Book Reviews


No fewer than forty writers have contributed to this excellent Festschrift which honors the late Oswald T. Allis, a man of great academic distinction and blessed memory. Edited by John H. Skilton, the work is organized in terms of the two areas of Old Testament study which were of prime importance to Dr. Allis. Interspersed with more technical writings are essays which bear tribute in various ways to his life and witness, and these provide a fascinating and informative background for persons such as the present reviewer who had never met Dr. Allis personally.

As is usual with works of this kind, the technical articles cover a wide assortment of subjects. However, the book has been planned in such a way that there is something for everybody, whether he be linguist, historian, exegete, or theologian. The standard of scholarship is uniformly high, and it would be invidious to single out any contribution for special praise. Many of the authors address themselves to weaknesses in the liberal position in a way which would have delighted the one in whose honor the volume was written. The array of talent which has been marshalled for this occasion shows, firstly, the extent to which others have entered into Dr. Allis' labors, and secondly, that conservative Evangelical scholarship in the field of Old Testament studies has now come of age.

This volume is a worthy testimonial to an outstanding scholar whose writings did much to afford academic respectability to the conservative approach to Scripture, and to Old Testament studies in particular. It is unfortunate that Dr. Allis did not live to see the book in its completed form, and yet there is cause for joy in that he is now in the nearer presence of the Lord whom he served so faithfully for a lifetime.

— R. K. Harrison, Wycliffe College, Toronto


A volume of merit, Livingston's Pentateuch reflects his twenty years of experience in teaching Old Testament introduction at Asbury Theological Seminary. Doubtless many others who teach the same subject will wish to use this work in their own teaching either as a basic text or as collateral reading. It is neither as fully documented nor as technical as
Kenneth Kitchen's *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity, 1966), but it is more comprehensive in its treatment of Pentateuchal backgrounds and more readable for the student.

Livingston's intent is two-fold: (1) to relate the Pentateuch to ancient Near Eastern cultures and (2) to analyze the content of the Pentateuch. In fulfilling this dual aim he covers chronology and archaeology; peoples of the ancient Near East and their languages, scripts, literatures and religions; higher criticism of the Pentateuch and its philosophical bases; form criticism and tradition criticism; Mosaic authorship and canonization. The book is profusely and helpfully illustrated with charts, maps, photographs, drawings, tables and the like. The pictures are sharp and clear. Rather than an immense bibliography, the author has appended lists of supplemental readings to each chapter.

There are some minor blemishes in this nicely produced book; dittography of a line on p. 43; *gds* for *qdsm* on p. 125; "oran" for "oral" on p. 260. 2000 BC (!) seems a bit too early for the development of the Midrash (p. 192). It is strange to see an American author render the Name of God as *Jahweh* rather than *Yahweh*; this predilection carries over in the citing of Albright's last book as *Jahweh [sic] and the Gods of Canaan* (p. 89).

In areas of dispute Livingston displays a tendency merely to list contending theories or alternatives, rather than to venture his own view. This is seen, for example, in his discussion of the meaning of *nabi*, "prophet" (p. 164), and in his discussion of the difficult "sons of God" in Genesis 6:1-4 (pp. 141-42). Respecting the date of the Exodus, Livingston concludes: "It does seem clear that the Exodus took place sometime during the Late Bronze Age. Beyond that we presently cannot go" (p. 50). So much material is covered that by necessity many items are treated with abrupt summaries. Biblical Theology is given but two paragraphs. (This is excused with a note that another course in the curriculum handles the subject—a strange remark outside of a classroom syllabus!) The material on the OT versions (pp. 208-209) seems too skimpy to be of much value to the student. The last chapter, "The Pentateuch and Canonization," appears to be something of an appendix. The book proper seems to end in a grand manner in chapter 9 (pp. 267-68), where there is a *credo* for the biblical scholar.

Although Livingston is perhaps a bit too pessimistic respecting the lack of familiarity by Evangelical scholars of the mythology of the ancient Near East, it is in his own development of these themes that he makes a splendid contribution to the student of the Old Testament. In addition to a description of the respective beliefs of the peoples of the ANE, Livingston supplies the reader with helpful correlations of deities and their aspect or function in Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian and Canaanite lists. His summary of the common elements in ANE mythology is particularly insightful and instructive (pp. 127-34).

