

BOOK REVIEWS

Early Christianity and Society. By Robert M. Grant. San Francisco: Harper, 1977, xii + 221 pp., \$10.00.

This book is a collection of seven loosely-related essays that focus primarily on the institutional and economic development of the early Church. Grant first examines the evidence regarding the growth of the Christian population within the Roman empire. Prior to the conversion of Constantine, the Christian movement comprised "a relatively small cluster of more or less intense groups, largely middle class in origin" (p. 11). But what was the attitude of this movement toward the empire? The Church was generally favorable toward Rome and its hierarchical structuring of society—the sharp anti-Roman attacks of Hippolytus and Tertullian must be seen as exceptions to the generally optimistic attitude of the Church that reached its culmination in Eusebius. As a result of its esteem for Rome the Church became a state within a state, and hierarchical ideas were reinforced by the development of the episcopate and the papacy. Another aspect of the relationship of Church and state was the matter of taxation and compulsory public service. The early Christians were not unwilling to fulfill such obligations to the state, but neither were they unwilling to take advantage of the exemptions that became possible for Christian clerics after 313.

Subsequently Grant turns his attention to the early Christian views on work, occupations and the acquisition of private property. A survey of the NT and later ecclesiastical literature shows that the Church was firmly committed to promoting socially useful arts and crafts, although the definition of acceptable vocations tended to be influenced by the surrounding culture. While evidence shows the presence of all social classes among the Christians, slaves probably represented only a small minority of the total Christian population. The Church did not condemn slavery per se but favored practical improvement of the conditions of slavery. With regard to private property, the fathers generally rejected the idea of communal sharing set forth in the early chapters of Acts. The Christian attitude was aristocratic, allowing the rich to remain rich but discouraging social mobility and the avaricious accumulation of wealth.

The final essays treat the organization of alms and the acquisition of buildings and endowments by the Church. The fourth century saw a growing interrelationship between Christianity and the empire: Clerics became administrators for the state's grain dole, while the government closed pagan temples and began the construction and endowment of basilicas.

Grant is properly concerned to interpret the Church's "practicality" in its broader historical context. I was left with doubts, however, about the significance of a number of the citations of Graeco-Roman parallels to Christian thought. For example, does the political application of the metaphor of the body by either pagan or Jewish authors really contribute to our understanding of Paul's use of the body metaphor in 1 Cor 12 or Rom 12 (pp. 36-38)? Or again, should Luke's description of the communal sharing of the early Church (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35) be understood as the product of conscious assimilation of the Jerusalem situation to the structure of certain Pythagorean communities known to Luke (p. 100)?

While many of this book's conclusions are not so surprising as the jacket cover suggests, it supplies a useful introduction to a limited range of material and should be added to college and seminary libraries. The individual chapter bibliographies will prove helpful for those who wish to delve further.

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Theonomy in Christian Ethics. By Greg L. Bahnsen. Nutley, NJ: Craig, 1977, 619 pp., \$12.50 paper.

Protestants have never agreed about the place of the Mosaic law in the Christian life. *Theonomy* is essentially a restatement of the Reformed position. Bahnsen cogently sets out his thesis on page 34: "The Christian is obligated to keep the whole law of God as a pattern of sanctification and . . . this law is to be enforced by the civil magistrate where and how the stipulations of God so designate."

After painstakingly exegeting Matt 5:17-19, which is a touchstone defense for the rest of the book, the author attempts to remove misconceptions about the thesis, to resolve the conflicts with other Scripture passages to which opponents of the thesis commonly appeal, to reply to positions antithetical to the thesis, to "dispel" indifference to the thesis, and to apply it to the state. In an introduction he sets the historical context for the whole matter, and in several appendices he goes into more detail on several issues raised in the body. The work is nicely indexed (subjects, names, Scripture texts) and abounds in bibliographic footnotes. At 619 pages the treatise is easily the most extensive work in English on this important topic in ethical prolegomena.

