before this century.

The opening papers are centered on Hellenistic Judaism. Giversen's contribution is a short but worthwhile examination of the covenant theme in Barnabas. The next paper by Lars Hartman would have been a better opening chapter because it provides a useful overview of the extent of Hellenistic Judaism. It also looks at the way the OT was used as a basis for ethics and teachings about eternal reward in Hellenistic Judaism. Nikolaus Walter then helps to put Hellenistic Judaism in a historical context by pointing out that Jews in Alexandria already demonstrated at least two centuries of Hellenistic education before the time of the NT, as seen in the production of the Septuagint and the Sibylline Oracles. He finds it ironic that much of this culture was valued and preserved only by Christendom. Marius de Jonge examines this Christian transmission, arguing that the Christian scribes probably were largely faithful to the original because they also succeeded in transmitting the Septuagint without changing it.

Four Gospel studies follow. James H. Charlesworth looks at the healing of Bartimaeus and especially his appeal to the 'Son of David', which he says referred to the reputed powers of Solomon for healing and exorcism. Adela Yarbro Colins argues that the resurrection was an original part of the earliest Gospel traditions, pointing out that physical resurrection of a man who gained divine status was common in Hellenistic sources. Aage Pilgaard reexamines the pre-Christian concept of *theios aner* which Bultmann and others regarded as a model for the development of Christology. He doubts that this concept could have developed into Christology without the added concept of an eschatological Son of Man. Johannes Nissen finds Jewish and Hellenistic parallels for all aspects of the love command in the gospels. The only aspect which he finds unique is the context of these commands in a new community where the love command in the gospels. The only aspect which he finds unique is the context of these commands in a new community where the love command becomes practical.

The volume ends with six Pauline studies. Peder Borgen finds it significant that Philo regarded Hagar as fleshly, and nowhere compares Hagar with the Sinai covenant. He concludes that Paul deliberately used this figure to suggest that the old covenant is like slavery to the flesh. Karl Gustav Sandelin traces the sacramental language in 1 Cor. 10 to the OT and Hellenistic Jewish literature. He suggests that it should be read as Paul's warning against participating in pagan practices. Per Jarle Bekken finds that the exegesis of Deut. 30:12-14 in Romans 10 follows accepted techniques and forms found in Philo and Baruch. Niels Hyldahl looks for the reason Paul wrote the Corinthian correspondence. He finds a crisis so serious that Paul would have had to expel a large

proportion of the church, if he visited in person, or else he would lose his authority completely. Niels Willert seeks the background of the so-called peristasis or hardship catalogues. Instead of the Hellenistic Jewish background suggested by Bultmann and the OT background suggested by others, he prefers to see the gospel passion traditions as the underlying model. Finally, Ole Davidsen looks at the Adam-Christ typology in a narrative study of Romans.

This volume is a collection of disparate papers which provide a wide-ranging insight into how Hellenistic Jewish literature is being used to open up the New Testament. Some papers are tendentious and some may become seminal, and they are mostly good examples of how to read the New Testament in the context of one of the worlds it originally inhabited. David Instone Brewer, Tyndale House, Cambridge

Roman Garrison, *The Graeco-Roman Context of Early Christian Literature*, Journal for the Study of New Testament supplement series 137, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, hb., 123 pp. \$35.00.

Garrison argues that the New Testament and early Christian literature must be understood in the context of the literary and cultural world of the Graeco-Roman era. In his collection of investigative essays he explores the same significant parallels found in Hellenistic literature and early Christian literature. Garrison's examination of selected literary works by early Christians like Paul, Luke, Polycarp and Clement demonstrates that these authors utilized important Hellenistic cultural concepts, themes, symbols and terminology. Thus, Hellenistic culture influenced and shaped their works. This is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the impact of the Graeco-Roman world upon early Christian literature, but it is a helpful introduction. Ken Archer

Joan B. Taylor: *The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism. Studying the Historical Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. Pp. xvi+360. ISBN 0-8028-4236-4. \$30

Joan B. Taylor, lecturer in religious studies at Waikato University in New Zealand, here presents a competent and highly serviceable historical treatment of John the Baptist. At present, her book is probably the best work of its kind available in English.

After a brief introduction to the biblical and extra-biblical sources, her treatment divides into six main chapters: (1) John's ascetic, quasi-Nazirite lifestyle and the question of his relationship with the Essenes (there was none); (2) his baptism as rooted in purity halakhah and conditional on prior repentance (rather than as a symbolic initiation rite); (3) his moral teachings and prophecies of imminent judgement by one who was to come; (4) his (predominantly positive) relationship with the Pharisees; (5) the nature of opposition to him and reasons for his execution (criticism of Antipas combined with the acquiescence of the Jerusalem establishment); and finally (6) his relationship with his disciple Jesus who continued his message (read 'against the grain' of what Taylor sees as the NT's defensive and apologetic treatment). The book ends with a useful and compact conclusion, a reasonable bibliography and indexes of names

(very patchy), subjects and ancient sources.

Taylor's volume, the second in a promising new series edited by Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans, is on the whole a refreshingly thorough and well-documented treatment of both primary and secondary literature, with excellent insights on subjects such as John's diet, dress, and views of purity. There is good critical interaction with important recent works like those of R.L. Webb, J.P. Meier and R.A. Horsley. Perhaps most innovative and interesting is her theory that Mark 9.11-13 shows Jesus to have interpreted John in the light of a 'suffering Elijah' tradition, which he adapted after John's death to interpret his own ministry (e.g. pp. 286, 315). One may not in the end agree with this, or with her chronology of dating John's death to A.D. 33/34 (and the crucifixion correspondingly later). Nevertheless, the book offers plenty of good interaction with the primary sources on which an assessment of the author's theories will need to be based.

Dr. Taylor is in general a reliable guide on this subject, although there are exceptions. Her grasp of the redaction history of Qumran documents struck this reader as wobbly (e.g. p. 28), her assertion of a dichotomy between inward and outward cleansing in IQS 3 (pp. 78-80) and John (p. 98) as forced, and her denial that 'initial immersion' is 'initiatory' (p. 81) as reminiscent of Alice in Wonderland. On a significant point of detail (p. 59), Taylor's discussion of purity also confuses the rabbinic halakhah of menstruation (*niddah*) with that of gonorrhoea (*zabim*). Typographical errors are mercifully few, a rare merit nowadays.

A certain 'curate's egg' quality emerges in comparing some of the chapters, which show signs of having undergone quite different processes of composition. For example, the chapter on John's relationship with the Pharisees devotes a prolix 30 pages to a needlessly tedious discussion of the Pharisees. Chapter 2 on 'Immersion and Purity', by contrast, stands head and shoulders above the rest as an incisive and informative treatment; the Preface makes it clear that this has had the benefit of extensive scholarly critique and discussion.

Although at 360 pages this is not a slim treatment, greater conciseness on subjects such as the Pharisees might have left space for a welcome discussion of several other issues. These include the NT claims of John's priestly descent and family connections with Jesus, and also traditions of his possible links with Samaria, Galilee or the Golan (a little hastily despatched on p. 47 n.59 and p. 249 n.71). Similarly, readers will learn little or nothing from Dr. Taylor about the image of John in early Jewish Christianity, Gnostic and Mandaeen groups; indeed she tends to underrate the Baptist's ongoing influence on various groups in the later first century, without which the implied polemic against his disciples in the Fourth Gospel (and Acts 19) is incomprehensible. Remarkably, the only insight offered on Jesus' baptismal vision of the Spirit 'as a dove' is the author's own experience of being once set upon in Jerusalem by a particularly feisty member of that species (*sic*, p. 274). Leaving aside the more mind-boggling implications of this anecdote, the admittedly difficult motif of the dove might, for example, have been usefully explored in Jewish allegorical treatments ranging from first-century texts like Ps.-Philo 39.5 and 4 Ezra 2.15; 5.26 to Septuagintal, Targumic and midrashic interpretations of the Psalms (e.g. 56.1; 68.13) and of the Song of Songs (2.14; 5.2; 6.9).

Contrary to the editors' claim that this otherwise promising new series will

remedy the neglect of primary and secondary literature in some current treatments of Jesus, Dr. Taylor offers no history of research and shows only minimal interaction with the non-English works listed in the bibliography (as indeed a number of listed English works are never cited). And although by comparison with other early NT topics the pertinent secondary literature on John the Baptist is not vast, Taylor misses a significant number of continental treatments altogether (e.g. J. Daniélou 1964, J. Ernst 1994, M. Reiser 1990 (E.T. 1997), H. Stegemann ¹1994, A. Schlatter 1956, M. Stowasser 1992, W.G. Kümmel 1974).

Finally, students assigned this work as a textbook should nevertheless be encouraged to note a certain methodological naïveté in the overall argument. Although Dr. Taylor strenuously (and, on the whole, successfully) pursues her project as a quest for 'the historical John the Baptist', she offers no hint of an acknowledgement that such a quest might be subject to some of the same hermeneutical vagaries that have long afflicted the study of historical Jesus. Simply to claim that one's aim is to rescue 'the real John' (so e.g. p. 12) from under smothering layers of Christian propaganda must surely be either naïve or devious. As it happens, the attentive reader cannot fail to notice from the outset Dr. Taylor's own driving assumption that the NT appropriation of John as a forerunner is seriously false and misguided: the evangelists' 'defensive, apologetic tone' (p. 320) is intended only to 'explain him away' (p. 4).

At the end of the day, of course, neither the evangelists nor Dr. Taylor interpret the inevitable ambiguities of history without bias, *sine ira et studio*; the main difference between them is that the former openly acknowledge their presuppositions. It remains a fact that John the Baptist pointed forward to a decisive eschatological figure who was soon to follow him, and that the early followers of his disciple Jesus took his prophecy seriously. To say they misunderstood John (though acknowledging his doubts about Jesus, Matt. 11) is at once to say they misunderstood Jesus: for if John was not the forerunner, then neither was Jesus the One who was to come. To say the evangelists suppress John or explain him away is not only to trivialize the evangelists' complex picture of him, but also to make a nonsense of the ancient church's well-attested veneration of him in his own right. As is strikingly illustrated in Grünewald's Isenheim altarpiece and similar Christian paintings, the truth or falsehood of the apostolic view of John depends in the end on the truth or falsehood of the apostolic view of Jesus.

Markus Bockmuehl, University of Cambridge

Petr Pokorný, *Jesus in the Eyes of His Followers: Newly Discovered Manuscripts and Old Christian Confessions*, North Richland Hills, Texas: BIBAL Press, 1993, 100 pp. + x. n.p.

Professor of New Testament at Charles University in Prague, Petr Pokorný here sets out in sharp relief his recent study of Christology (see his *The Genesis of Christology*: Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1987) in an evolutionary and developmental manner: after shaping the discussion in light of early Christian confessions (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:3b-5 -which he calls the "Formula of Faith"), Pokorný analyzes Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, his status as a Prophet and his status as Messiah before moving on to see how Easter shaped by interpretation the original outlines of Jesus' mission and

ministry. The task is noble though I am less than convinced that he has provided either broad outlines of a new view or a logically compelling case for the smaller points made. In addition, the book suffers from strikingly poor English and erratic spellings (e.g., pp.51 ["monofysitist"], 53 ["post-mortal" seems to be used for "post-mortem"], 54 ["substitutive" instead of "substitutionary"], 63 ["then" is used for "than"] and he likes the word "messianity").

After exegeting 1 Cor. 15:3b-5 responsibly, the author provides a brief summary of the history of research into the issue of the development of Christology in earliest Christianity. Oddly, he concludes with the literary approaches of A.N. Wilder and V.K. Robbins (whose lines of thinking he never again uses) and argues that this approach "strengthened confidence in the reliability of Jesus [*sic*] tradition and indirectly initiated a series of christological projects based on the teaching of earthly [*sic*] Jesus and his activity, often called the 'Third Quest for Historical [*sic*] Jesus'" (p.21). To my knowledge, the literary approach has neither strengthened confidence in the historical reliability of the Jesus traditions (since it shows almost no interest in such a question) nor has it spawned the Third Quest, whose decisive impulses came from stubborn historical questions fashioned by such people as G.B. Caird and B.F. Meyer as well as the massive industry of investigating Judaism (which got its impulse from the pioneering work of W.D. Davies when he argued that Paul got his ideas from Judaism, not the Greco-Roman ideologies: see his *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*). The method which he adopts, however, ante-dates the Third Quest and is nearly identical to the method of Norman Perrin.

His analysis of Jesus is unexceptionable but generally accurate. But for some reason he nearly forgets the bases on which he constructs NT christology for as he proceeds through the various christologies of the NT he simply fails to make connections back to the Jesus traditions. For Pokorn'y, Easter is the decisive impulse for the emergence of higher and more synthetic christologies; the previous christologies (e.g., Wisdom, Son of Man) are taken up and lodged in a larger framework as a result of Easter. He shows some interesting connections with larger frameworks in his brief survey of titles but it is especially in his study of Paul and Mark that he shows the impact of Easter on creating a larger synthesis of christological categories. For example, Pokorn'y shows how a "divine man" miracle christology was absorbed by Mark's post-Easter interpretation into a larger apocalyptic synthesis. Easter surely played the role Pokorn'y envisions for the development of early Christian christology and the general method he employs, moving from Jesus to the later Christian theologians, surely deserves further implementation.

Scot McKnight, North Park University

Geoffrey Wainwright, *For Our Salvation: Two Approaches to the Work of Christ*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/London: SPCK, 1997, 186 pp., \$18.00, pb.

Geoffrey Wainwright is a British Methodist theologian who has taught in the USA for many years. In this book he has brought together two series of lectures given at various institutions. The first set explores the different ways in which Jesus Christ comes to his people through the Word. Wainwright is interested in the uses of the different senses as means of communication, and he develops the ways in which touch,

taste and smell are used alongside listening and seeing. The result is an intriguing survey of the modes of apprehension of the revelation of Christ as they are found in Scripture and in the history of worship. The second set of lectures explores the concept of the threefold work of Christ as prophet, priest and king, examining the history of its usage and then analyzing each of its uses in five ways: christological, baptismal, soteriological, ministerial and ecclesiological. The freshness of the book lies in the breadth of knowledge of Christian theology and liturgy which is presented in a very readable and attractive manner. The author's style tends to be analysis and description of the material rather than argument. He writes as a Methodist, conscious of his heritage, but also as one who has learned from other traditions and is especially concerned for the ecumenical nature of the church. So he is able to show how the evangelical understanding of the gospel can profit from attention to the liturgy of the catholic tradition and thus be presented in a more comprehensive way. Methodist theology generally feels itself closer to Luther than to Calvin, and it is particularly good to see a Methodist here making good use of Calvin. Wainwright is concerned to see what he calls 'classic Christianity' thriving over against any liberal or modernist watering down of our Reformed and Catholic heritages. Here is an intriguing combination of these two elements by a master of historical theology. This is heart-warming reading.

I. Howard Marshall, University of Aberdeen

N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996, xxi + 741 pp., cloth, \$65; paper, \$41.