The importance of international treaty structures as an aid to understanding the Pentateuch is developed by the author (pp. 153-62). In addition to the presentation of analogues to the Old Testament covenants, Livingston stresses the metaphors of relationship employed in
the OT covenant: father-son, king-subject, shepherd-sheep, husband-wife. Emphasis is given to the personal nature of the relationship, the unequal status of the contracting parties, and the deeply emotional bond involved.

Livingston wrestles with the problem of cultural dependence and cultural adaptation of the Pentateuch and its environment. He summarizes the procedures by which cultural environment was adapted to bear the revealed truth that God deposited with Israel under eight headings (pp. 181-186): (1) spiritual personilization, (2) radical displacement, (3) theological displacement, (4) historical displacement, (5) secularization, (6) depersonalization, (7) vocational reorientation, and (8) legal moralization. Through these various means Israel (1) retained those customs, institutions, rites, and laws that could be adapted to the ways of pure worship; (2) prohibited those customs, etc., that were contrary to the covenant obligations; and (3) added to, diminished, or rejected those customs, etc., that became obsolete.

Livingston’s most constructive contribution in the volume is his preliminary proposal on the analysis of literary types in the prose sections of the Pentateuch (pp. 241-58). Avoiding Western (and prejudicial) terminology, his own descriptive terms for the forms he observes include: (1) the Positive Response type, (2) Moral Violation type, (3) Moment of Decision type, (4) Covenant Negotiation type, (5) Messenger Commissioning type, (6) Miracle Authorization type, and (7) Leadership Challenge type. It is time indeed for conservative scholarship to grapple with the prose forms of the Pentateuch, and in this task Livingston has given a splendid direction.

— Ronald B. Allen, Western Conservative B. Sem., Portland, Ore.


John McKenzie, honored for his historical studies on the Old Testament, has now thrown a gauntlet into the ring of biblical theology. This work will challenge theologians of the Old Testament everywhere to reassess their objectives and methods. He sees the need for a new theology in the needs of an ever changing society; both the world and the church are asking questions which theology is not even hearing. The author’s stated objective is “to deal with such problems as war and peace, poverty, the urban problems, industrial and technological society, and such—not directly, of course, but by stating clearly what principles may emerge from the totality of the utterances” (p. 24).

The method begins with a delineation of those emphases found in the biblical writers themselves, categories around which the distinctive beliefs of the people may be grouped. For McKenzie there are seven such categories, corresponding to the seven chapters of the book: (1) cult, (2) revelation, (3) history, (4) nature, (5) wisdom, (6) institutions, and (7) the future of Israel. Then, each of these topics must be analyzed historically and critically, starting with Israel’s earliest encounters with Yahweh and
moving down to the late, post-exilic experiences.

No claim is made to have discovered any unifying theme that might synthesize the material. Eichrodt’s failure to make the covenant-synthesis is a warning to all biblical theologians. The historical and developmental features must predominate. Gerhard Von Rad was “too casual in his attitude toward the history behind the Old Testament books” (p. 20). McKenzie echos a farewell to all Heilsgeschichte and kindred views that presume to see some continuity running from Genesis to Revelation. This would require a “theory of biblical inspiration no longer tenable” (p. 325). Of course, he rejects all Summas and dogmatic works that pretend to systematize the “God-talk” of the Old Testament.

The assured conclusions of Higher Criticism jut through the structure of this theology at every connection. So frequent are the references to “the accepted critical view,” or “modern scholarship” one easily forgets that the book is intended primarily to be a theology. All developed ideas of God, man and the world are suspect, usually labelled as post-exilic glosses. One case in particular could be challenged, a discussion of Isaiah 24-27. McKenzie admits the parallels with the literature from fourteenth-century Ugarit, but concludes the passage to be “clearly a post-exilic appendix,” due to an allusion to the resurrection.