Theonomy has several stylistic problems. First, it is too long. This is generally because the author has (secondly) often resorted to "overkill." Thirdly, Bahnsen sometimes resorts to technical language that obscures the meaning to all but the philosophically trained reader. These three problems John Frame noted when he reviewed the book for the *Presbyterian Journal*. But the fourth problem, and by far the most troublesome, is Bahnsen's tendency to polemicize to the point that many who disagree with him will likely discontinue reading before they come to his best arguments. Take, for example, his preface where he calls those who do not hold his view "pseudo-teachers who impugn the integrity of God's word" or some similar name. That sort of thing is hardly an encouragement to wade through 619 pages!

With respect to content, the book has one serious flaw. Being a work of prolegomena, *Theonomy* eschews concrete application of the Mosaic code to today's societies. This is to say that Bahnsen gives only rare illustrations of what he means when he says that the Mosaic code is a "pattern." In the face of statements that the believer is responsible for every "jot and tittle," that there is "abiding validity of the [Mosaic] Law in exhaustive detail," and that "[God] did not deliver to us merely some broad and general moral principles, but He revealed very extensive, specific, and all-encompassing commands" (p. 35), it seems most reasonable to assume that Bahnsen is a literalist in applying OT law to the believer so that we should make Moses' law—*verbatim*—the law of all lands. There may be a few buried indications otherwise, but the preponderance of verbiage is toward literalism.

This reasonable conclusion is nonetheless not what Bahnsen has in mind. In subsequent dialogue with the editor of the *Presbyterian Journal* Bahnsen rejects a literal pattern, saying that though any nonceremonial OT command would still apply literally if the conditions were the same, he believes that "there is no place in *Theonomy* where literalistic interpretation of God's law is insisted upon at every point. . . . It is the underlying principle . . . that is binding today." Alas, in 619 pages he never said it so clearly! Thus he seems to be arguing that every OT rule is a phrasing for Jewish culture of some principle of mercy, justice and/or truth. And what we need to do is to go to every one of those rules, find that specific or general principle and apply it to our own societies.

It may be interesting to members of ETS to know that, put this way, Reformed and dispensational ethicists could agree upon the use of Moses by the NT believer. Lutheran scholars could also give assent. But the reason that all do not is that these different groups have generally insisted that everybody use the same words. The Reformed want everybody to say that the "law" applies to us today. Lutherans have often wanted to reserve the term "law" for justification discussions (as a comparative term to "gospel"). Dispensationalists think of Israel's national constitution when they hear the word. But, as we have seen, the Re-

formed think of application in terms of principles to be stated in modern terms. Luther insisted upon the importance of teaching the Ten Commandments. And Ryrie remonstrates that dispensationalism is misrepresented by those who imply that dispensationalists do not believe that the Sermon on the Mount applies to believers today (*Dispensationalism Today*, p. 107). (Incidentally, I find Bahnsen's treatment of Ryrie to be either incredibly sloppy or outright dishonest when he disregards Ryrie's clarification, drawing the rejected implication from material on the very page where the clarification is made!) I personally do not know one member of ETS, from any of these groups, who does not believe that "all Scripture is profitable for . . . instruction in righteousness."

Given a nonliteralistic hermeneutic, it should be much more likely that folk could agree that states should, in their constitutions and law codes, embody all of the OT principles of mercy, justice and truth. This is the second part of Bahnsen's thesis. Of course there will undoubtedly be arguments over particular applications. And many will disagree with Bahnsen's postmillennial implications. But is not Bahnsen right in insisting that God's civil ministers use God's (specific) principles of justice in the fulfillment of their task? Read Bahnsen before you respond.

W. F. L.

Christian Social Ethics. Edited by Perry Cotham. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979, 265 pp., \$4.95 paper.