This is a big book—in every way. It is very long (too long!) and yet on its own admission fails to get in everything the writer intended to say. It addresses a great theme, the message and aims of Jesus of Nazareth, and does so in a way that relates Jesus both to his Jewish roots and to the Christian movement that sprang from his life. Wright sees history writing as the search for a large hypothesis that seeks to answer the big questions, and whether or not you agree with him, you will surely agree that he has asked the right questions and made an inspiring attempt to answer them. He is also very readable, full of vivid phrases, suggestive metaphors and sharp asides, always accessible, so that it might fairly be said of him that his pen is like the tongue of a ready preacher! To change the picture, this book is a mighty symphony, magnificent in conception and gloriously full of singable tunes.

The book is in three parts. The first addresses the question of whether the Question of the Historical Jesus is legitimate, possible, and how it should be pursued. Wright shows that orthodox Christianity has been better at answering the question, Why did Jesus die, than the question, Why did Jesus live? He gives an illuminating sketch of the Quest in this century, arguing that the choice is still between Wrede and his followers (we can know almost nothing about Jesus), and Schweitzer (Jesus is an apocalyptic Jewish prophet). Of the two, Wright opts firmly for the latter, with the important correction that apocalyptic does not refer to the End of the World, but to a coming national crisis of world-shattering magnitude. He argues persuasively that history cannot be done by searching for authentic sayings and counting beads, but by

constructing hypotheses that will account for the facts of history as we have them, and answer five key questions: How does Jesus fit into Judaism as we know it from the ancient sources? What were Jesus' aims? Why did Jesus die? How and why did the early Church begin? And, Why are the Gospels what they are?

The second part, entitled the Profile of a Prophet, shows that Jesus makes sense within first century Judaism not as a teacher of subversive wisdom but as a prophet, in the line of Israel's prophets, announcing the imminent fulfilment of Israel's deepest longings - the return from exile, the defeat of evil and the return of YHWH to Zion - inviting and welcoming his fellow Israelites to share in the coming kingdom, but also challenging and summoning them to turn from the false road of violent nationalism and join him in a new way of being Israel. Like Isaiah, he announced the end of exile and the return of the King; like Jeremiah, he warned that armed resistance was no way to bring in God's reign and would lead instead to the destruction of Jerusalem. The repentance Jesus spoke of was thus a change of political outlook behavior, and the forgiveness he offered was national liberation and the rebirth of Israel to be the light of the world.

The third part addresses the Aims and Beliefs of Jesus - if that was his message, how did he think the kingdom would come, and what was his own part in bringing it about? Jesus saw himself as the Messiah, the king who represented and embodied his people, whose destiny it was to fight the battle against the forces of evil and set his people free, but he differed fundamentally from his contemporaries in how he saw this battle was to be fought. Rather than raising an army and driving the Romans out of the country, he saw it as his calling to draw down on himself the judgement of God which the Roman armies represented and to die on behalf of the nation. Only so could the Satan be defeated, only so could Israel become what she was meant to be, and only in this way would the ancient hope of YHWH returning to Zion be fulfilled. What is impressive is the way Wright has been able to bring together two things usually put asunder, Jesus' nonviolent stance and his vicarious death. Jesus is neither the Savior of the World who happened to be a pacifist, nor the teacher of an exalted Ethic who happened to get killed, but someone whose rejection of violence was the cause of his death and means of his Atonement.

But what difference did it all make? Jesus died. Caiaphas and Pilate and their successors lived and reigned, and in the end the city was destroyed anyway. Wright has run out of space! He sketches an answer to this question in five pages, but it is hardly satisfactory. His answer, of course, focuses on the Resurrection, but it seems to me a serious weakness in the book that this vital topic has to be left for another volume. Wright carries me with him all the way until he starts talking about the 'Return of the Lord to Zion', which he apparently identifies with the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. But surely this can only be so if the Resurrection is included as well as the Cross? Surely then, and then only, is the kingdom seen to have come in power? Surely the Cross is no victory without the Resurrection and all that flowed from it?

In short this is a great book, full of insights and ideas that there is no space to do justice to in a brief review, but in the end the subject matter defeats the author's attempt to deal with it in one volume. There was perhaps an alternative strategy. At the risk of sounding like a music critic telling Beethoven that the Ninth Symphony is a magnificent work, but we could do without all that singing at the end, I suggest Wright would have

done better to write one book on the Prophet and his Message containing Parts 1 and 2 (474 pages, no mean feat in itself), and write another on the Aims and Achievement of Jesus to include the present Part 3 and that book which, like its subject matter, the Resurrection, we eagerly await. R. Alastair Campbell, Spurgeon's College, London

J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Rule of the Community. Photographic Multi-Language Edition*, New York: Continuum, 1996, 148 pp. \$100.00.

The Rule of the Community (IQS) was one of the first four Dead Sea Scrolls to be discovered in 1947. As a text originally composed by the Qumran community (rather than a biblical text or a writing known from outside the community), the *Rule* gives us precious, firsthand information about the religious and social ethos of the sect, as well as a window into the process for joining oneself to the sect and the rules by which the community life was governed. From this text we learn of the community's strict dualism, and its central desire to live as "sons of light" [sic] separated from a world populated by the "children of darkness." We encounter a community that is at once intensely devoted to the correct observance of Torah in all its details and magnificently aware of God's grace and mercy as the foundation for righteousness: "The perfection of my way and the uprightness of my heart is in his hand. He shall blot out my transgressions by his righteousness.... My justice is from the fountain of his righteousness." This hymn at the end of the *Rule* breaks all stereotypes of Judaism as a religion of "works" in opposition to "grace." IQS resonates in important ways with the New Testament, from the dualism of the Johannine literature to Paul's understanding of God's mercy as the foundation for our righteousness.

This beautiful edition opens with an accessible and lucid introduction by Charlesworth, beautifully illustrated with full-page photographs of the Qumran site and the caves where the scrolls were found. Charlesworth discusses the discovery and contents of the scrolls, the community that wrote and preserved them, and their significance for our understanding of early Judaism and the birth of the church, closing with an outline of the *Rule*. Following this brief introduction are clearly legible photographic plates of each of the eleven columns of IQS with facing page transcriptions with critical apparatus comparing the text of IQS with the six copies (and fragments) of the *Rule* found in cave 4. These plates are the chief selling point of the volume, for it is as close to examining the *Rule* itself as most students of Qumran are likely to come. Following the plates are translations by leading Dead Sea Scrolls scholars in English (J. H. Charlesworth), Modern Hebrew (E. Qimron), French (J. Duhaime), Italian (P. Sacchi), German (H. Lichtenberger), and Spanish (F. García Martínez). A centerfold of the complete *Rule of the Community* completes this ultimate coffee table edition of an ancient Jewish text. Readers interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the beliefs and life of the Qumran community, and the significance of these texts for our understanding of early Judaism and Christians would be advised to turn first to the incomparably more comprehensive and affordable books by G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Penguin, 1997), and J. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans,

1994). For those who are pursuing advanced studies in IQS itself, or who just enjoy beautiful reproductions of ancient works, the present volume will be an indispensable and enjoyable aid.

David deSilva

Robert Hetzron, ed., *The Semitic Languages*, London/New York: Routledge, 1997. xx + 572 pp., hb., \$200.00.

Edward Lipinski, *Semitic Languages: Outline of a Comparative Grammar (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 80)*, Leuven: Peeters, 1997, 754 pp., hb.

Both of these volumes are very important introductions to the Semitic language family, of which the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Bible are a part. Unfortunately, their price will undoubtedly limit them to academic library collections. Each does an admirably job in presenting the languages involved, even though they approach the task from differing perspectives.

Hetzron, retired from the University of California at Santa Barbara, has assembled an outstanding team of twenty-three scholars from around the world, most of whom are well-known in their work in the language which they present. Each individual language (Old- Akkadian, Amorite and Eblaite, Aramaic, Ugaritic, Ancient Hebrew, Phoenician and the eastern Canaanite languages, classical Arabic, Sayhadic [Epigraphic South Arabic], and Ge'ez; Modern- Arabic dialects and Maltese, Modern Hebrew, Neo-Aramaic, modern South Arabian, Tigrinya, Tigré, Amharic and Argobba, Harari, Silte [East Gurage], and Outer South Ethiopic) is covered by a chapter of up to 31 pages. These are preceded by discussions of the family sub-groupings within Semitic, the various writing systems, and the grammatical traditions of Arabic and Hebrew.

Each language is presented as regards its phonetics (the sound system), morphology (word form), and syntax (word order and interrelationships). Brief bibliographies for those interested in doing further exploration are provided. Languages are presented in transcription, which is useful since few would be expected to have a mastery of the multiplicity of scripts represented. This makes the volume more accessible, though one would have to be a fairly committed student to be able to wend through the entire volume. It does present a useful and readable, though of necessity brief, introduction to each language.

Lipinski has a different goal in mind, as is reflected by his subtitle. He sets out, as stated in the introduction, to provide 'primarily an introductory work, directed towards an audience consisting, on the one hand, of students of one or several Semitic languages, and, on the other, of students of linguistics. Its aim is to underline the common characteristics and trends of the languages and dialects that compose the Semitic language "family" by applying the comparative method of historical linguistics' (pp. 17-18).

The introductory section defines the Semitic languages, and places them within the context of Afro-Asiatic languages. He briefly discusses proto-Semitic and the various North (Ugritic, Paleosyria, Amorite), East (Akkadian), West (Canaanite, Aramaic, Arabic), and South (South Arabian, Ethiopic) Semitic languages and their scripts. Lipinski then does a detailed comparative analysis of the language family members as regards phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicon. For those not familiar with

linguistics, he provides a useful glossary of technical terminology from that field. There is also general index of over 40 pages, and an additional index of words and forms for each language, which could serve as a mini-dictionary.

The book itself is a tour-de-force, the result of decades of dedication to a wide range of languages, the likes of which would be hard to match for any other individual scholar today. Lipinski does not claim equal expertise in all of the languages discussed, but acknowledges gratitude to a number of leading scholars whom he has consulted, their works being listed in a 45 page bibliography. The volume will be the standard for years to come, and will be a model for future research in the field and a resource for all interested in the topic. It should be added to every specialist Semitics library, and should also be on the shelves of the better seminaries. The publishers and contributors of both works are to be thanked for their important and exemplary work. David W. Baker

John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, Harvard Semitic Museum Studies 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997. xl + 647 pp., cloth, \$44.95.

idem, *Key to A Grammar of Akkadian*, Harvard Semitic Museum Studies 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997. viii + 137 pp., cloth, \$24.95.

Akkadian is the Semitic language used in Mesopotamia from the early third millennium BC until after the time of Christ. It is the earliest Semitic language attested to date. Israel and its ancestors had much to do with speakers of this language. This ranged from Abram's departure with his family from Ur, where it would have been used, to Israel's return to the area against her will at the time of her exile to Assyria (722 BC) and Babylonia (586 BC). Akkadian was used to record numerous religious, economic and historical texts which cast helpful light on the events, culture, and beliefs of Israel and her neighbors. Adding to the importance of the language is the number of texts in Akkadian which have been preserved. Written mainly on clay tablets which, when baked, becomes much more permanent than papyrus or parchment, the amount of written material in Akkadian greatly exceeds that from the same period in Hebrew. Finally, on the linguistic level, Akkadian is a sister language to Hebrew and Aramaic, and an understanding of its grammar and vocabulary greatly assists our appreciation of these two biblical tongues.

John Huehnergard, professor at Harvard University, is to be thanked for providing for us the most thorough introduction to Akkadian in any language. He uses an deductive pedagogical approach, overtly modeling his grammar on those of Thomas Lambdin for Hebrew, Ethiopic and Coptic. Chapters, of which there are thirty eight, present the grammatical rules of concern with detailed discussion and paradigms. The Akkadian is presented in transliteration into English letters. Chapters conclude with exercises including vocabulary, assignments, and translation from and into Akkadian.

In lesson 9, the Akkadian writing system is introduced, and from then on signs are added to the vocabulary for memorization. They are given in Old Babylonian lapidary (monumental script carved in stone) and cursive scripts (used on clay), as well as the more common, and simpler, Neo-Assyrian forms. Exercise in transliteration and translation of these are also included. The correct answers are provided in the supplementary Key.

The chapters are followed by a supplementary reading selection from the Old Babylonian version of the Gilgamesh Epic in transliteration. A 45-page glossary of all Akkadian words encountered in the book is a boon, since there is no handy, one-volume dictionary for Akkadian. A list of Sumerian logograms and their Akkadian equivalents is also provided, as is an English-Akkadian word list. Five appendices cover dating systems, weights and measures, the historical development of Akkadian phonology, and the literary Standard Babylonian dialect and Assyrian, with their divergences from the Akkadian taught in the volume. The volume also includes with 31 paradigms, each with cross references to the places where they are discussed in the book itself: 3 for pronouns, 4 for nouns and adjectives, and the rest for verbs. It concludes with indexes of the various texts reproduced in the volume and of grammatical forms and subjects.

The volume, and the key, look like they would be suitable for self study, since the explanations are quite detailed, although classroom instruction and interaction. After successfully completing the volume, one would be very well prepared to read texts from numerous periods in various literary genres. I just wish the volumes were available when I studied Akkadian. They should be in all academic biblical studies libraries, and budding Hebrew students would be well rewarded by working through them.

David W. Baker

Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, translated by Mark E. Biddle, 3 vol., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997, 1638 pp., \$119.95.

This useful reference work is a translation of the *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, which was originally published in 1971. The conciseness of the entries and the scholarship of the contributors made the original a helpful resource indeed, and the content of entries has been translated without major alteration, apart from some updating of editions and translations referred to. A new key has been added to the start of each entry which cross-refers to discussions in BDB, *TDOT* by Botterweck and Ringgren, Koehler and Baumgartner's *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Van Gemeren's *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE)*, Harris et al., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, and Strong's concordance numbers. Also added was a concordance of places where the Masoretic Text verse numbers, which are used in this work, diverge from those of English translations.

Each entry consists of five elements: a discussion of the root and its use in other Semitic languages, statistical data on the use of the root and its forms (supplemented by an appendix with tables of most frequent Hebrew words, most common verbs, total word counts for each OT book, and other interesting information), the general meaning of the root in Hebrew, its theological significance, and comments on its subsequent usage in early Judaism and in the New Testament. The work itself concludes with indexes of Hebrew and Aramaic words (one in Hebrew characters and a second in transliteration), English glosses, modern authors, and a lengthy one (130 pages) of Scripture references.

There are less entries than the more recent *NIDOTTE*, but they at times greatly outshine them in length. For example, the entry on 'name' (*shām*) covers nineteen pages in *TLOT* but only five in *NIDOTTE*. It would not be redundant to have both works in

one's library. *TLOT* would indicate the understanding of main-line biblical scholars, mainly from Europe, and provides useful information such as distribution statistics which *NIDOTTE* does not provide. The latter presents generally a more conservative perspective which is more up-to-date. All academic biblical studies libraries should have both sets, and serious OT students will find themselves delving into both.