This pervasive use of historical criticism serves to dissipate rather than strengthen the raw material of the theologian. The author is not able to fulfill his objective of making the “totality of the utterances” speak to the issues of the day. In his treatment of the cult in ancient Israel we find only the progressive refinement of the pagan beginnings, fertility festivals, and polytheistic beliefs. Eventually the priests achieve the purity of Judaism’s late, late monotheism.

The study of revelation in the Old Testament is the study of human responses to revelation. McKenzie’s respect for the inspiration of the prophets is obvious, but “no demonstration is necessary to show that those who receive the communication are unable to share it” (p. 66). Naturally, this well-worn, existential dilemma pre-empts any hope of hearing some authoritative voice or message from God. One looks in vain for “principles” to apply to urban problems.

Israel’s understanding of history and nature was more advanced than that of her Mesopotamian and Egyptian neighbors. The spiritual God of Israel ruled all creation according to a plan, with his favored nation in the center of that plan. But a paradox admittedly exists: how can the critics affirm the historical competence of the Hebrew scribes, while they are pointing out the extensive mythology of those same records? McKenzie’s solution is to distinguish between history as event and history as record. Evidently he feels that the events were real, even if the written descriptions of those events are not to be trusted. For him, not only the primeval history of the Old Testament (Genesis 1-11), but such great events as the nation’s exodus from Egypt are mythological (p. 147).

Biblical theologians have not given full consideration to the Wisdom Literature. John McKenzie’s discussion on this point provides an excellent summary of the contents and contributions of the wise men of Israel. However, the reality of Yahweh is hidden behind the essential
humanism of the sayings common to wise men all over the ancient Near East.

Israel's social and political institutions are brought into the list of categories with some apology and hesitation. Historical and cultural aspects again are primary, such as the force of corporate personality on the family, tribe, and state units of the nation. All of life was a blending of the religious with the profane. Saul and David were "free-booters and warlords" that achieved their power by coercion, abetted by their claim to be the "Anointed Ones of Yahweh." For McKenzie, the King-Messiah theme has no relationship to the Jesus of the Gospels; nothing in the Monarchy or later records could have predicted or foreshadowed the Christ of the New Testament (p. 323).

Aside from a commonly expressed belief in the indestructibility of the people of Yahweh, McKenzie can detect no clear and unified picture of the future of Israel. Expressions of national hope in the great prophets, thos egreat triumphal passages such as Isaiah 11, Micah 5, and Jeremiah 23, are all late insertions by glossators. McKenzie's critical strictures have made the sun go down over the canonical prophets as well as the false prophets!

Certainly the author of this book has ably met his obligations to scholarship by his thoroughness and skill with the documents. He is also consistent with his basic assumptions, starting with the conviction that in the Old Testament we are examining man's experience and response to the deity, not the voice or presence of the deity himself. But has he produced a theology of the Old Testament, or simply a topical analysis of the history of the religion of Israel? In my opinion the latter is true. Nor has he met his own stated objective, as set forth in his introduction, to state clearly those principles that will guide modern society to the answers it seeks. If the task of Old Testament Theology is the total description of Yahweh, "that being whom Jesus called his father," (p. 28) much more needs to be said.

— Arthur H. Lewis, Bethel College, St. Paul, Minn.


Derek Kidner offers a fine introduction to the Psalms in which he deals with the forms of Hebrew poetry, the structure of the Psalter, trends in the modern study of the Psalms, the Messianic elements in the Psalms, the imprecatory Psalms, use of the Psalms in the New Testament, and their present relevance. Then follows a section on the titles, technical terms, and authorship of the Psalms.

The commentary is given without a translation of the text. Kidner labels each Psalm with a descriptive title. For example, Psalm 1 is called "The Two Ways." Then follows a general statement on the Psalm which deals generally with the theme and often comments on its type and place in the overall teaching of scripture. The author proceeds to comment on individual verses or passages.
In his comments, Kidner demonstrates his ability as an exegete and scholar. But this is balanced with insights from the heart of a pastor. Of course, a book of this size has built in limitations, but the author does a fine job dealing with many views and opinions, often in the footnotes. He displays an ability to put forth his own view in a gentle but very positive way.