A book on social ethics written by competent evangelicals is a welcome sight. It is a field that Americans have tended to avoid since the days of the old "social gospel." This book, a symposium collected by a minister of the Church of Christ, seeks to reverse this trend.

The book begins with the editor's essay on the importance of evangelical involvement. Next John Willis gives an excellent chapter on OT foundations of social action. He argues that since God's nature, man's nature, and the nature of responsibility are all unchanging, the OT is very relevant to any discussion in the field. It is a tragedy indeed that few of the contributors take advantage of either Willis' chapter or the OT.

James Thompson exemplifies this failing in his chapter on NT ethics. Jesus' Sermon is not seen as a reiteration and stress of the spirit of the OT law but as a radicalizing of "Jewish identity." Jesus' ethics is spoken of as something "unmistakably new" (pp. 48-49). Rightly, Thompson understands NT ethics to arise out of the preaching of repentance and new life, but sadly he does not see that NT failure to set out an organized social ethic must be understood in light of the completeness of the OT system. In turn, few of the remaining essays attempt to make significant use of the NT either.

The next two chapters are on politics. In the first, Paul Henry discusses the ethics of "power politics." Believing that "politics is the authoritative allocation of values and resources for all society" (p. 65), he holds that Christian witness will provide a morally prophetic conscience to government. He is opposed to theocratic-type input, however, and rather argues for government toleration of non-Christian and agnostic religious traditions (p. 72). This latitudinarianism could be challenged (it seems to me) on Biblical grounds.

Richard Pierard completes the political set with a well-researched attack on civil religion. The question this chapter raises to this reviewer is, however, why the chapter is in the book. Ethics per se is only tangential to his discussion. This reveals one of the biggest problems in social ethics—namely, what are the limits of the field? Is social ethics ethically sensitive sociology, the "second table of the law" writ large, or what?

From principles and perspectives the book now turns to problems. First comes Letha Scanzoni on "Changing Family Patterns." Her work is essentially an evaluation of elements in the 1976 census. The right trends she discusses—e. g., rising divorce rate and cohabitation—are viewed as opportunities for rejoicing. To her, cohabitation "is one attempt by some people to approach marriage rationally rather than thinking in unrealistic romantic terms." It is "getting to know one another well" and can be "commendable" (p. 126). I

was indeed grateful that she did not deal with recent indications that incest is on the rise! I have a hard time concluding that the chapter is not morally irresponsible.

Jim Reynolds returns to responsibility in his chapter on Christian sex ethics. His commitment is to Scripture and is profitable reading, though not all will agree with all of his conclusions.

Cotham's own chapter on ethics and media is excellent. It is a sober and sobering study of what is constantly flooding our homes and minds. His research is scholarly, his conclusions are evangelical, and his admonitions are practical.

David Moberg is next with an equally good chapter on ethics and aging. The chapter is not only loaded with informative statistics but also contains very practical material on how we can help to meet the physical, material, socio-physical and spiritual needs of the aging. The chapter could have gained strength from more Scriptural input.

Stanley Mooneyham follows with a challenging study of world hunger. Though he has a tendency to preach the right sermon from the wrong text and to overreach himself on other texts, the essay is sure to change the fiscal policies of all the truly Christlike, the already poor, or the hard of heart.

Robert Culbertson moves us back into politics with a somewhat-too-technical essay on punishment and sentencing. Dissatisfied with both the traditional "treatment" approach to punishment and the various ideas of determinate sentencing, he offers what he calls the "comprehensive reintegration model," which seeks to combine variable term incarceration with programs of reintegration, restitution and reconciliation. Though he does give some evidence of being able to distinguish "just retribution" from vengeance (cf. p. 244), his tendency is to equate them in such a way that it renders him unable to appreciate OT justice—which sort of justice, incidentally, taught determinate sentencing with very little recourse to prison.