David W. Baker

Willem A. Van Gemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 5 vol., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997, 5965 pp., \$199.00.

This mammoth undertaking will greatly repay all who delve into its riches. Thanks must be expressed to the thirteen editors, over two hundred authors, and the publishers for the vision and execution of this project. It joins the previously published *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology*, edited by Colin Brown and published in 1975. While the latter has been gainfully used for almost a quarter century, the editors have built on its format, keeping its helpful features while making the present volumes even more user-friendly.

Readers will find *NIDOTTE* consists of at least three different reference tools. The first is a book-length (218 page) "Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis." This starts with an introduction (Van Gemeren) to the methodology and layout of the project. This must be read to best utilize the material which follows in the dictionary proper. Then come the following: Introduction- Hermeneutics, Text and Biblical Theology, 1- "Language, Literature, Hermeneutics and Biblical Theology: What's Theological About a Theological Dictionary?" (K. Vanhoozer); Part I- The Reliability of the Old Testament Text. 2- "Textual Criticism of the Old Testament and its relation to Exegesis and Theology" (Bruce Waltke); Part II- History, Theology and Hermeneutics. 3- "Old Testament History: A Theological Perspective" (Eugene Merrill), 4- "Old Testament History: A Hermeneutical perspective" (V. Philips Long); Part III- Literature, Interpretation, and Theology. 5- "Literary Approaches and Interpretation" (Tremper Longman III); 6- "Narrative Criticism: The Theological Implications of narrative Techniques" (Philip Satterthwaite); Part IV- Semantics, Interpretation, and Theology, 7- "Linguistics, meaning, Semantics, and Discourse Analysis" (Peter Cotterell); 8- "Principles of Productive Word Study" (John Walton); Part V- Canon, Literature, Interpretation, and Biblical Theology. 9- "The Flowering and Floundering of Old Testament Theology" (Elmer martens); 10- "Integrating Old Testament Theology and Exegesis: Literary, Thematic, and Canonical Issues" (Richard Schultz); Conclusion, 11- "Several Illustrations on Integrating of the GUIDE with *NIDOTTE* in Doing Old Testament Exegesis and Theology" (Van Gemeren). Each of these most useful introductions conclude with very helpful bibliographies. These chapters alone could serve as a textbook for a course in exegesis or hermeneutics. The last chapter in particular will repay study by those who want to use this work most effectively.

The next major section, stretching from mid-volume 1 through mid-volume 4, contains lexical articles discussing individual Hebrew words, arranged according to the Hebrew alphabet. These are similar in format to their NT counterparts. Each entry has the lexeme with a number taken from Goodrick-Kohlenberger's numbering system,

which is more complete and up-to-date than that of Strong. There are also brief definitions of the lexical forms. Following are a discussion of linguistic cognates in ancient Near Eastern languages, the meaning and use in the Old Testament and in post-biblical literature. The lexeme is then placed in one or more relevant semantic fields, which will help find other words that can help in understanding the words usage, with cross-references made to other related entries. A bibliography also accompanies each entry. Due to the layout of this section, some Hebrew knowledge is useful.

The third major section is a topical index of almost 1,000 pages. Here entries are listed according to the English alphabet. There are discussions of proper nouns, concepts such as adoption and idolatry, as well as presentations of the theology of individual OT books. Extensive cross-references back to the previous section make this a more suitable entry point for those whose Hebrew is lacking.

The fifth, index volume, is a treasure trove in itself. It begins with an alphabetical 'Index of Semantic Fields,' collecting all of these together into one place, providing another useful avenue for entering into theological analysis of the OT. It is made more usable by an eight page set of directions. An index of Hebrew words and phrases which are discussed follows, with the Hebrew appearing in transliteration as an aid for non-Hebraists. Scripture and subject indexes follow, and the volume concludes with tables for converting Strong's numbers to those of Goodrick-Kohlenberger, and vice versa.

While one must be aware of what can and cannot be done through theological word studies (see James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical language*, 1961), readers will greatly benefit from the judicious use of this work. For the NT, I find myself turning more frequently to *NIDNTT* than to Kittel's longer *TDNT*, and I imagine the same will apply here in reference to Botterweck and Ringgren's *TDOT*. All readers of this review should look at what the project has to offer, and serious students should plan on purchasing it, either from Zondervan or in electronic format through Logos Research Systems, for which I can supply information (e-mail: dbaker@ashland.edu; 419-289-5177).

David W. Baker

Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*, Downers Grove, Illinois: 1997, 414 pp., pb, \$19.95.

This book is not for those seeking an easy, "how-to" approach to spiritual warfare. It is for anyone who desires an in-depth, scholarly, biblical study of evil and the place of a warfare world view in scriptures.

"The central thesis of this work is that this warfare world view is in one form or another the basic world view of biblical authors, both in the Old Testament and even more so in the New. This is not to suggest that the biblical authors . . . deny that evil is also a reality of the human heart and human society. To the contrary, biblical authors consistently demonstrated a passionate concern for confronting evil in all the individual and societal forms it takes" (p. 13).

The author believes that the presence of evil and spiritual warfare was not something that early Christians simply contemplated intellectually. It was a reality of life that they actively confronted each day. The difference between the view expressed

in scripture and the view often expresses today is a matter of where one starts.

“... do we start with a view of God as being at war with evil or with a view of God as controlling evil? ... the central thrust of this work has been to argue that if we model our approach to the problem of evil after the New Testament, we must in every instance opt for the former, not the latter, starting point” (p.291).

Boyd confronts the classical-philosophical theology held by many in modern Western Christian circles. He does so, not with lofty philosophical arguments, but by holding up the real face of evil expressed in the story of one little Jewish girl and her mother living in the Warsaw ghetto during Nazi occupation. Having thus raised our consciousness, the author methodically presents the biblical approach to evil and warfare.

Part One of the book systematically examines “The Warfare World View of the Old Testament” in 167 pages. Part Two analyzes in depth “The Warfare World View of the New Testament” in 124 pages. The author then includes 101 pages of extensive notes, reflecting his goal to write the book at two levels. In the body of the text, the author presents a solid exposition of the subject for the general reader. He attempts to satisfy the needs of the scholar through his comprehensive notes.

This is not a book one breezes through in one reading. It is a book that one settles down with for a while to soak in the depth of research and wealth of insight, and it is worth the time.

Gregory A. Boyd is a professor of theology at Bethel College and a preaching pastor at Woodland Hills Church in St. Palls, Minnesota. He has also written *Cynic, Sage or Son of God?* and *Recovering the Real Jesus in an Age of Revisionist Replies*. Boyd is working on a sequel to *God at War* titled, *Satan and the Problem of Evil*.

Walter Kime

Kevin Giles, *What On Earth is the Church? An Exploration in New Testament Theology*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995, 243 pp., \$16.99.

In a vast world where Christians are living on every continent and claim membership to many different denominations, we remain uncertain as to the meaning of “the church.” In this enlightening book Giles offers the Trinity as an analogical model to define the church as it should exist today.

Kevin Giles, an Anglican minister and theological consultant for World Vision Australia, offers several reasons for writing such a book. Protestant scholarship recently has not produced detailed studies on ecclesiology of the caliber that Roman Catholics have achieved. In addition, he wishes to challenge the modern individualism that is so prevalent in the western church.

The author approaches this study from two directions. The first seven chapters deal directly with scriptural analysis: the teachings in the four Gospels, and the apostolic theology in the book of Acts, the epistles of Paul, the non-Pauline epistles, and Revelation. It is in these chapters that Giles asks the questions: What did Jesus intend by calling the disciples, and did Jesus found or institute the church? Answering these questions takes up more than two-thirds of the book.

In the final three chapters the author moves toward a systematic theology. He discusses the ecumenical movement and the change that has taken place in its view of "the church." He challenges both the conservative evangelical and the liberal views of the church and provides an alternative ecclesiology based upon the Trinity.

Giles suggests that finding a working definition for the church by merely translating the word "*ecclesia*" is impossible. Therefore, he sets out to look at the many names that scripture has ascribed to the church. This provides a complete portrait of the church as seen in the New Testament.

One main problem to which Giles continues to return is the presupposed individualism that permeates modern thought. He asserts that the idea of autonomous congregations and even individuals scattered throughout the world is a concept foreign to Scripture. Scripture sees the church in three ways: the universal community, the local community, and the individual congregation. However, he suggests that congregations are never autonomous; there is always a sense in the New Testament of being a part of a larger body.

Giles also critiques static concepts of the church. He says, "Besides confirming the basic premise on which the study commenced, we discovered not a community established and defined once for all, but a community in transition" (pp.182). He suggests that the church needs a provisional ecclesiology that allows change to take place as it continues to develop on earth.

Giles finds the following characteristics to be basic to a correct definition of the church: community, unity, diversity, and changes that continually occur. He claims that divisions in the church are present with us only until the communal life of Christians is revealed on the last day.

He also offers an interesting basis for our ecclesiology. Rather than base it upon scripture alone or upon tradition, he suggests that we build our ecclesiology upon the triune nature of God. Along with this model the author gives four distinct aspects that should describe the church: communal, ecumenical, egalitarian, and non-sexist. This final chapter gives us a practical view of how the church could be realized on earth.

Giles provides the church a foundation upon which it can continue to build and transform itself. This book is a scholarly work, thoroughly researched, and well-written. Anyone wishing to read this should set aside extra time. Ministers, students, and laity will find this a valuable resource as they develop their understanding of the church.

Andrew S. Hamilton

Tom Yoder Neufeld, *Put on the Armor of God: The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, 182 pp., \$45.00.

"I was struck by the importance of power and empowerment in Ephesians" (11). So reports Tom Yoder Neufeld, an associate professor of Religious Studies at Conrad Grebel College, University of Waterloo, in Ontario, Canada. This discovery took place in the basement of the library at Harvard Divinity School in 1984 as he did research for a graduate seminar on Roman Christianity. He goes on to say, "My attention fixed quickly on chapters 1 and 3, but especially on the motif in chapter 6 of believers in the armor of God, at war with the powers in the heavens (11).

Motivated by scholarly, theological, and pastoral interests, the author pursued the subject of the Divine Warrior throughout his graduate studies. *Put on the Armor of God* is in essence the dissertation accepted by Harvard Divinity School. This scholarly document follows the motif of the Divine Warrior from Isaiah 59 through The Wisdom of Solomon 5 and I Thessalonians 5, to its conclusion in Ephesians 6. "Several issues attended this study from the very beginning: agency, status, the function of mythological and/or metaphorical terminology, and finally the relationship of the human to the divine" (12).

With disciplined thoroughness, Neufeld carefully examines the context of each text as well as the Divine Warrior and the armor. Each step of the way he analyzes the passage and reports his observations. The document is a detailed study of the Greek and Hebrew, and is extensively footnoted. From Isaiah 59 where God saw that there was no justice and none to intervene, "So He Himself stepped in to save them with His mighty power and justice" (Isaiah 59:16, NLT), to the imperative in Ephesians for the community of saints to "put on all of God's armor" (Ephesians 6:11, NLT), the writer traces the evolution of the tradition-historical motif of the Divine Warrior through a significant transformation.

In Isaiah, it is God who puts on his own armor and fights the enemies of justice. In Ephesians, it is the church that is called to "battle at the very front lines of cosmic hostility" (151). Neufeld finds that I Thessalonians 5 is at the very heart of this transformation.

In Thessalonians 5 Paul takes the breath-taking step of placing the confused and even fearful Thessalonians into God's armor, thereby implicating them in the invasion of the Divine Warrior. More over, the surprise element of that divine intrusion is heightened by the nature of that participation—the militant exercise of faith, love, and the hope of salvation (154).

Put on the Armor of God is not light reading for the mass market. It is a scholarly investigation that challenges the role of the church in the struggle of reconciliation. At a time and in a society where the role and authority of the church is often minimized, I found it refreshing to discover again the values and power of the Divine Warrior who calls the believer to an aggressive involvement in the battle. Walter J. Kime

Henry T. C. Sun and Keith L. Eades, with James M. Robinson and Garth I Moeller, eds., *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 403 pp.

This is a useful collection of 25 essays, mostly in English though 4 are in German. Many of the essays are in explicit dialogue with some aspect or other of Rolf Knierim's significant writings on Old Testament Theology, often seeking to extend the implications of Knierim's work.

It should immediately be said, however, that the title of the book is misleading. On the one hand, problems of *biblical* theology, in the sense of the interpretation and use of Old and New Testaments together as scripture, are almost nowhere in view (apart from in the short and crisp essay by Pannenberg), for this is a collection of essays about the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, the term "theology" is left

generally undefined, and so the essays range widely from positivist historical accounts of Israelite religion and literature to varying attempts to reflect on the hermeneutical issues of Hebrew scripture as an enduring authority and resource for Christian faith. For me, the tenor of the book sometimes tilts more in the direction of aspects of ancient religious thought than of constructive hermeneutics and theology; but my difficulties here, which relate to the wider question of what theology is and how as a scholarly discipline it may be appropriately practiced, are perhaps simply difficulties with contemporary biblical scholarship more generally.

Some essays discuss primarily questions of method and approach. Rolf Rendtorff gives, as ever, good insights into German scholarship, while Burke Long offers an interesting account of differences between modern and postmodern approaches to biblical study (using 2 Kings 3 as a test case). Marvin Sweeney discusses the significance of the respective canonical shapes of Christian Old Testament and Jewish Tanakh. General questions of textual criticism are discussed in a characteristic essay by James Sanders, while some possible implications of the Hebrew text as found at Qumran are sketched out by George Brooke. Among the exegetical studies, Roy Melugin's exposition of Isaiah 40-55 stands out as a persuasive account of the movement of thought within the biblical text. And I was fruitfully provoked to reflection by Antony Campbell's structural analysis of David, Saul and Goliath. in 1 Samuel 16:14-18:30. A range of contemporary issues are also allowed to set the context for, and interact with, exegesis, as when Elmer Martens discusses "Yahweh's Compassion and Ecotheology" or Stephen Reed engages with diet, animals and vegetarianism.

In all, a worthwhile collection. It does not, however, so much offer fresh channels of theological thought as helpfully extend existing ones.

R.W.L. Moberly, Durham, United Kingdom

Roger Badham, ed., *Introduction to Christian Theology* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

This volume contains essays by fifteen scholars who between them describe the current state of Christian theology in North America. The contributors are often eminent (Hauerwas, Henry, Hick), and each is asked to describe his or her own tradition in order to provide a survey of what is happening and where. My first response as a reader was to wonder about this procedure: whilst reading the introduction, it makes perfect sense as a theory, but on seeing the execution in the papers, I was left with the feeling that more profitable results might have been obtained in different ways. Many of the papers have the feel of manifestos, or even sloganeering, and in some cases the reader will wonder what has been added to his or her knowledge: that Carl Henry (for example) thinks inerrancy is important we knew; to understand why, or even what he means by it, we would need to go beyond the series of headlines that is offered here.