One might wish Kidner had been a little less cursory in handling some very important problems; for example, Psalm 16:9, 10, which is quoted by Peter at Pentecost and also by Paul in Acts 13:37. Since the apostles put so much weight on the precise meaning of the word sahi, it seems a little weak to say the apostles were following a Septuagintal reinterpretation of the symbolism of the Pit. Whether the question can be answered readily or not, the reader ought to be apprised of the problem and then given several possible solutions, including the one mentioned in the footnote. However, this volume is of excellent quality and should be recommended to all serious students of the Psalms. The book is small but much that is good is packed into its pages.


This book by the elder Carl Armerding is a collection of devotional studies on thirty-three of the Psalms, plus David's dirge in 2 Samuel 1 and his last words in 2 Samuel 23. These are largely poems of "Trouble and Trust," a type of psalm which forms the backbone of the Psalter.

The author makes no claim of exegetical precision and there are places where one might question his interpretation. But he succeeds admirably in applying the devotional content of the Psalms to the needs of Christians in the 20th century. A book like this could be used as an excellent guide in both private and family worship.

— Elmer Smick


Septuagint students would probably all account the published works of the late P. Walters (né Katz) as worth their weight in gold. His was a combination of linguistic horsesense, and textual critical flair which is rare if not unique in the field. In language he might have become either a Hebraist or a Hellenist of distinction, but chose to direct his intelligence towards the neglected discipline of Septuagint studies and especially to the question of the basic text. His classic monograph *Philo's Bible* (Cambridge, 1950), in which by a piece of acute observation he dealt a disabling blow to Kahle's view of Septuagint origins, established his reputation beyond dispute. In the light of this, the posthumous
publication of his Cambridge thesis, with many improvements and additions incorporated, is a joy; and his pupil Dr. Gooding is to be congratulated on the completion of what judging by the Editor’s Preface cannot have been a straightforward task.

Walters has here done for Thackeray’s Grammar what Jellicoe did for Swete. Under the main heads of Grammatical Corruptions (Part I) and Semitisms (Part II) the book takes the form of a selective grammar, and hence goes a long way towards meeting a desperate need, for in practice Thackeray never took us much beyond orthography, while Walters is rich in syntactical and semantic insights. In a longer and more technical review (JTS N.S. Vol. XXV, Part I, p. 148ff.) S. P. Brock describes the book as “not something for the tiro,” but anyone engaged in first-line Septuagint study will find it an indispensable work of reference. It is equipped with excellent indices, to Greek, Hebrew and Latin words, to Biblical passages, to ancient texts and to papyri. Part I contains much to interest the specialist in Hellenistic and New Testament Greek, and the whole, but particularly Part II, is full of useful examples in Old Testament textual criticism, even if the treatment does not claim to exhaust a comprehensive list of problems. In the light of new knowledge one may sometimes be bound to differ from Walters on points of detail, but his method, elegant, economical and convincing, essentially stands, and is perhaps shown at its best in the Excursuses. Incidentally Wutz’s transcription theory is given short shrift on grounds of method.

Small criticisms are that the subtitle is a little misleading, for the book is in fact weighted towards corruptions: emendations Dr. Walters intended to take up more fully in a second volume which he did not write; and the language has in places been insufficiently purged of its Teutonic tinge, though never to the point of real obscurity. Perhaps this latter feature may offend American readers less than British.

— P. D. M. Turner, 1307 Devonshire Crescent, Vancouver, B. C.


This monograph is a re-sifting of the evidence concerning the textual history and authenticity of the longer ending of Mark’s Gospel. Farmer marshals the data to argue for the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 by examining external evidence such as the Mai fragment of Eusebius, statements by Jerome, Victor of Antioch and Origen. In addition, he discusses the early manuscripts that clearly omit the passage.

The key thought for the whole first part of the book is Farmer’s opinion that Alexandrian scribes trained in textural emendation practices of secular scribes omitted 16:9-20 to remove apparent contradictions with the other Gospel accounts, and embarrassing items such as the promises in v. 18 about snakes and poisons (pp. 13-22). The suggestion surfaces again and again at turning points in the argument (pp. 53, 70, 71, 72).