The final chapter is on biomedical ethics. It is authored by Harold O. J. Brown. Though short, it touches on almost all of the major issues in that complicated field. The essay is markedly pro-life, but rationally so. Brown is in favor of passive euthanasia and opposed to genetic engineering. He utters caution with regard to the matter of harvesting organs for transplantation.

It is unfortunate that the book does not have material on business ethics. Indexes would also have been helpful. Despite these lacks, the book is still well worth the cost. We can only hope for more works to set beside it on our shelves and challenge our actions.

W. F. L.

Homosexuality and the Church. By Richard F. Lovelace. Revell, 1978, 158 pp., \$6.95.

Richard Lovelace has been deeply immersed in the ecclesiastical confrontations with this issue, for he was leader of the minority task force on homosexuality in the United Presbyterian Church. After a brief survey of the Church's traditional stance that sees homosexuality as contrary to the will of God, Lovelace examines new approaches to non-heterosexual behavior. These new approaches are results of shifts in medical and psychological opinion as well as new perspectives in the Church.

Although he finds the new theological arguments on behalf of homosexuality to be wanting, Lovelace does note that they have uncovered two serious defects in the traditional posture: (1) a neglected mission in the gay subculture, and (2) homophobia—a fear and hatred of homosexuals. He calls the Church to a deeper understanding of gay life and a commitment to overcoming past hatreds.

For Lovelace, the key to the homosexual debate is what to do with Scripture. "The issue at stake," he contends, "is not any particular view of Biblical inspiration or inerrancy, but whether the Bible is to be the ultimate rule of our faith and practice or whether it is to yield its normative role to our experience, or reason, or our supposed new revelations from the

Spirit" (p. 112). He takes a long hard look at each of the Biblical texts that pertain to the issue in chap. 4. After surveying the arguments used to defend homosexuality in each text, Lovelace goes on to give his own exegetical stance—that the Bible does speak clearly to all kinds of homosexuality and condemns such behavior.

In the final chapter the book deals with "The Church's Ministry to Homosexuals" and the problem of Church discipline. Lovelace contends that active homosexuality within the Church must be challenged and disciplined in gentleness but that there should be no "search and destroy mission" against active homosexuals. Some cures, he notes, are worse than the disease, and thus a certain amount of pluralism must sometimes be tolerated.

Lovelace's indictments are not just aimed at the active homosexual. He challenges the Church to draw on the resources of God's grace for two cures: homosexual behavior, and the homophobia of many heterosexual church members.

Lovelace, while acknowledging that certain Levitical practices do not apply today, claims the hermeneutical principle that Scripture interprets Scripture as well as the criteria of the severity of punishment in Leviticus. Because the penalty for homosexual acts in the code is severe and because the rest of Scripture reiterates the Levitical prohibition, it is seen to be binding and morally authoritative for our day.

Lovelace's work is a must for all evangelical pastors and pedagogues. His treatments of varying Biblical and theological interpretations are lucid, honest and nonrhetorical. Yet his own position is set forth with depth, firmness and deep conviction. His constant appeal to the Reformers for authority is a bit annoying, and his riding-the-fence approach on Church discipline may seem weak to some readers with a different ecclesiology. While he affirms the need for gay civil rights, a thorough analysis of this pertinent issue would have enhanced the book's value. But other than these few details, it is an illuminating work that will be used for a long time to come.

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Turretin, Francis. *Turretin on the Atonement of Christ*. Translated by the Rev. James R. Willson. Baker, 1978, 195 pp. \$4.95 paper.

Francis Turretin taught theology in the Geneva Academy roughly a hundred years after Calvin. By any account his work in general, and his *Institutes* in particular, stands as one of the pinnacles of Reformed theology. Moreover, since the *Institutes* served as a primary text at Princeton Theological Seminary during the nineteenth century, Turretin provided the theological undergirding for an important segment of the evangelical movement in the United States.