The best of the papers are those which set out to define a tradition by exploring it. James Buckley's essay on Postliberal theology, for instance, argues an interesting case that this is a more Catholic tradition than it has usually been thought to be, thus offering a new and worthwhile reading of that tradition. Those that carefully define a minor or foreign tradition will be useful to those of us who were previously unaware:

Werner Jeanron exposes the concerns and presuppositions of what he calls 'correlational theology' in revealing ways. Hauerwas is uncharacteristically disappointing, Oden at least entertaining, and so we could go through. The papers vary in quality, but some profit will be found in almost all. On these grounds, the book is useful for anyone wanting a map of the current state of North American theology.

Back to the introduction, for the book has a further purpose. Badham finishes his comments by raising a concern. What this volume points to is fragmentation: four essays in the penultimate section demonstrate this well, as feminist theology becomes further fragmented into womanist (black woman's theology), *mujerista* (Hispanic/Latina woman's theology) and Asian-American woman's theology. Badham asks for an Augustinian hermeneutics of charity, so that each fragment can hear what the other is saying and take it seriously as a conversation partner. 'This book,' he writes 'is an attempt to create a conversation by presenting competing voices that can speak truthfully of their own theological positions.' (p.21) The 'competing voices' are well-chosen and each is given a right to speak; but no 'conversation' was evident to this reader, at least. This is, I think, not a fault of the editor, but of the contributors: North American theologians, more so than those of other parts of the world, it seems, no longer know how to talk to each other – and some of them appear not to *care*. This is a sad situation for women and men who claim to speak on behalf of a faith that values communication so highly that it begins with the incarnation of the Divine Word.

Steve Holmes, Spurgeons College, London.

Kelly James Clark, *When Faith Is Not Enough*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans., 1997, pp. 190, \$18.00.

Two primary themes lace their way throughout this thoughtfully written work. One concerns the question of doubt's relationship to faith. As knotty as the first is, the second is embarrassingly uncomplicated: Why do our most profound attempts to find meaning and happiness apart from faith inevitably lead to despair and brokenness? In illustration of the seemingly impenetrable complexity as well as serene simplicity of authentic faith, characters as diverse as Abraham, Job, Kierkegaard and the Brothers Karamazov parade before the reader in this volume.

The author is refreshingly honest as he wrestles with the "shadow of doubt" – the hiddenness of God – particularly in the contexts of a pluralistic, and for the most part pagan, culture. Doubt, writes the author, is "that secret sin buried within the soul." Although we are afraid to touch it, authentic Christian belief "demands that we uncover it, understand it, and make our peace with it." The doubt encountered on life's journey with which the author struggles is a doubt endemic to religious belief and is to be distinguished from obstinate unbelief. The latter, in the author's words, is characterized by "a hardness of heart, a stubbornness, an unwillingness to trust or hope in God." The sincere doubt of the believer, by contrast, is the "authentic expression of anguish over our wretched believing condition."

While belief in God may provide the intellectual and moral center of our lives, the fact remains that, existentially, we may still not be certain of its truth. Critical scrutiny – an ability observed by the author to be both blessing and bane – must be applied to our faith if in fact that faith is seaworthy. The reader is thus cautioned: "Not all

atheists are fools or idiots," for intellectual humility is a virtue that recognizes the limit of human understanding—an understanding that is incapable of penetrating the mystery of providence and pain, innocent suffering of gratuitous evil. In the end, when alone with our questions, we are left with the confession of the writer of Hebrews: "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of realities not seen." Like Abraham of old, we too do not see the inheritance; we merely bear seeds of the promise—a promise not yet fulfilled.

The search for self, as described by the author (a professor of philosophy at Calvin College), ends in the manifestation of the virtue of humility: "It is only when we realize that on our own we are nothing that we can open our self up to God"; any "trivial attempts to fill up that space with meaning amount to precisely nothing." Humility, in contrast to the arch vice pride, represents the "unmasking of the self." This "unmasking" is a necessary precondition of all meaningful human fellowships and the foundation-stone for the "establishment of a proper relationship with God." Finding one's true self is no other than finding "satisfaction in the esteem of God." Finding personal self-esteem in the esteem of God is understood by the author to reconcile the two poles that constitute biblical anthropology—human worth as the *imago Dei* and human depravity. To deny either pole is to deny the essence of human nature. Doing justice to both elements finds expression in an unconventional bit of rabbinic wisdom: "A man should carry two stones in his pocket. On one should be inscribed, 'I am but dust and ashes.' On the other, 'For my sake the world was created.' And he should use each stone as he needs it."

Life's pilgrimage, sustained by a healthy, probing faith and manifesting itself in the grace of humility, forbids us from becoming either complacent or anxious. The faith-life is anchored in the awareness of "a moral and spiritual center of the universe," around which our lives, our health, our being, revolve. We live and press on, knowing that God is perfecting the good work already begun in us—a work that He will ultimately bring to completion, regardless of faith's mystery that so often seems impenetrable.

For the wayfarer wrestling with doubt and seeking a spiritual compass, this volume is a welcome road map, even when the author stubbornly resists dispensing pat answers to unexpected turns in life's way. J. Daryl Charles, Taylor University

Millard J. Erickson *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1998.

Erickson will need little introduction; this volume contains a list of "other titles by..." that will ensure that. In this little (161pp., including index) book, he returns to the task of mapping contemporary evangelical theology that he previously essayed in *The Evangelical Left*. Erickson announces his purpose as "to survey some representative evangelical responses to postmodernism." (p.9) A few pages of introduction to postmodernism, and then we are led through a tour of evangelical theologians that makes up the meat of the book, before a final comment on the possibility of Christian apologetics to postmodern thinkers. I suppose Erickson would expect his reviewers to consider how well he has read each theologian, and how usefully these thinkers span the range of theological responses. The book contains accurate readings, as far as I know,

and certainly maps out some territory. Its flaws are on a far more fundamental level than that.

'...[S]ome *representative* evangelical responses ...' It might be considered deeply ironic that a book on postmodernism should regard the views of eight (including Erickson himself) North American males as in any sense 'representative'. This is more than just ironic, however: it is an indication that Erickson has not begun to grasp the challenge thrown down by postmodernity. In this duel the respondent is not offered choice of weapon, and if he arrives with a coterie of male WASP seconds he will be laughed off the field.

And so we go through the book. At every turn, the things that the postmodern critics have devoted themselves to systematically casting doubt on, or even undermining, are simply assumed. Erickson offers a reading of each of his representatives: what makes him presume that he can read and report with any degree of accuracy? Does he not realise that 'every decoding is a further encoding', and so that his 'readings' are no more than reflections of his own subconscious? Worse, he applies the same interpretative questions to each one, assuming (with charming naïveté, no doubt) that 'knowledge', whatever that may mean, is not necessarily shaped by its object. In each case aspects are described as 'good' and 'bad' suggesting, astonishingly enough, that Erickson apparently has straightforward access to some transcendent value system which will enable him to pass moral judgement!

Postmodernity is something serious. It is a challenge on a methodological and philosophical level to current ways of thought and practice. It is a full frontal, and apparently successful, attack on precisely those intellectual presuppositions that Erickson adopts in writing this book. The whole conception of this book unreflectively assumes the falsity of the postmodern critique, and yet Erickson then offers a supposedly neutral evaluation of a series of positions relating to this critique. Methodologically, this would be a bizarre procedure whatever the object in view; with this object in view it is indicative of a failure to grasp what is being discussed. The reader who has already decided that the questions asked by postmodernity are to be dismissed will find his or her prejudices confirmed by this book, and will no doubt gain some insight into the responses being made by (North American, male) evangelicals; the reader who does not regard these questions as quite so trivial, however, will just be bemused.

Steve Holmes, Spurgeons College, London

Henry H. Knight III, *A Future for Truth: Evangelical Theology in a Postmodern World*. Nashville: Abington Press, 1997, 253 pp.

While postmodernity challenges the very foundation of Christianity, we find an evangelical scholar proposing an answer to its charges. However, this time the approach comes from the perspective of pietism. Knight writes this proposal hoping to explain how Christians can believe in a revelation that they claim is universally significant and still proclaim its message to a post-modern world.

Henry Knight III, an Assistant Professor of Evangelicalism at Saint Paul School of Theology, challenges the traditional universal truth claims. In a world where we are faced daily with diverse cultures and perspectives, universal truth is naturally

questioned. Knight has thoughtfully put together a ten-chapter book that suggests Christianity is now positioned better than it has been in centuries to spread the gospel.

In the first three chapters of this book, Knight offers definitions to key issues surrounding truth claims. He sets out first by offering a definition to a label that many different people lay claim to, "evangelicalism." In this first chapter, he shows the wide spectrum of meaning that it holds and how he will use it in the text. Considering evangelicalism, he interestingly enough embraces Bloesch's criticism of liberal and conservative theology which shows that there is not much difference between the two. The second and third chapters discuss "modernity" and "postmodernity." These three chapters give the reader a fine overview to some key issues facing Christians today.

However, it is chapter four that truly introduces the central issue of the book. From here to the end of chapter ten, Knight wrestles with the prospect of proclaiming Jesus Christ as the universal savior to a postmodern world. Within these chapters he compares and contrasts the ultra-critical and the post-critical approaches. In the end, he concludes that it is the post-critical description of narratively shaped communities--enhanced by a strong view of the Holy Spirit--that allows Christians to proclaim Christ to a postmodern world while remaining faithful to the gospel.

Knight has skillfully put together a book that challenges the conservative evangelicals. Among its strengths, this book deals with relevant issues for today's world. Knight has provided a fair introductory analysis of postmodernity that is readable for students. He has also given us a good introduction to some contemporary theological issues.

This book, however, had some weaknesses as well. While I found the discussion interesting, it became noticeable that key figures outside this book who have been active in the debate concerning modernity and postmodernity were missing. This may be due to Knight centering around evangelicalism, but it has resulted in the failure to acknowledge some key questions dealing with these issues. Nevertheless, in the end Knight provides evangelicals with the weighty challenge of entering into the postmodern world while still proclaiming Jesus Christ. I would recommend this book to pastors and students alike.

Andrew S. Hamilton

Arthur F. Holmes, *Fact, Value and God*, 1997. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, pp. 183, \$18.00.

In light of what is deemed "a checkered career" of twentieth-century moral philosophy, Arthur Holmes explores the fact-value connection in the wider context of metaphysics and theology. Unconvinced that we live in a value-free universe and that fact and value are unrelated, the author attempts to explore historical ways in which moral values have been grounded in the nature of reality. What emerges, in the author's words, is "a more pervasive linkage than I had anticipated" between religious and moral beliefs, despite contemporary philosophical claims to the contrary.

Chapters 1 to 6 concern themselves with metaphysical accounts of the cosmos, teleology and notions of good and evil, ranging from pre-Socratic philosophers, Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics to Augustine and Aquinas. The pre-Socratics largely replace the early mythology about nature and the gods with a more "scientific" outlook, which in turn prepares the way for Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics. A central concern of

Plato's works is the improvement of the soul. It is the Sophists who most personify what Plato opposes, namely, rhetoric as a means to achieve influence, rather than the inculcation of virtue. Whether addressing matters of the state or the individual, Plato believes that knowing good is essential to improving the soul. In the author's view, Plato's concept of God, though emerging only gradually, anticipates Judeo-Christian teleology and moral arguments and influences the development of Christian theology.

While Plato is much more the moralist and reformer, Aristotle seems more the objective scientist. Aristotle's dissatisfaction with his predecessors is their lack of consistently scientific method. Moral philosophy in Aristotle draws an analogy between nature and human action. Nature's ends are not matters of change; Aristotelian teleology pervades all things, including human well-being (*eudaimonia*). Virtue means the flourishing of the human condition; moral virtues are the excellence of the appetitive life, and intellectual virtues of the life of the mind.

During the New Testament era, Christian and Greek philosophy come into repeated contact. The apostle Paul cites Stoic philosophers as he addresses Stoics and Epicureans in Athens, and his reflections on creation and conscience in Romans 1 and 2 are reminiscent of Stoic notions of natural law and the cosmos. An important touch point between Christian and Stoic philosophy is the Logos as the divine intermediary which governs the universe. Important distinctions between three competing explanations of the cosmos emerge during the early Christian centuries. The dualist echoes the gnostic claim that matter exists independent of God, and therefore, is a source of evil. For the pantheist, Stoic and neoplatonic ideas of matter emanating from the divine make the divine and nature one, whereby evil is only a privation, a deficiency, in reason. The theist, on the other hand, makes the crucial distinction between God and the natural world. Created *ex nihilo*, the cosmos is given its existence—and value—due to God's free action. Creation *ex nihilo*, moreover, means that evil is not an inherent necessity in the structure of the cosmos—an issue that is more fully expounded by Augustine.

The problem of evil constitutes a major influence in Augustine's occupation with Platonic and Manichean thought. As understood by the latter, an eternal dualism allows no room for the eventual vindication of good, and any notion of justice is illusory. For Augustine, the implications of the biblical doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* satisfy conditions for human freedom and divine sovereignty, while offering hope for both history and the human soul.

To the extent that Plato anticipates Christian metaphysics for Augustine, Aristotle does so for Aquinas. Unlike some of his day, Aquinas was unwilling to acknowledge that philosophy and theology stood in opposition; rather, reason and revelation, rightly understood, work together. Knowledge comes to human beings in two ways: through divine law as revealed in the scriptures and natural law that is "written on the heart," as Paul expresses it. Natural law derives from self-evident "first principles" elucidated by reason and implanted by God the Creator. In integrating Augustinian theology with Aristotelian philosophy, Aquinas sets forth an understanding of ethics that is seen to be "inescapably religious"; moral good is grounded in the reality of God.

Over two millennia witness to the conviction that transcendent realities supersede history and human choices. For the author a shift can be seen with the nominalist construction of human nature, Scottish realism, Kantian dualism and volitional

autonomy, utilitarianism, Hegelian dialectic and Nietzschean evolutionary naturalism. Chapters 7 through 13 are devoted to this gradual shift.

Utility and personal happiness constitute the measure of ethical conduct for pragmatist-hedonists such as John Stuart Mill. For Mill, no metaphysical theory or theological presupposition is needed. Liberty and justice cohere in a social stability that issues out of subordinating individual impulses to social ends, without any recourse to metaphysical claims. Ethics in Mill is an empirical science that understands people as complexities of sensation who are ordered and managed by social means.