At the end of the first part of the book, nevertheless, Farmer estimates
the evidence as "inconclusive" and so in the second part examines the actual wording of 16:9-20 to see whether it appears Markan. He begins by assailing Robert Morgenthaler's treatment of the passage in question (Statistik des neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes, pp. 58-60). Then follows a word by word study of these verses. He notes every possible similarity to Markan style including the absolute use of to evaggelion in 16:15 and ton logon in 16:20. He plays down every argument against authenticity. For example, concerning the abrupt change in subject between vv. 8 and 9, Farmer says, "It is difficult to assess the force of this circumstance" (p. 103).

Farmer's final suggestion is that "Mark 16:9-20 represents redactional use of older material by the evangelist and belonged to the autograph" (p. 107), and his case seems to be as good as can be represented for this option. Certain reservations must, however, be registered. First, the assumption supported by Farmer about scribal emendation in Alexandria never had hard evidence and is even less credible today. The kinds of deliberate scribal changes that can be proved in Egyptian manuscripts are in the direction of the Byzantine text. (Here see Gordon D. Fee, "P75, P66, and Origen: The Myth of Early Textual Recension in Alexandria," in New Dimensions in New Testament Study, edited by R. N. Longenecker and M. C. Tenney [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974], pp. 14-45. This presents anew the question of why scribes would omit 16:9-20 when the manuscripts indicate, rather, the tendency to include the ending and even to conflate other endings with it. It should be noted that Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, the two chief early Greek witnesses against the longer ending, show few signs elsewhere of an attempt to remove embarrassing elements in Mark, either of a grammatical or dogmatic nature. Rather, they preserve more of both kinds of elements than other types of manuscripts on the whole.

In short, Farmer's attempt to show why, in his view, 16:9-20 was omitted does not stand up. He does not do justice to the fact that 16:9-20 seems to be a mosaic of tradition from Luke, John and Acts. Hort's very attractive suggestion that 16:9-20 is a summary of resurrection appearances reworked and added to Mark here in the early second century or earlier is not considered. Hort's suggestion seems to take account of all the stylistic data as well as any other suggestion, including Farmer's.

But the book is interesting as a modern attempt to address a major textual problem. Its bibliography and indices are very adequate and seems well edited and produced with typical Cambridge Press care. It must be acknowledged that the longer ending of Mark is very early, widely known and that it does reflect some similarities to Markan style and vocabulary. Its actual origin is still only a matter of speculation.

— Larry W. Hurtardo, 9779 Gross Point Rd., Skokie, Ill.


Four chapters of this work deal with the background and critique of
"situational ethics" and one chapter with the author's sketch of what he regards to be a biblical ethic. Dr. Erickson traces the modern mood of relativity to the relativity discovered in physics, mathematics, and among the world's cultures. Existentialism is singled out as a philosophical source, but not nearly enough attention and space is given to it.

The exposition of Joseph Fletcher's view is generally very good (chapter two), and the critique (chapter four) is one of the most complete and accurate available (pp. 97-127). The book suffers some, however, from what is a general ailment of evangelical books on ethics; viz., it is a whole lot easier to smell a rotten egg than it is to lay a good one. Professor Erickson makes some amends by at least sketching a positive Evangelical approach in the last chapter.

In contrast to Fletcher's three categories of legalism, situationism, and antinomianism, the author suggests a four-fold typology with room for another view in the middle which is objective and principal vis-à-vis Fletcher's subjective and situational position. It is confusing, however, for the author to identify both his and Fletcher's views as "relativistic" in contrast with the "absolutistic" view, which is equated with legalism (p. 137). This seems inconsistent with the author's willingness to speak of "universal or absolute norm" (141).