The *Institutes* has never been translated in its entirety, but a part of the *Institutes* did appear at the beginning of the nineteenth century under the title *The Atonement of Christ*. This excerpt from Turretin's major work covered the necessity, the truth, the perfections, the matter and the extent of the atonement. As one might expect, he defends the doctrine of limited atonement, which had been given official sanction at the Synod of Dort. The fact that his discussion of this particular topic occupies almost half the space devoted to the doctrine of the atonement should indicate his deep concern about this highly-debated issue.

Those interested in historical theology and in the Reformed tradition will be glad to know that this part of the *Institutes* has been reprinted as a part of Baker's Twin Brooks Series.

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Heppe, Heinrich. *Reformed Dogmatics: Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*. Foreword by Karl Barth. Revised and edited by Ernst Bizer. English translation by G. T. Thomson. Baker, 1978, 721 pp., \$9.95 paper.

Heppe is for the hearty only. Those with only a casual interest in technical theology will be well advised to pass this one by. On the other hand, few works stay in print almost continuously for a hundred years. Having done just that, Heppe's work has stood the test of time. It would be hard to find a better entree into Reformed theology.

In his subtitle Heppe informs the reader that his work both sets out Reformed theology in detail and also illustrates that theological perspective from the historical sources of that tradition. It is this second purpose that makes this work so valuable. A thorough reading of Heppe will introduce the reader to the best in Reformed theology from the time of Calvin through the mid-nineteenth century.

This edition is a reprint of the 1950 edition, which was a translation of Volume 2 of Heppe's writings on Reformed theology that appeared in 1861. This addition to Baker's Twin Brooks Series makes an excellent companion volume to Heinrich Schmid's *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Augsburg), which illustrates the sources of Lutheran theology.

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The Reformation: A Narrative History Related by Contemporary Observers and Participants. By Hans J. Hillerbrand. Baker, 1978, 499 pp., \$6.95 paper. *Karlstadt's Battle with Luther: Documents in a Liberal-Radical Debate*. Edited by Ronald J. Sider. Fortress Press, 1978, 161 pp., \$5.95. *Anabaptist Beginnings (1523-1533): A Source Book*. Edited by William R. Estep, Jr. Nieukoop: De Graaf, 1976, 172 pp., 75 Hfl. *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*. Edited by William Klassen and Walter Claassen. Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1978, 610 pp., \$24.95.

A good anecdote often brings a history class to life. Hillerbrand's *The Reformation* provides the teacher with an ample supply. Sermons, incendiary statements, personal recollections, humorous stories—all are included. *The Reformation* is delightful.

Hillerbrand's collection is divided into chapters that present the major streams of the Reformation including, I might add, the Anabaptist tradition, which has often been ignored in the past. Each chapter commences with a four- or five-page introduction by the editor. The selections included in the various chapters tend to be a page or two in length, although some are as short as a paragraph and a few run to five or six pages. Each selection has a one- or two-sentence introduction. In short, the collection is well organized and easy to use.

This edition of Hillerbrand's work is a reprint of the 1964 edition and takes its place in Baker's Twin Brooks Series. The collection would make an excellent secondary text for a course on the Reformation. For that matter, since the selections are fun reading I would recommend it to anyone interested in fleshing out his understanding of the Reformation.

Older accounts of Andreas Karlstadt often painted him as a revolutionary iconoclast in the same camp with Thomas Müntzer. Ronald Sider's earlier work, *Andreas Bodestein von Karlstadt* (Brill), effectively laid that image to rest. But Luther still tends to get a better press. After all, Luther's works are readily available while Karlstadt's are not. Sider's newest contribution, *Karlstadt's Battle with Luther: Documents in a Liberal-Radical Debate*, should help to even the odds a bit. The issue between Karlstadt and Luther was not violent revolution versus peaceful reform. The issue was whether changes in Church order should proceed gradually or not. Karlstadt took the radical alternative, demanding the immediate abolition of everything that lacked Scriptural support. Luther insisted that reform proceed more slowly. Because Luther could not accept the fact that Karlstadt and Müntzer were not fellow travelers in the revolutionary wing of the Radical Reformation, he

eventually engineered Karlstadt's dismissal from the University. Karlstadt responded with a few parting shots published in Switzerland.