In Kantian thought, reason not only reflects nature but also determines its essence and meaning, in accordance with the Enlightenment tradition. Whereas Kantian reason is able to exercise its sovereignty over the phenomenological world, it is powerless to discern anything about the noumenal realm of the spirit; discerning meaning and value by Kantian logic requires the use of the irrational. For Hegel, Kantian ethics is too abstract. Reason and passion need reconciling. The pulsation of reason and will throughout history is due to an all inclusive Absolute Spirit, the highest expression of which finds its embodiment in the nation-state. Hegelian "theology" deifies history, with its creative and dialectical processes. Consequently, Hegel is unable to acknowledge any ultimate distinction between good and evil, since both categories inhere in a nation of God. Hence, radical evil—such as murder, genocide or chronic poverty—as well as natural catastrophe—e.g., floods, earthquakes and pestilence—defy any attempts at explanation. In the end, such historical positivism cannot provide any assurance of good overcoming evil, leaving the question of the relationship between fact and value unresolved.

While ethics is demystified and "humanized" in people like Hume, Mill, Kant and Kegel, the relativizing process is complete in the work of Nietzsche, who sees no theoretical or pragmatic reasons for belief in God. Christianity, with its emphasis on the fictitious afterlife, constitutes a rejection of the "real" world, thereby "corrupting" humanity. Christian faith serves as a "counter-concept to nature," an invention that degrades both the body and the passions. Nietzsche's reconstruction is a call to move "beyond good and evil" and to embrace nature. Nature itself reflects a will to power, a universal drive that underlies the world. Although it makes no explicitly metaphysical claims, Nietzschean evolutionary naturalism, in the author's view, takes a metaphysical posture by its rejection of ethical objectivity.

The purpose of this volume is to trace briefly the historical roots of moral philosophy and demonstrate the connection between the fact-value relationship and notions of God. Several broader historical approaches to ethics reveal it to be grounded not just in fact but in some concept of divine transcendence, whereas modern and postmodern approaches to ethics divorce themselves from this presupposition. But even ethical relativism, as the author observes in tipping his hat to academic celebrity Richard Rorty, depends on a presupposed belief in God. The great value of this volume, which is selective and assumes general philosophical knowledge on the part of the reader, is the author's ability to critique the movement of moral philosophy, with its increasingly secular and immanent trajectory, in the light of an alternative perspective—namely, belief in the *Logos* and an ordered universe, the conviction of which "grounds objective truth and goodness, gives purpose in life and viability to reason, and offers hope of an eventually moral world."

J. Daryl Charles

Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia: Christian Moral Perspectives. Committee on Medical Ethics, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C. Morehouse, 1997.

This book is the report by the Episcopal Dioceses of Washington, D.C., concerning the question of assisted suicide and euthanasia for those who are in pain and near death. The report attempts to present "both sides of the question, as well as two 'middle' views" on the issue (xi). The report indicates that some would have wished for them to "reach morally binding conclusions," but that they have not yet found a way to do so (xiii). The committee indicates a strong commitment to openness and dialogue, especially in the event that new information is made available.

The committee is to be commended for offering helpful distinctions and definitions of relevant terms (Section B), which should be helpful to those who have not read widely on the moral questions surrounding assisted suicide and euthanasia. The report is fair and accurate in presenting contemporary discussion of the issues.

However, in my view this report has significant weaknesses, most of which stem from its failure to make any substantial moral judgement about the issues that are presented. Setting aside secondary problems with this report, then, I will attempt to address what I think is the main problem.

There is an apparent presumption that the issues are best sorted out simply by presenting all sides as fairly and accurately as possible, and recognizing differences of opinion. However, there are problems with such a tactic. First, truth becomes secondary, something perhaps seen best in an analogy with certain court room practices. What is important is persuasion, and sometimes the most persuasive view is not the one that corresponds with truth. Persuasion may be derived from stacking up numerous arguments that confuse and create an appearance of a "preponderance of evidence". Second, and following on this point, the process of weighing arguments in such a way often does not take special account of those arguments that better grasp the truth. To illustrate, it is like stacking weights on two sides of a scale, but failing to account for differences in individual weights. As a result, the "winning" side is the one with the most weights, not the most weight.

An indication of the problem of the committee's approach is found early on. Since there is disagreement among Christians, they suggest, we may consider assisted suicide and euthanasia a disputable matter (cf. Rom. 14:1). Thus, it seems to be implied, we need to agree to disagree and work on building up the community. Is this framing of a possible solution acceptable? Disagreement amongst Christians on an issue does not indicate that the issue is a "disputable matter". It may indicate that someone (or some group) is wrong! American slavery was not a disputable matter simply because some Christians argued strongly against it and others argued strongly for it.

The committee presents all arguments openly, fairly, and as objectively as possible, leaving judgments and conclusions to the reader. This is highly unfortunate, for two reasons. First, the committee fails to discern the difference between weighty arguments and those that are not at all compelling. And second, it fails to draw its own moral judgment concerning assisted suicide and euthanasia. Perhaps what is needed, even more than "openness" and "dialogue" on these and other moral issues, is moral wisdom and courage. The committee serves as a voice of the Church, and the Church ought to be able to make moral judgements on such crucial issues. It ought not to have

simply presented the evidence for the jury to decide, but also to have *weighed* the evidence and offered a verdict.

Of course, when the committee is divided sharply, this is a difficult task. Yet that does not indicate that assisted suicide and euthanasia are disputable matters, but only that the committee, as a reflection of the Church as a whole, stands in need of the transformation of the mind and heart that would produce the unity of Christ. And, one would hope, a moral judgment on such significant issues.

K.T. Magnuson, Wake Forest, NC

Michael Manning, *Euthanasia and Physician-assisted Suicide: Killing or Caring?* New York: Paulist Press 1998, ix + 120 pp., \$8.95.

This is a concise, clearly written book on a pair of closely related ethical issues—euthanasia (E) and physician-assisted suicide (PAS)—that modern society is ever more readily embracing. Those outside of, as well as within, the church know the secular, popular level arguments that have led Oregon to legalize PAS and Holland to permit E—sympathy for a dying person who requests help to end their suffering. The initial problem for the reflective individual is to retrieve the reasons that underlie the traditional ethic against (suicide), E and PAS, so as to bear up to the seductive nature of the popular reasons that favor E and PAS. This book is very helpful toward that end.

Manning provides the reader basic definitions of E and PAS and sketches out the traditional Christian position, in particular, that which features the natural law tradition of Roman Catholicism and St. Thomas Aquinas. However, one of the main strengths of the book is its short chapter on the secular history of euthanasia (from Plato to Darwinism) and the religious history on “crimes against life” (from St. Augustine to the Magisterial Documents and arguments of John Paul II). The following chapter on “Self Determination” is an argument for moral limits on autonomy and compassion, by appeal to the literature of the Church, numerous contemporary theologians and bioethicists, e.g., Richard McCormick, William May and Daniel Callahan. The chapter on “Killing vs. Allowing to Die” addresses the most fundamental ethical distinctions that one must carefully sort out, together with the proper use of the Principle of double Effect. These distinctions must also be employed in order to hold that it may be permissible to discontinue life-sustaining treatment (in limited conditions) but that PAS and E are unethical in principle. This chapter is somewhat weak, as it employs “natural” conditions and “artificial” treatments as if they are moral distinctions per se, the “Principle of the Common Good” is too vague and open to misuse, and the reader is left unclear whether or not Manning is arguing that nutrition and hydration must be provided endlessly, e.g., in cases of the persistent vegetative state. It would be helpful there to add the American Medical Associations’ (Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs Statement on Withholding or Withdrawing Life Prolonging Medical Treatment, March 15, 1986) clinical criteria for marking off permissible cases of allowing to die from the impermissible practice of PAS and E. The criteria for termination of life-sustaining treatment are that: the patient must be terminally ill, imminently dying, suffering, they must meet the conditions of making an informed request to forgo treatment, and then the patient may be sedated and allowed to die from the underlying condition, but must not be intentionally killed, i.e., as in acts of PAS and E.

Chapter 7, on "The Slippery Slope Argument," outlines this important type of argument and explains its pragmatic effectiveness in non-religious settings where consequences, rather than moral principles per se, get peoples' attention. It highlights relevant historical evidence of the slippery slope occurring in German medicine prior to World War II that led the way to the "Final Solution" in Nazi Germany. This chapter also sketches out a slippery slope condition that is currently occurring in the Dutch experience of the medicalization of the "merciful administration of death." Basic literature references are given that point the reader to further study. The final chapter is weak, as it is only a four page conclusion and commentary on the preceding materials. However, the purpose of this work is to provide a concise introduction to the formative arguments and distinctions that the general public must become knowledgeable of in order to understand the seriousness of PAS and E; ideas that are fashionable and seductive of many within the Church, and not just those outside its boundaries.

Howard M. Ducharme, University of Akron

Sondra Ely Wheeler, *Stewards of Life: Bioethics and Pastoral Care*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996.

The purpose of this book is to discuss moral questions raised by the use of technology in contemporary medical practice, within the framework of Christian faith. Wheeler, who is Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., seeks to show that bioethics is a task for the Church, a task that the Church ignores only at her own peril and that of society. Further, she seeks to provide a basic introduction to the language, questions and methods of bioethics, and to equip pastors and chaplains to provide counsel for parishioners and patients.

Chapter One addresses Christian faith in relation to medical practice. Wheeler rightly asserts that ethics is not the right place to start, because it is one's belief system that determines one's ethics, i.e., Christian faith determines Christian practice, so faith issues must first be clarified. Chapter Two discusses the (traditional) four main principles of medical ethics: autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice. Chapter Three seeks to apply these principles to difficult cases in bioethics. This is a valuable chapter, not least because it deals with actual cases, including whether to intubate an elderly or critically ill person and whether aggressive surgery is appropriate for a very premature infant. The fourth chapter discusses four roles of the pastor in a medical crisis: "presence", "interpreter" (of the situation), "partner in discernment", and "witness to the gospel." In her conclusion Wheeler issues a reminder that there are (and should be) limits to the practice of medicine and bioethics that need to be recognized and respected.

Wheeler has largely succeeded in accomplishing her goals. This book is not only a helpful introduction to bioethics, but it also addresses the pastoral concerns that are left out of other introductions. Further, the author is to be commended for raising *theological* considerations rather than relying merely on sociological, psychological, legal and technical points. For example, the discussion of autonomy demonstrates serious theological reflection. Christians, Wheeler asserts, have good reason both to affirm a basic concept of autonomy, and to look upon certain accounts of autonomy with suspicion. Autonomy is not an individual freedom to be understood apart from

responsibility toward others and accountability to God. Rather, autonomy indicates a right and responsibility to take seriously the stewardship of life that God has given His image-bearers.

Mention should be made of some weaknesses in this book. First, while it serves its purposes well, it is a very brief introduction and not a tool for in-depth study. It is only 118 pages of text, with a brief bibliography and no index or glossary. References to significant thinkers, such as Augustine (p. 44f.), are not documented with sources, which limits the student who would want to do further study.

In addition, Wheeler indicates a strong influence of narrative theology on her thinking in Chapter One. Although she may be applauded for attempting to incorporate both narrative and principal ethics in her approach, she emphasizes the notion of "story" without suggesting whether the story is or must be true. It may be asked whether "story" is a strong enough concept to guide ethical reflection and deliberation. The issue is important for determining the function of Scripture in ethics. It also presses us to ask whether Jesus Christ accomplished something objectively on behalf of humanity, or do we simply have stories related by his followers? It is not clear what Wheeler thinks (cf pp.22, 26).

Further, in her discussion of various ministry roles, the role of witness to the gospel, arguably the most significant of the four, is not given due weight. One last minor point. In her discussion of artificial feeding of a person whose quality of life is severely diminished, she asks, "can medically provided nutrition sometimes be ended *because of the burdens it imposes?*" (p.83, italics added). In reality, it is the disease, not the treatment, which imposes the burden. It is a significant point in that the way that we articulate problems affects the way that we perceive and think about them, and it affects our determination of action.

These weaknesses do not outweigh the strengths of this book, however. It is a helpful and practical contribution for ministers who have questions or need to think about bioethical issues.

K.T. Magnuson

David W. Bercot, ed., *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*, Hendrickson: Peabody, MA, 1998, 704pp., \$34.95 hb.

This book is basically an extended index to the ten-volume *Library of Ante-Nicene Fathers*, now also published by Hendrickson. The author has gone through these volumes and selected quotations according to subject matter, making it possible to see at a glance what the early Christians thought about such things as the mark of the beast and natural law, as well as more familiar topics like baptism and martyrdom. He has also taken the trouble to cover subjects which were unknown to the early church, but which may have been dealt with in an oblique way. A good example of this is the entry on purgatory, which refers the reader to 'dead, intermediate state of the' and to 'prayer VI: should Christians pray for the dead?'

For those with fading memories who cannot quite recall where it was that Tertullian compared Athens with Jerusalem, for example, this book will save hours of labor, though it should be said that in this particular case it is necessary to look under philosophy, since there is no entry for Athens, and the ones for Jerusalem deal with other matters. Particularly important is the fact that each entry begins with a verse or two from

the Bible which refer to the topic being discussed, so that it is possible to compare Scripture with the Fathers on the same page.

Preachers looking for sermon material will naturally turn to 'quotable quotes from the fathers', perhaps stopping off at 'entertainment' along the way. Mr Bercot claims that theology took a back seat to living the Christian life in the early centuries of the church, but in spite of that his index is highly theological, and includes almost everything one would expect to find in textbooks of a much later date. There are also helpful references to pagans like Pythagoras and Plato, and even Zoroaster gets a mention.

The one drawback to the dictionary is that it is necessary to use the Hendrickson edition of the Ante-Nicene Fathers along with it, since references are given to that, and not to the chapter and verse of the works quoted. Thus, for example, we discover that Noah is mentioned in Lactantius 7.63, which means p.63 of volume 7. Only by looking that up do we find that it is from chapter 14 of the *Divine institutes!* In effect this means that consulting the dictionary is only the first of a two-stage process which would be virtually impossible to complete without the LANF. That may be a drawback to some potential users, but for those with access to the LANF texts, this dictionary will be an essential resource. It is to be highly recommended, and will surely be widely used by scholars, preachers and students alike.

Gerald Bray, Beeson Divinity School

Hans Küng, *Great Christian Thinkers*, John Bowden, trans., New York: The Continuum Publishing Co., 1996, 235 pp.

The noted Tübingen theologian describes this book as a short forerunner to the second volume of his trilogy *The Religious Situation of Our Time*. Before discussing Christianity in our day (the subject of Vol. 2) he wants to summarize and evaluate seven of the greatest theological minds Christendom has produced.

The chapter titles describe the value he ascribes to them: 1. Paul: Christianity becomes a world religion. 2. Origen: the great synthesis of antiquity and the Christian spirit. 3. Augustine: the father of all western Latin theology. 4. Thomas Aquinas: university science and papal court theology. 5. Martin Luther: return to the gospel as the classical instance of a paradigm shift. 6. Friedrich Schleiermacher: theology at dawn of modernity. 7. Karl Barth: theology in the transition to postmodernity.

Küng has tried to identify a handful of thinkers whose influence proved to be so great that they could be said to have initiated paradigm shifts in the way Christian theology has been conceived and written. Paul, for example, took a provincial Messianic sect and turned it toward becoming a world religion. Two centuries later Origen married that faith (for better or for worse) to Platonism and Neoplatonism, the greatest philosophical approach of the ancient world. A century and a half later Augustine struck out in a new direction for Roman theology by his thinking on sin, grace, and predestination.