Unlike some recent works on ethics by Evangelicals, the author takes a realistic approach toward conflicting moral situations. He alludes to the lesser of two evils view and non-conflicting absolutism but favors a form of hierarchicalism that considers it one's obligation to follow the higher command in irresolvable conflicts. This, he says, may not be the ideal "good"; but it is the "right" thing to do. Even if one may regret the unavoidability of the conflict, he need not feel guilty for doing the best he can do. This position seems eminently more sensible and Biblical than to claim, as John Warwick Montgomery does (Situation Ethics, p. 47), that one is morally wrong and guilty for (or, in) doing his best in an unavoidable conflict. Erickson gives two pages to this important problem of conflicting moral situations in contrast to Carl F. H. Henry who does not give any treatment of it in two volumes on ethics.

The author reflects a wide acquaintance with contemporary literature on theological ethics, but he does not cite any works after 1971. Most of the literature comes from the mid-sixties debate, and some significant Evangelical works since 1970 are omitted, even where they would have been very useful.

Minor criticisms such as mistakenly calling Scotus a "nominalist" (p. 37) and failing to note that Fletcher clearly claimed to be a utilitarian in a later work (Norm and Context in Christian Ethics, ed. Gene Outka, p. 332), should not vitiate the overall value of the work. This reviewer was a bit humbled to read that "competent moralists" never describe giving one's life for another as "sacrificial suicide" (cf. my Ethics: Alternatives and Issues, chapter 13).

The stress on the propositional authority of the Bible as the norm for Christian ethics is commendable. And the tracing of all ethical norms back to the unchangeable nature of God, rather than merely His will, was most essential in an age intoxicated with a changeable process god. Erickson
also has some helpful suggestions for Christians in view of the problem conflict cases posed by Fletcher. Mrs. Bergmeier should not have committed adultery in order to get out of prison, as Fletcher suggests. She should have remained faithful to her vows and husband and trusted the providence of God for some third alternative (p. 121). Likewise, a man should take his father, not the inventor of a cancer cure, out of a burning building first, because there is an intrinsically higher relationship and responsibility to his own father (p. 123).

There are several troublesome aspects of Erickson’s own ethical position. First, the fact that he considers his approach objective and principial (indeed, biblically propositional) and yet is reluctant to call it “absolutistic” in favor of the word “relativistic” (p. 137). Why should he label only the legalistic view as “absolutistic” and consider his own view along with Fletcher’s to be “relativistic” is puzzling. Of course, he rightly distinguishes his view as objective and principial as opposed to Fletcher’s subjective and situational position. But has not professor Erickson fallen into an unnecessary aversion of the word “absolute” that one would scarcely expect from an Evangelical with a book of this title? Secondly, is it necessary to the intrinsic ethical value of an act to dissociate it from its consequences? One need not be utilitarian to hold that the immediate (in contrast to the long-run) consequences are inherently connected with the act itself. Could not one be non-utilitarian and yet hold that the immediate at-hand results are part of the total ethical activity of performing an intrinsically good act?

In brief, professor Erickson has provided a good background of contemporary ethical relativism—particularly Situationism; but he has not provided an unambiguously clear and sufficient biblical absolutism to replace it. However, he moves in the right direction generally and provides some particularly helpful insights.


The author, a member of the library faculty at Asbury Theological Seminary, has had considerable background with the largest American Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God. He attended Central Bible College and is a graduate of Evangel College, though he is now an Episcopalian.

This handbook is an edited version of an essay presented by the author to the 26th annual conference of the American Theological Library Association in June 1972. The manuscript has been reviewed by various officers and members of the Society for Pentecostal Studies and has subsequently been endorsed by that society and distributed to members as a membership bonus.

As the title indicates, this is not a catalog but an interpretative essay. It serves as a useful guide to the important resources a serious student of
Pentecostalia should have at his disposal. The list of resources Faupel treats is not comprehensive, but his critical assessment of those resources included is most valuable. Particular emphasis is placed on the historical aspect of American Pentecostalism; briefer treatment is given to theological currents associated with the movement.

Especially useful are the appendices. The list of Pentecostal periodicals is of considerable value, since research must take seriously the periodical literature of so recent a movement, especially a movement which has not developed a substantial literary tradition. Thus it is here that one is most likely to capture the true ethos of the Pentecostal movement.

— William Menzies, Evangel College, Springfield, Mo.