In *Karlstadt's Battle with Luther* the documents have now become available. Sider's selections are fascinating; the historical debate is interesting in its own right. But even more, the battle can be seen as typical of the recurring argument about how Church reform should proceed. Those interested in contemporary Church reform will find that Sider's collection of documents provides much-needed perspective.

Earlier studies of the Reformation tended to find the sources of the Anabaptist tradition in the Karlstadt/Luther confrontation. Recent studies have tended rather strongly to locate the origins of the Radical Reformation in Zurich among the students and followers of Zwingli. The collection of documents entitled *Anabaptist Beginnings (1523-1533)*, edited by Estep, provides the materials for understanding the Anabaptist critique of the Magisterial Reformation in Zurich. Estep's work is devoted, therefore, exclusively to the origins of the Anabaptists in Switzerland, South Germany and Austria.

Estep begins his collection with the Minutes of the Second Zurich Disputation (October 1523) as recorded by L. Haetzer. The origins of the conflict between the Activist wing of the Reformation in Zurich led by Grebel and the Magisterial Reformers led by Zwingli are usually traced to this meeting. A few of the other items contained in the collection are a selection of Grebel's letters from the period December 1523-October 1524 concerning the Reform movement in Zurich, Mantz's defense of the Radicals in Zurich written to the Council in January 1525, and the Schleithem Confession of 1527. Estep concludes the historical survey with Marpeck's "Confession of Faith" (January 1532). The editor has provided each selection with a brief introduction.

The documents included are well chosen and will be useful in teaching the Reformation. Theological libraries will definitely want to have a copy of this work. The editor indicates in the "Introduction," however, that he intends the book to supplement his own *The Anabaptist Story* or some other introduction to the Radical Reformation. If that was his goal, he made a mistake in choosing the publisher. Few students will be able to afford thirty-five dollars for a secondary text. And that is a shame, for the documents deserve study.

Several years ago Herald Press issued *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*, edited by John H. Yoder, as the first volume of a projected series entitled Classics of the Radical Reformation. The second volume in that series, *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck* edited by Klassen and Claassen, is now available.

Pilgram Marpeck, a mining engineer from the Tirol, functioned as one of the pillars of the South German Evangelical Anabaptist movement. His usefulness as an engineer apparently helped him to avoid serious persecution, and as a result he managed to live into his sixties—an unusual feat for an Anabaptist leader. During the 1530s Marpeck took a leading role in the debate between the Evangelical Anabaptists and the Spiritualists. Not surprisingly, therefore, the first two treatises included in this volume deal with issues raised by Spiritualist writers such as Schwenckfeld. The third treatise is a complete version of Marpeck's "Confession of 1532" (cf. the abridged version contained in the Estep collection). The fourth and longest work is his "Admission of 1542," which deals with baptism and the Lord's supper. About one half of the volume is devoted to the 19 letters from Marpeck that have survived. The work is an excellent addition to the English resources now available for studying the Anabaptist movement. It belongs in all theological libraries.

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Being Human: The Nature of Spiritual Experience. By Randal Macaulay and Jerram Barrs. InterVarsity, 1978, 212 pp., \$4.95 paper.

Macaulay and Barrs, who are staff members for L'Abri Fellowship, explore the relationship between human nature and spiritual growth as they develop the thesis of this book:

that spiritual growth does not negate what is human but helps to restore what is truly human. This book is actually more about spiritual growth than a Biblical discussion of human nature. For this reason and its clear writing style it would make excellent reading for any Christians struggling with understanding how God expects them to grow spiritually. *Being Human* does avoid the oversimplistic "five steps to holiness" writing that is common today as it deals with topics such as the centrality of Christ, the need for active obedience, God's sovereignty and human free will, affirming self and denying self, spiritual guidance, and the purpose of the believer's judgment.