Each of the seven, as Küng sees it, stood at a major crossroads of intellectual history and pointed a new way for the church. Through the course of Küng's career (he wrote this when he was 66 years of age) he has given special attention to the doctrine of justification and the theology of Karl Barth. Those emphases are here also. His chapter on Luther is one of the best, and he recounts insightful conversations with Barth.

The book likewise reflects Küng's lifelong impatience with the hierarchical government and teaching of his church. At several points he uses the place of women as a test case, and he speaks sharply of his church's lapses. Commenting on Luther's "return to the gospel as the classical instance of a paradigm shift," he writes, "Rome has not drawn the consequences which followed Luther for the structure of the church. Indeed the present clerical unspiritual dictatorship of Rome again mocks the basic concern of the Reformation, which is also a good Catholic concern (the Pope is not above scripture). Rome still has little understanding of what Luther wanted in the light of the gospel" (pp. 147-148).

Each chapter begins with a chronology of that thinker's life, identifies the nature and importance of their work for their day, and evaluates their contribution for our time as well. Küng has thought long, hard, and broadly. Many in our world admire him; others believe he is dangerous. But he continues to push the church--all of the church--to really give to the world what we claim to have: light and life in Jesus Christ.

Jerry Flora

L. W. Barnard (tr.), *Justin Martyr, The First and Second Apologies, Ancient Christian Writers 56, New York/Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1997, vi + 245 pp.*

Justin Martyr wrote two apologies--two appeals, in effect, to the Roman emperors Antoninus Pius and his adopted son Marcus Aurelius calling for the suspension of the execution of Christians merely on the basis of their devotion to this new "philosophy" and not on the basis of conviction of criminal behaviors. His work merits the careful attention of all students of the New Testament and early Christianity as a testimony to the way in which Christians were slandered by many in the ancient world and the nature of the prosecution of Christians before the general persecutions of Decius and Diocletian in the third century. Justin also provides a valuable window into the early church's reading of the Jewish Scriptures as a body of predictions of the ministry and passion of Jesus, the meaning and practice of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the second century (concerning which Justin gives an extensive account), the way in which the teachings of Christianity were compared with the teachings of Greco-Roman philosophical schools and the pagan myths and practices, and the progress of certain heretics in Rome (like Simon the Sorcerer and Marcion).

Barnard has provided in this volume a very readable translation of these apologies, together with a helpful introduction and excellent notes discussing matters of the translation of difficult passages, tracing the philosophical influences upon Justin, and providing copious references to classical, scriptural, and patristic authors for the further investigation of these connections and cross-influences. An appendix describes the features of Justin's eschatology and accounts for the sometimes contradictory schemes by a closer examination of the concerns which shaped Justin's different accounts, and a thorough bibliography serves as a guide to further reading on the work of Justin and his environment.

While there are some details which merit criticism, such as Barnard's invoking Matthew 25: 13 and Justin, *Dial.* 28.2-3, as examples "not of apocalyptic, but of realized, eschatology" in his appendix and his mention of an assault on the church by Domitian

without clarifying this statement in light of the rather cogent argument of L. L. Thompson (*The Book of Revelation* [New York: Oxford, 1990]) against the likelihood of Domitian's interest in persecuting the church, this is nevertheless a very welcome guide to Justin's key writings. Of special value are the extensive notes and Barnard's discussion of the connections between Justin's interpretation and defense of the gospel and the philosophical conceptions which undergird his presentation.

David A. deSilva

Aloys Grillmeier with Teresia Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition, Volume 2: From the Council of Chalcedon to Gregory the Great, Part 4: The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. 550 pp, cloth, \$50.00.

One of the contributions of postmodernism to theology has been the reminder that dogma does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it exists with all kinds of historical and cultural particularities. In this book, Aloys Grillmeier together with Teresia Hainthaler examine the development of Christology along the Nile prior to the Islamic conquest. The author refers to this work as "a Christological Nile expedition." This is a surprisingly accurate description as the authors have organized the material in such a way that it truly has the feel of a journey. The book follows a geographic progression that moves from somewhat familiar to extremely remote terrain.

This work is the fourth part to volume two of Grillmeier's impressive study of the historical development of Christology. It is, itself, divided into four parts. The first part addresses Alexandrian-Greek Christology. It details the early struggle between the Chalcedonians and the anti-Chalcedonians and examines the influence of the Alexandrian scholars on Christology. Journeying up the Nile, the second part examines Coptic Christianity. The central figure for this part is the Coptic monks Shenoute. The section concludes with a study of the Christology of Coptic liturgical prayers.

Part three is a brief section and is entitled "The 'Cross of Christ' over Nubia" which Grillmeier graciously explains as the area along the Nile between Aswan and Khartoum. This is the shortest of the four parts of the book but intriguing, nevertheless. The material is derived from "archeological rescue work" that was made necessary by the construction of the Aswan High Dam. The expedition ends in Ethiopia with part four discussing Ethiopian Christianity. Much of this section is devoted to explaining the introduction and propagation of Christianity in the area. Toward the end, Grillmeier makes the interesting assertion that Ethiopian Christianity has characteristics of Jewish-Christian origins.

The book's high level of scholarship is immediately evident even before reading it. The fact that this is the fourth book on Christology between Chalcedon and the death of Gregory is a strong indication of the thoroughness of Grillmeier and Hainthaler. Furthermore, the depth of research is evidenced by the footnotes which consume an average of one-third to one-half of each page. In my opinion, this is a significant book not only because of its extensive use of the secondary literature, but because of its examination of the primary literature. From the poetry that is considered in part one to the prayers and liturgy that are considered in parts two, three, and four, this book wisely looks beyond theological treatises for insights into Christology along the Nile.

This book is also important because in much of this work the authors are forging new ground. This is particularly true of material on Nubia and Ethiopia. Apart from the work that Grillmeier and Hainthaler have done, much of the material covered in this book would remain largely inaccessible. For these reasons the authors have done the academy an immeasurable service. In my opinion, the scholarship of this book further establishes *Christ in Christian Tradition* as the current definitive work on the historical development of Christology.

Rob Douglass

Arthur J. Freeman, *An Ecumenical Theology of the Heart: The Theology of Count Nicholas Ludvig von Zinzendorf*, Bethlehem, PA and Winston-Salem, NC: The Moravian Church in America, 1998, 346 pp., \$24.00.

This is a timely book in that the year 2000 marks 300 years since the birth of Count Zinzendorf. It celebrates renewed interest in Zinzendorf within the Moravian Church and throughout the larger scholarly world. A reticence against hero worship has meant that his own communion has often neglected Zinzendorf's history and theology. And, until recent academic interest, Pietism has not had favorable print over much of the last century. The fact that much of Zinzendorf's writings are not available in English translation has also contributed to his neglect in American scholarship. Freeman's work therefore addresses a real need in the study of Moravian Pietism and its contribution to the larger Christian community.

Freeman is well suited for the task of communicating Zinzendorf. He was the subject of his doctoral dissertation at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1962 (p.1). For over 30 years he taught at Moravian Theological Seminary, including a course on Zinzendorf's theology (p. 307). He has served as a bishop in the Moravian Church and participated in many of its theological and ecclesiastical deliberations over the last decades. His book reflects his excellent facility in the German language of Zinzendorf's writings and the theological sources which surround such a study.

The purpose of the book is to put Zinzendorf's theology in an ecumenical perspective and integrate it with concerns for spiritual formation (pp. iv, 2). Freeman's object is to show the ecumenical spirit of Zinzendorf's theology in his own day as well as its possibilities of addressing broadly-based Christian issues of the present time. This is most obvious in the "reflection sections" that conclude each major chapter, where the author describes possible connections between Zinzendorf's thought and the modern age. Here the pastor/churchman in Freeman comes to the surface: he wants to help Christians to grow in Christ. Frequently a chapter ends with his own contemplative poetry.

The book has six major chapters. The first covers the life and history of Zinzendorf and the Moravian Church. Then five chapters summarize the Count's theology under such topics as the Knowledge of God; Scripture; Christ, the Spirit and the human predicament; Christian life and ethics; and the church. These chapters have extensive quotes from Zinzendorf's writings, since they are not readily available to English readers. There are many good insights into Moravian thought and practice, and difficult themes in Zinzendorf are put into helpful contexts.

The book is difficult to read, however, and evaluation does not come easily. I found its historical sections to be the most lucid and thus the most beneficial. Thus the

introduction, chapters 1 and 6, and Appendix A (Outline of Zinzendorf's Life) were very helpful. Freeman has succeeded in making Zinzendorf accessible in his long quotations from his writings and in the sources indicated in the footnotes and bibliography. Scholars might well find this the greatest contribution of the book.

As a theology of Zinzendorf, it is a disappointing book. Whether this is due to the unsystematic nature of Zinzendorf's theology or to Freeman's style of writing is not clear. One suspects it is both. On the latter question, a lot depends upon a reader's expectation. The author is true to his purpose in that he attempts to put Zinzendorf at the service of ecumenical Christianity and spiritual formation. But this raises a suspicion that we only have "a part of Zinzendorf," and that the part that is presented might skew the whole.

One cannot expect a systematic theology of Zinzendorf when that was not the nature of the man. But could we not have a historical theology of the Count? Freeman's expertise is in New Testament studies. This is manifested repeatedly in his chapter introductions and closing reflections. He then moves on to Zinzendorf's thought and concludes with the contemporary Moravian Church or modern religious questions he feels Zinzendorf might address. At times he compares Zinzendorf to thought currents of his times, but seldom are theological precedents prior to Zinzendorf engaged, nor developments between Zinzendorf and the modern period traced out. I, for one, came away from the book feeling that I still do not understand many aspects of Zinzendorf's thought.

Freeman has cut a new path for scholars. What is needed now are extensive translations of Zinzendorf's writings which are not yet available in English. Then others, especially those gifted in historical theology, might try their hand at giving the scholarly world a more adequate theology of Zinzendorf. In spite of its many virtues, this book—in the estimation of the reviewer—has given us too much Freeman and too little Zinzendorf.

Luke L. Keefer, Jr.

Abraham Friesen. *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission*. William B. Eerdmans, 1998.

This an extremely important and exciting book. The influence of Erasmus on the early Swiss Anabaptists—the circle initially influenced by Zwingli—and on Menno Simons has been the subject of scholarly research. But the line taken here by Friesen is to a large extent a new one. Although the book has a clear focus, at many points there are also new angles that illuminate the wider story of the Reformation.

What Friesen argues is that the Anabaptist movement was deeply indebted to Erasmus for its interpretation of Christ's Great Commission to teach and then to baptize. In particular he shows that Erasmus's preface to his Greek New Testament, his paraphrase of the Great Commission and his annotations to the New Testament take us to the core of what became the Anabaptist understanding of believer's baptism and of mission. Erasmus asked how Christ's disciples understood and applied the Great Commission. This led him to the Acts of the Apostles and thus to the practice of the church.

Much Anabaptist scholarship, which at times concentrates on the contrasts between Anabaptist thinking and other religious stands in the sixteenth century, will be

given a fresh perspective through this study. Also, those who work in the arc of Erasmian influence on the mainstream Reformation will have to take account of the ways in which Anabaptism, rather than Lutheranism, was the movement that (to adapt the image from the time) hatched the egg which Erasmus had previously laid.

Abraham Friesen writes in an engaging way. His massive historical learning as a professor of Renaissance and Reformation history (at the University of California) is worn lightly. Despite the ideas presented being ground-breaking, there is nothing here that is inaccessible. This is a book which could be read by someone beginning Reformation studies but is also a challenging and thrilling read for those who have spent many years in the field.

Nor is Friesen afraid to move from the historical to the contemporary. Thus the book can be read with great profit not only by historians but also by theologians and by those engaged in inter-confessional dialogue. For Friesen the Erasmian focus on teaching the central doctrines of the faith has the potential to bridge Catholic/Protestant divides. This certainly calls for the Anabaptist story to be seen in a new light. Indeed all those who want to study Anabaptism, for historical or for contemporary reasons, should engage with this book.

Ian Randall, Spurgeon's College, London

David T. Gouwens, *Kierkegaard as Religious Thinker*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, ix-xv + 248 pp., \$54.95 hb., \$17.95 pb.

David Gouwens in his work, *Kierkegaard as Religious Thinker* makes use of Kierkegaard's later religious writings and also includes his earlier philosophical works. He studies Kierkegaard's religious and theological work with the emphasis upon human nature, Christ and Christian discipleship. Gouwens enables the reader of his book to view Kierkegaard as a religious thinker because Kierkegaard himself saw religion as basic and central to his entire work. Kierkegaard himself sought to bring about religious response from his writings.

Gouwens presents Kierkegaard as an advocate of genuine Christianity. Gouwens discusses Kierkegaard's treatment of religion with the focus upon the use of the dialectic of "becoming Christian". He discusses both the edifying discourses and the pseudonymous writings.

The structure of Gouwens' study begins with Chapters 1-3 which form an introduction to some of Kierkegaard's central concerns as a religious thinker and Christian thinker. Chapter 1 examines Kierkegaard's diagnosis of certain diseases of reflection, especially those which deal with Western philosophical and theological tradition.

Gouwens offers an outline of Kierkegaard's understanding of an alternative "style" of "subjective thinking" in philosophy and religion. Chapter 2 examines how Kierkegaard proposes and practices this alternative kind of "reflection" that addresses these diseases. Gouwens focuses on Kierkegaard's anthropological reflection that interweaves psychological analysis and specifically Christian dogmatic concepts in a religious understanding of the self. In this, Gouwens allows for a closer look at Kierkegaard's religious understanding of the self including moods, emotions and "stages on life's way" and also the Christian narrative understanding of the self.

Chapter 3 focuses on Kierkegaard's understanding of "becoming religious" which Gouwens sees in Kierkegaard's use of the terms "up building" and "forming of the heart." Gouwens examines here Kierkegaard's vision of becoming religious, not in terms of mere "feeling" or decision of the will but in the development of "personal emotional and ethico religious capacities." Gouwens shows how this links Kierkegaard more strongly with the virtue tradition in moral philosophy and theology. He demonstrates this over against the stereotype of the "existentialist Kierkegaard." (p.25-26)

In Chapters 4-6, the author deals with Kierkegaard's treatment of religion. Gouwens focuses here on the Kierkegaardian dialectic of "becoming Christian" with particular attention to the relation between Christ and the believer. Particular emphasis is upon the relation between Christ and each of the three Christian virtues of faith, hope, and love.

Chapter 4 looks specifically at Kierkegaard's anatomy of Christian faith as "disposition." Also, Gouwens here connects the concepts of grace and freedom, and Christology and soteriology in Kierkegaard. Gouwens continues the "dispositional" analysis of Christian existence in Chapter 5 by dealing with the Christian response to Christ in suffering and hope. Chapter 6 finishes the analysis of Christ and the Christian virtues by looking at Christian works of love.(p.26)

Gouwens in Chapter 7 deals with the theme of recent current scholarship in Kierkegaard on the question of the common interpretation of his thought as privatistic and asocial. Gouwens examines the later Kierkegaardian concept of how the "dispositional" virtue language of faith, hope, and love is altered. Gouwens addresses the development in his last years of the public role for Christian disciplinship as "the witness to the truth."(p.26).

The author sees Kierkegaard situated between foundationalism and irrationalism. He sees Kierkegaard as an anticipation of the end of "modernity" while he stands at the center of the Christian tradition.

Gouwens in his work presents an excellent and insightful study into Kierkegaard as religious thinker. This work is suited for the scholar of Kierkegaard and for persons interested in recent scholarly debate in the works of Kierkegaard. Gouwens advances the research of Kierkegaard in the area of moral philosophy and theology with this excellent book. It is highly recommended for Kierkegaardian scholarship and study.

JoAnn Ford Watson

D. Gibson, *Avoiding the Tentmaker Trap*, Hamilton, Ontario: WEC International, 1997, 155 pp., \$9.99. (WEC International, Lit. Dept., 37 Aberdeen Ave., Hamilton ON L8P 2N6, Canada).

The arguments for missionary "tentmaking" have been numerous and compelling. As Paul sewed tents to help pay his own way to distant places to share the Gospel, so missionaries today could support themselves and avoid various hindrances of career missionary work. This would be the way to get into "closed countries" and bypass the long process of support raising, to say nothing of building rapport with business and professional people in other countries, and being able to follow the example of Paul and others in biblical times.

D. Gibson has written a concise and very helpful book evaluating the tentmaking movement. He begins with a brief overview of modern missions history, and some of the reasons why tentmaking became important. He presents two models from scripture, which he calls the Pauline Model, and the Priscillian model, since Priscilla and Aquila also supported themselves while doing God's work in many different places. Various situations and agencies call for tentmakers with more emphasis on ministry and others with more time and focus on the job. Both models are commendable, though Gibson concludes: "Those following Paul's example may suffer Paul's experience of 'hard work, sleepless nights, and hunger' (2 Cor. 6:5) as they try to find time for both employment and ministry outside their jobs. . . . For Priscillian tentmakers there is the danger of assuming that, having gotten in and making a professional contribution, the job is over" (p. 38).

Gibson proceeds to give the theological foundations for tentmaking, a brief history of tentmaking and the rationale for tentmaking, and finally comes to the tentmaking traps. Although there was a wave of tentmakers between 1960 and 1980, there are not many great success stories. The traps are: failure to learn the language and culture, difficulty in time management, lack of support networks, lack of Christian fellowship, stress with the expatriate community, inadequate or restricted housing, difficult adjustment of family, lack of security, poor preparation, lack of accountability, and breakdown of integrity.

In spite of these drawbacks, there are creative solutions that make tentmaking not only do-able but very desirable in many situations. Gibson spells out the possibilities for developing networks, working with mission organizations, forming tentmaking corporations, working in partnerships, and working as tourists. He works through the issues of finding a job and choosing a partner organization, and discusses the experience of bombing out. His convincing conclusion is that tentmaking can be a very effective means of doing missions today.

The clear and direct approach of this book makes it an encouraging source of information on tentmaking. Those questioning the validity of this model should expose themselves to the material in this practical little handbook. Gibson makes a convincing case for tentmaking as a means which God is using to increase His kingdom, and offers many sources of help for doing it effectively.

Grace Holland

Jimmy Long, *Generating Hope: A Strategy for Reaching the Post Modern Generation*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997, 235 pp., \$14.99.

Over three decades ago a generation gap was created when baby boomers rejected the values of their parents. Now, however, Jimmy Long believes that Generation X will reject the baby boomers' "drive for the 'good life' as its main guiding principle" (22). Subsequently, Xers have adopted their own values and distinguishing characteristics. Moreover, Long explains that the dynamics of this generation go beyond traditional values and characteristics because society is also experiencing a major philosophical shift from the Enlightenment to a postmodern period. Long suggest that Xers are the first purely postmodern generation. In his book *generating hope*, Long engages the reader by asking: "How will the church respond to these changes?" (18)

The author is a regional director for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and has contributed to *the Small Group Leaders' Handbook: The Next Generation*. Long believes society is experiencing a tremendous upheaval where “the Pillars of ‘modern’ western civilization erected during the Enlightenment are now crumbling... We are now in a period of cultural lag--in which most people in the western world are not yet aware as scientist and philosophers that the Enlightenment is over.” (192) Long challenges the church to engage these changes, and suggests effective strategies in an effort to reach generation X with the gospel. In order to generate successful evangelism, Long clarifies the differences between boomers and Xers, and defines the characteristics of postmodernism.

Long’s primary strategy is building community through relationships. He believes that Xers value relationships and will find meaning in things that they experience in the community. Long explains that boomers prefer anonymity and are more globally focused, while Xers will tend to participate more and be more focused on local communities. In other words, “boomers wanted to save the world, Xers want to make a difference in the neighborhood around them.” (202)

The concept of shame is key to Long. The focus of shame is not on being a sinner that needs justification, but one who has experienced the shame of being separated from God. Long explains this by using the story of Adam and Eve: “Their awareness of their nakedness symbolized their awareness of their sinful state... Adam and Eve were now ashamed of their loss of unity with God and with each other, which was a vital part of who they were as complete person.” (102) Long assumes that broken community is a major part of Xer’s lives who have experienced broken promises from parents, friends and society. This context has made it difficult for Xers to have hope, so the church must be ready to enter into the pain and suffering this generation feels and offer a place for them to belong.

Furthermore, the church must recognize the broader cultural shift to postmodernism. Community plays a vital role in this paradigm shift also. Long explains that the Modernist chased truth that could be proved and dogmatically stated. In contrast, Xers are asking is it real, and “need to see the incarnation of the gospel in people’s lives more than to hear the proclamation through our words” (210). For successful evangelism, Xers must see truth lived out through their communities.

The strength of this book is in Long’s description of the intricate differences between the generations in light of the philosophical shift from the Enlightenment to Postmodernism. However, one ought to be aware of Long’s perspective of those to whom he refers to as the Christian right. He sharply criticizes them and accuses them of hampering the spread of Christianity and creating an us-verses-them mentality. Those that support these Christian groups may be offended at his open attack against them.

In spite of the hostilities, which are limited to a few pages, this book is enriching to read. It provides cutting edge insights into the Xer’s generation and the move toward postmodernism. Long’s innovative suggestions will help put evangelicals on the front line of a changing society where they can offer hope to Generation X.

Kenneth L. Duffee

Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997. Paper.

Someone recently told me there is little hope for the youth of the present generation. They have no religious and moral foundation for living; everything is relative and there are no absolutes; they pick and choose what to believe; their worldview is distorted by the many options available in the present culture. They often are not aware of their worldview, yet moral, spiritual and social decisions are made based on it. Many people are unwilling to listen to the absolute claims of Jesus Christ because they are happy in the worldview they hold. In order to be impacted with the gospel of Jesus Christ in this cultural setting, one's worldview must be challenged to the point of discomfort. Being uncomfortable with one's worldview will create a potential to be open to hearing about Jesus, but change occurs slowly over time.

Pollard shares his significant experience in working with youth on college and university campuses. He has spent years conducting long and deep open forum discussions with college students in student lounges. In this setting students have an opportunity to explore the claims of Christ for themselves. They are given the chance to question a Christian by grilling, arguing and presenting contrary ideas and thoughts. The objective is to learn the way people think in the postmodern era. Pollard and his staff show genuine love for students by being available as they think through their worldviews at their own speed.

The book discusses the way people in the postmodern era think, and it illustrates methods of discussions and styles that promote thinking which clearly shows inadequacies in a value and belief system. Since many are unaware of their value system, this technique enables them to sort out the inconsistencies and false ideas they unintentionally believe. As students begin to think through their worldviews, they may begin to move one step closer to a desire to become acquainted with Jesus. Pollard calls this process "positive deconstruction." This process also must apply to Christianity.

The theme of the book is that evangelism is hard, but it can be made slightly less difficult. Understanding why evangelism is hard is the place to begin. In addressing the common reasons for hardship in this area, Pollard is quick to understand one's apprehensions, concerns and anxieties because he admits failure in some of the same areas. He gives excellent tried and proven logical solutions to the dilemmas experienced by the person engaged in witnessing or evangelizing. One example is that most people are not interested in an evangelistic campaign. It is better to trust God to provide opportunities, and to feel free to take advantage of them. People who are comfortable in general conversations often find witnessing opportunities opening up to them. Prayer is the key factor; any effort expended is futile without saturation in prayer.

The author scientific research training is evident in the layout of the book, which is set up in a problem-solution format, arguing from cause to effect. This format enables him to examine the problems in detail and to effectively propose solutions. Within this format, the book is broken down into four parts. Each part addresses a particular problem.

First, the problem of the postmodern, Post-Christian worldview is explored in detail. Pollard addresses the historical reasons behind the confused and convoluted worldviews people hold. The need is identified, and he addresses ways of helping

people who are happy in their present situation. In this section Pollard draws from the experience and knowledge he gleaned in listening to students over the years, identifying the worldviews that are characteristic of the postmodern post-Christian culture. His positive deconstruction solution is brilliant.

The second problem is how to help people who want to know Jesus. Pollard provides the solution in the balance of the section. An excellent summary of the biblical themes and topics that could be easily committed to memory is provided. Discussion of these topics is theologically sound. Scriptural text is separated into themes. Pollard draws from his own experience in anticipating questions people will ask and in presenting very helpful answers. Storytelling is his preferred method of communication. He has mastered it well.

Part three deals with the problem of apologetics. Although Pollard is a scientist, stories of his inadequacies in handling difficult and awkward situations illustrate his compassion and love for all people. Stories of errors give him credibility. Clear and specific illustrations and stories support the listed reasons that are given as guidelines. Excellent arguments and examples solidly support his answers to the reliability, consistency and origin of scripture issues. He gives a good logical approach to the issue of the Bible as history. Evidence issues are discussed with reasoned logic. Argumentation is solid and he draws a bottom line. His commitment to the integrity of scripture and the Christian life, and his respect for humanity are seen throughout this section in the illustrations and examples he uses.

Part four discusses problems inherent in leading people to Christ. Illustrations from his experience make it easy to understand the relationship Pollard presents. His solution to the problem is that single method does not exist. Repentance and change are custom made to the needs of an individual. In keeping with the illustration pattern and logical argumentation that characterized the book, Pollard clearly explains and differentiates the change inherent in a personal relationship with Christ. That the human mind and human will are involved in the change is a key point.

Pollard candidly points out in the Postscript that motivation for evangelism can run dry. Particularly this is true if motivation is based on results. The motivating factor that keeps one prepared at all times to witness is a passionate love for all people. This book reflects Pollard, not just his experience.

This book is exceptionally well done. This is an excellent source for training people interested in doing personal evangelism. The enormity of experience this book contains would serve as a useful reference source for those engaged in ministry to educational institutions. This book is easily read and understood so it could be used with any age group older youth through adult. It would serve as an excellent course in evangelism for the local church.

Phyllis J. Rhodes

Walter Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among Exiles*, Westminster/John Knox Press: Louisville, Kentucky, 1997, pp. 155, \$16.00.

When the oldest shaman of the tribe declares, "I have a new story to tell," everyone gives full attention. So, when Walter Brueggemann, that grand dean of Old Testament studies, confides, "This book represents a heavy-duty rethinking for myself of the art and act of preaching," I, for one, am all ears.

The world of homiletics has been buzzing and biting round the carcass of inductive preaching - the declaration of general truths applied to individual problems (the scientific method of the Enlightenment). Charles Rice, Eugene Lowrey, David Buttrick, and Fred Craddock have all pronounced half-hearted eulogies on the old gray mare, and ridden off on horses of different colors, or more accurately, shades of the same color. The new breed share the common markings of narrative and story, imagination and openness.

Brueggemann rides the same pony, but does so with the grace and style of a different gait. Speaking from his rich background in biblical studies, he does a textual take on preaching in a post-modern, post-Christian world. The metaphor is "exile," an experience of "homelessness" for both the American church and culture.

The exiled Jews, like today's American evangelicalism (both liberal and conservative), "...experienced the loss of the structured, reliable world which gave them meaning and coherence, and they found themselves in a context where their most treasured and trusted symbols of faith were mocked, trivialized, or dismissed." (p. 2) The marks of such an experience include deep sadness, rootlessness, despair and a profound sense of God's absence. If you can identify with life "by the waters of Babylon" (and this reviewer certainly can), *Cadences of Home* will comfort and challenge, disturb and inspire.

In essence, preaching to "exiles" involves more than a shift in style; it requires a change in hermeneutic. He writes, "I do not believe that any single method of text interpretation is to be preferred to the exclusion of all others. I believe we must eclectically use all available methods, and that serious interpreters inevitably do. Nonetheless, the intentional embrace of rhetorical criticism seems to me especially important in a situation of a decentered community." (p. 58) He declares that the historical-critical method has its limitations and is particularly suited for upholding the establishment. However, exiles subvert the established order, and they do so with story, song, and imagination. Our Old Testament professor is calling for the practice of rhetorical criticism.

Rhetorical criticism suggests that what is said in Scripture depends in large measure upon how it is said. Wonderful examples are given in the book: Isaac and Esau, Elijah and Elisha, Cyrus the gentile messiah, and the birth of Solomon. Such an understanding and expression of the text is more a matter of provocation than pronouncement, more daring in imagination than declarative of dogma, and thick with incongruities, for such is the life of exiles.

I, personally, found the many examples of Scripture to be particularly helpful. Also, the expanded endnotes are useful to someone straining to keep up with the vast literature that undergirds the study. The theme of the exiled or decentered church is explored in the meaning of the text, in preaching as testimony, in evangelism, and as a model of the church. The book concludes with a challenge to be "exiles" with all the daring disciplines that open our hearts to a newness of God's presence.

One could argue that there is a bit of choppiness in the book, due, perhaps, to the fact that several of the chapters were written for different publications over a period of seven or eight years. I came away with the sense that each chapter could be expanded into a book in its own right (in places it is a bit like drinking from the proverbial firehose).

However, I cannot help but imagine that this is the first telling of the story, the first cohesive expression of the theme. It is the medicine for our experience. I, for one, request, "Say it again, we need to hear more."
Richard Parrott

Jung Young Lee, *Korean Preaching: An Interpretation*, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997, 150 pp., \$14.95.

The meaning of the words was unintelligible to me, but the significance of the emotional tenor was unmistakable. I had given a copy of Jung Young Lee's book, *Korean Preaching: An Interpretation*, to a homiletics class I was conducting in the city of Sok-cho', about 200 miles east of Seoul. The animation of the discussion lead me to believe that Lee had critiqued his own book correctly: "My intent here is to offer a critical study of Korean preaching, which may arouse controversy among some Korean ministers, and suspicion among white American ministers." (p. 10)

Jung Young Lee was professor of Systematic Theology at Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, New Jersey. He has also authored a book of sermons and a book on the Trinity from an Asian perspective. The Koreans in my class knew of him. The discussion of the book was lively. My translator summarized the classes conclusion for me, "They think he (Lee) asks the right questions, but they do not like his answers."

Lee deals with the question of preaching and context. After outlining the rationale for his book, he looks at the cultural context of the Korean congregation. Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism are deep dynamics that "still live in the hearts of the Korean people." (p. 29) Lee goes on to detail his interaction with these religious forms: participating in shamanic rituals; studying Buddhism at the Haein Temple; and celebrating Ch'u-sok, the national day of ancestor worship.

Lee characterizes Korean culture as "basically syncretic." (p. 37) From this stance, he critiques the Christian church as having rejected many cultural resources due to an exclusive approach toward other religions. Korean protestanism is an outward rejection of other religious forms. Lee contends that such a posture is rejecting what it means to be Korean. He observes: "However, no matter how much we want to cut ourselves off from our heathenish religious traditions, we can never be completely free of them. We are products of our past. Our attempt to be free from our past is merely an attempt to escape reality. Thus, our so-called heathenish traditions have been unconsciously integrated into our Christian life." (p. 138)

This theme is played out in an investigation of the Korean worship service and distinctives of Korean preaching where Lee believes that Shamanism and Buddhism are strong dynamics. He also opens the door to the pastors' possible misuse of authority where the Confucianistic ideal holds sway. For the Korean pastors' homiletic class in the sea resort of Sok-Cho', this was fuel for debate. I agree with my Korean friends, Lee asks the right questions, but his answers are not fully acceptable to me.

For me, the book had two values: a tantalizing introduction to the Korean church and an opportunity to view the issue of Christ and culture as a more distant observer. I found myself challenged with the pluralism vs. exclusivism of Lee's analysis and wanted to test his thoughts with Koreans. Further, I found myself testing the question in my own culture. To paraphrase Lee, our so-called "westernish" traditions have been unconsciously integrated into our Christian life.

Korean Preaching begins as an invitation to Americans to understand the Korean church but ends as an agenda addressed to Korean pastors. I read the book from the beginning as an American seeking to understand the Korean church but ended up reconsidering my own agenda concerning the question of Christ and Culture.

Richard Parrott

Frank J. Houdek. *Guided by the Spirit: A Jesuit Perspective on Spiritual Direction*. Loyola Press, 1996.

There are now many books on spiritual direction and a review of a book which deals with this area has to take that into account. Does Houdek's book offer something distinctive? The chapter headings seem fairly standard and at first sight there is nothing particularly new. Houdek deals with the director and the process of spiritual growth, some particular types of directees and their needs, prayer and spiritual discernment, and the director and the process of direction.

There are, however, insights which are fresh and stimulating within this book. There is a welcome balance between personal stories and wider contemporary analysis. What, then, are the main advantages for the reader?

In the first place, *Guided by the Spirit* certainly springs from considerable practical experience. Frank Houdek draws from over thirty years of work in the field of spiritual direction. This gives the book a realism which is most welcome. There are no superficial answers or trite suggestions here. Having said that, I wondered at one or two points whether the spiritual journey was being understood in too rigid a way.

A second important aspect of the book is that it is written from a Jesuit point of view. That does not mean that it is narrow in its perspective. Rather, what we find again and again here is the wisdom of a long tradition. Houdek acknowledges his own personal limitations and does not try to make his own story normative. Instead he points to ways in which each director can learn from the broader stream of experience.

What I found most helpful, however, was the way that diversity was addressed. In Houdek's approach there is no formula which is applied to each individual, regardless of the point they have reached on their journey. Not only is the uniqueness of each individual stressed, but the action of the Holy Spirit—in all his freedom—is seen as been at the heart of direction. The title of the book is highly significant. Linked with this concentration on the Spirit, I warmed to the way prayer was given such a central place.

Although the Jesuit background is evident, those from a very different tradition who are exploring spiritual direction will find this book a valuable resource.

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Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop, translators. *Creation and Christ*. Paulist Press, 1996.

Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, translators. *True Joy*. Paulist Press, 1996.

Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn, translators. *Everything as Divine*. Paulist Press, 1996.

These three booklets are published in the same format. Each is between eighty and ninety pages in length. The small page size means that the books can be slipped into a pocket and easily read, for example, on journeys.

The intention of these booklets must be borne in mind. They contain short selection from classics of spirituality. *Creation and Christ* offers extracts from the wisdom of Hildegard of Bingen, one of the greatest mystics of the church. There is an introduction, but it is brief and not designed to be critical. The selection is from Hildegard's *Scivias*—a title which is short for 'Know the Ways of the Lord'. Her call to write this, in 1141, came about through 'a fiery light of exceeding brilliance'. The topics covered here, which reflect the profound visions that Hildegard received, are the greatness and majesty of God, creation and fall, and Christ as Redeemer.

The aptly-titled *True Joy* is a sample of the writings of Francis and Clare. There is a useful brief introduction to the life of Saint Francis. This is followed by his 'Admonitions' and by such famous poems as his 'Canticle of Brother Sun'. The material included certainly captures something of the spiritual vitality of Francis, but because he was a man of action his own writings were limited. This is even truer of Clare. Accordingly, in the part of the book dealing with Clare more space is given to a description of her life. Her 'Testament' is then reproduced. Those who are looking for a way to begin to read about the great mission from Assisi could start with this booklet, but might be better to read *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*.

The third booklet, *Everything is Divine*, contains the wisdom of Meister Eckhart, an outstanding Dominican friar who was born around the year 1260. True to his tradition, Meister Eckhart was a preacher. Part I of this book includes material from twenty-one different counsels which Eckhart gave young Dominicans, under the general heading 'On Discernment'. With his idea of God flowing through the world and with his refusal to be bound by reason over against mystery (which went beyond standard Dominican thinking), Eckhart has much to give to contemporary spirituality.

Ian Randall

Millard J. Erickson and James L. Heflin, *Old Wine in New Wineskins*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997, 269 pp., \$19.95.

In their book, *Old Wine In New Wineskins*, Erickson and Heflin recognize the changing face of the contemporary church where methods of worship and outreach are finding new expressions in an effort to reach an ever changing world. The authors support and encourage this change: however, they observe that as the church strives to adapt, the role of doctrinal preaching has declined. The authors support a stronger role for this discipline which they feel is essential to a vital church. They provide evidence

to support their view of the benefits of doctrinal preaching as well as offer practical guidance concerning the techniques of creatively exegeting and contextualizing doctrine.

The experiences of Millard J. Erickson and James L. Heflin compliment each other in this book. Erickson is a professor of theology at Baylor University's Truett Seminary and at Western Seminary, Portland. His books include, *Christian Theology*, *God in Three Persons*, and *The Word Became Flesh*. Heflin has formerly taught homiletics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and has co-authored *Proclaiming the Word*. Both authors wrestle with what Erickson calls "the problematic status of preaching today." (13).

In their academic settings, the authors are aware that some scholars believe that preaching is irrelevant due to the changing ways people listen. Attention spans have become shorter, learning has become more visually oriented, and people expect to participate more. Old style preaching can be passive and appear to the contemporary person as authoritarian. However, they maintain their stance on the importance of preaching as a biblical mandate, and believe that doctrinal preaching can transcend cultural changes to provided foundational support for the church during this time of change.

The authors believe that doctrine is essential to our relationship with God and definitive of the Christian church. It is prominent in the Bible and in Church history. Effective doctrinal preaching provides stability and identity to the church. With many contemporary churches focusing upon being "consumer friendly", there is an ever present danger the church will lose its uniqueness. The authors consider the consequences of other religions becoming consumer friendly by emphasizing experience and personal health? They inquire, how will one distinguish the doctrines of other religions from that of Christianity if the contemporary church has failed to teach the difference?

The authors believe that doctrine is found throughout the Bible, and they provide ample descriptions of exegetical techniques. These techniques focus on the didactic and narrative passages and help the reader transform doctrine from the original situation to a practical contemporary meaning. They suggest effective ways to utilize expository preaching through creative use of topical preaching, narrative preaching, and dramatic preaching. This book also includes chapters on planning, strategizing, and ways to assess congregational needs.

The authors do an excellent job of communicating some very difficult cultural nuances resulting from changes in our society today. They confront controversial issues with optimism and courage. This book is for preachers and those involved in Christian missions who are concerned with the lack of doctrine being promoted in contemporary worship. The book's wide variety of expository techniques and preaching methods will adapt to many styles and situations. This flexibility allows the articulation of doctrine to continue in an era of dynamic change, and, thus, prevent the church from losing its identity as it adapts to a new world.

Kenneth L. Duffee

Philip E. Johnson, *Defeating Darwinism*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997, pp. 131, pb.

This book is a passionate and articulate attack on materialistic naturalism, especially as expressed in various aspects of society in the USA. The author sees the lynch-pin of this dominant ideology is the Darwinian theory of evolution. Given this starting point, Johnson's strategy for defeating materialistic naturalism is to defeat Darwinism, and his method is to 'open minds'.

In attempting to 'open minds' Johnson has good things to say about exposing the weaknesses in the arguments used to support a materialistic and naturalistic interpretation of evolution in his chapter 'Turning Up Your Baloney Detector'. He also makes some valid points in the chapter 'A Real Education in Evolution', though this is spoilt by some superficial arguments. For example, that there are different opinions about the mechanism of evolution does not show that the theory is in trouble - only that the mechanism is more complex than Darwin thought. Johnson is unaware of the work on 'selector genes' which is opening up a new way of understanding the mechanism, which can include the existing insights.

If Johnson means what he says about opening minds, he will not mind me turning my 'baloney detector' on his book. He says that when people here the word 'evolution' in television science programs their baloney detectors should display "Snow Job Alert". The same should be true when you read the word 'evolution' in his book. His constant assumption that it is inseparable from a materialistic naturalism is untrue both historically and philosophically. A.R. Wallace, who arrived at the theory of evolution by natural selection independently of Darwin and at about the same time, believed in a directive divine mind behind the process. D. Livingstone¹ has shown that in the late 19th century many conservative evangelical scholars, especially those in the Reformed tradition, had no difficulty in accepting evolution as the method God used in bringing living creatures into existence. Johnson implies that such a view is inevitably deistic. It is not. The Reformed scholars understood God as upholding, and working through, all the processes of nature -not as 'a remote First Cause who establishes the scientific laws and thereafter leaves nature to its own devices' (p.16).

In fact, Johnson's view of God's relationship to nature seems to be a semi-deistic one. The book is pervaded by the assumption that belief in God as Creator (which he calls belief in 'intelligent design') is only possible if there are aspects of living organisms which scientists cannot explain. This is theologically unsound for three reasons. Firstly, it is a form of semi-deism. Parts of nature are apparently 'left to their own devices' (so he accepts microevolution), while in other parts God has had to intervene to do things which nature could not if 'left to its own devices'. Secondly, it implies a semi-competent God, one who could not design a world in which 'things can make themselves'². A more biblical view (prompted, for example, by Ps. 104) is a thorough-going theism which sees God as the transcendent Creator who is also intimately involved in his creation moment by moment, upholding and working thorough the laws he has put in place. In this view the processes of nature are seen as the seamless cloth of the Creator's activity. Thirdly, Johnson's project flies in the face of Jesus' example. He seems to want to prove the existence of a Creator by producing evidence of supernatural acts of creation. When

Jesus was asked (on three occasions) to prove who he was by doing some supernatural 'sign', he refused.

Johnson's argument is also scientifically unsound. He relies heavily on the work of the biochemist Michael Behe³, who claims that certain biochemical systems are 'irreducibly complex', *i.e.* they are made up of many parts that interact in complex ways, and all the parts need to work together. Hence, he finds it incredible that they could have come into existence by a gradual process, such as Darwinian evolution requires. In his book Behe castigates biochemists for not attempting evolutionary explanations for such systems, implying this is because none are possible. Here he is wrong, because work has been done on some of these systems, as Cavalier-Smith points out in his review of Behe's book in *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, Vol.12, 1997. This reliance on 'irreducibly complex systems may well turn out to be another example of the 'God of the gaps' apologetic that will back-fire. As the gaps in scientific knowledge close, so the need for God will seem to disappear again.

Much is made by Johnson, quite rightly, of the difference between 'information' and the material substrate that conveys it. He is right to stress that the rise of meaningful information by a meaningless process it is a major problem for materialistic naturalism. However, the input of such information into a natural process does not necessarily require that there be gaps in it, as he seems to assume. The proposals of John Polkinghorne and Arthur Peacocke regarding how God may act in the world through the input of 'active information' show this⁴.

Basically, Johnson's strategy is misguided. Rather than trying to discredit materialistic naturalism by attacking evolution, he should attack it directly. True, evolution is used by some to prop up their materialistic naturalism, but the answer to that is to show how evolution can be understood with the context of a thorough-going Christian theism.

Endnotes

¹ D. Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders*, Eerdmans, 1987.

² To quote a phrase used by Archbishop Frederick Temple in Bampton Lectures of 1885.

³ M. Behe, *Black Box*, Free Press, 1996.

⁴ See J. Polkinghorne, *Scientists as Theologians*, SPCK, 1996, 36f.

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Siang-Yang Tan, *Managing Chronic Pain*, Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996. 130 pp., paper, \$9.99.

Pain is a puzzling problem that can serve as a "gift" in warning us of more serious physical problems or in helping us to grow spiritually and emotionally.

The introduction to this book contains definitions of numerous types of pains, from chronic headaches to terminal illness, and their control by a variety of methods. The various kinds of pain and their control is illustrated by case studies and statistics.

Pain control by prescribed or non-prescription medication is widely practiced and available. The major method for pain control--medical, surgical, and spiritual--could be used as strategies for coping with pain more effectively.

A modified life style is also recommended if you are overworked. Proper nutrition without overeating is important for healthy living. Challenging and changing distorted thinking leads to living more effectively with your condition and learning to cope better with the symptoms of pain.

Specially gifted Christians have the spiritual gift of healing apart from the use of natural means. We can pray for physical and inner healing as part of the ministry to which Jesus has called us, without forgetting the primacy of finding salvation through accepting Jesus as personal Savior.

You can pray for your problem with the right motive of seeking his will for you, without demanding anything. If God chooses not to heal you, you have to submit yourself to God's will with trust that God knows best and all things work for your good (Rom. 8:28).

Having enough faith does not guarantee physical healing. Christian meditation is not only detachment from the world but also attachment to the Word of God, finding meaning for suffering.

God can use pain to discipline us, but his love remains changeless. Sometimes pain is part of God's pruning work to produce more spiritual fruit. On other occasions suffering and pain are used to bring blessing and salvation to others.

You can grow spiritually and develop mature character as a result of suffering. God will remain with you in this world full of pain and all things will work for your good. Nothing can separate us, not even pain, from the love of Jesus Christ.

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