The simplified, clear approach to this topic may also be a weakness, however, since the authors seem to oversimplify the Biblical approach to the goodness of human nature. Man's creation in the image of God is, as the authors point out, the basis for his self-worth. But they fail to explain the negative effects of the fall on human nature and how the fall affects our approach to our humanness. The fall changed human nature, and not everything that is presently found in human nature—particularly its self-centeredness—will remain as spiritual growth unfolds. The real glory in our humanness is not that we are descendants of Adam but that God has chosen to change our nature into children of the last Adam. Therefore it is not antihuman for the Bible to talk about denying self, humility, developing our new natures, the corruption inherent in the "old man," and the glories present in our spiritual nature.

Since we are bounded by a secular culture that finds glory in what is human instead of in him who is divine, and a Christian culture that often communicates only "what a worm I am," this book makes excellent reading as it gives us a well-balanced approach to the topic of humanness and spirituality.

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The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism. By D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979, 123 pp., \$3.95 paper.

From time to time the "KJV-only" position spills over into the evangelical arena. Currently we are experiencing a revival of that fad—with a significant difference. Hitherto the attacks against modern English versions were directed against "loose theology" and/or the "liberals" who translated those versions. However, now that *conservative* evangelicals are a recognized factor in the translational field (cf. *NASB, NIV*), a new tactic has arisen: the use of "textual criticism"—i. e., the Greek NT text underlying the *KJV* is supposedly the "best" text, "closest to the autographs"; the critical text underlying all other modern versions is substandard or "heretical."

This sounds like the Fee-Hodges/Taylor-Pickering debate concerning the "majority text" theory of NT textual criticism (cf. *JETS* for 1978). But that debate concerns the question whether the majority text theory can legitimately stand its ground on a scholarly basis. The issue Carson addresses is not to be equated with that question. The majority text of the NT at times differs significantly from that underlying the *KJV* (cf. Luke 17:36; Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7—such readings are rejected under majority text theory but retained by the *KJV* defenders).

Rightfully, the *KJV* partisans bear the brunt of Carson's attack. Certain issues paralleled in majority text theory are also addressed, but these are not the main thrust of the book. A 19-page appendix deals more directly with the majority text theory via a critique of Pickering's *Identity of the New Testament Text*.

Although the *KJV* proponents claim as well a translational excellence never to be equalled, Carson briefly refutes this within 24 pages and stands strongly for modern translation (the *NIV* his personal preference). For the textual question Carson is the nonspecialist's guide into basic manuscript and historical data, pointing out weak and erroneous argu-

ments and faulty and "loaded" logic emanating from the *KJV* camp (some of which apply to the majority text case as well). Carson demonstrates that the *KJV*-advocates' use of "textual criticism" is merely a smokescreen—these claim to support majority text theory, but only insofar as the majority text agrees with the *KJV*. Where the two differ, they claim the *KJV* is always right, even when no Greek manuscripts support the *KJV* text (cf. Acts 9:5b-6a). In the final result, this leaves them with no textual theory at all—only the original obiter dictum: "The *KJV* is best." Their use of majority text theory to bolster their case is a "red herring," nothing more.

Most if not all of the pro-*KJV* textual claims are similarly refuted by *reductio ad absurdum*. These refutations, found in Carson's "Fourteen Theses" (pp. 43-78), deserve repeated reading. Special attention is directed to his 13th thesis (pp. 76-77), which laments the mostly needless division caused over the "textual issue" as slanted by fundamentalist believers. Although the majority text theory itself is not directly addressed by this book, it still hits upon those very key issues that all majority text partisans must face and respond to if their theory is to possess validity. Therefore, for all concerned, this is a necessary and valuable book.

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An Introduction to Old Testament Study. By John H. Hayes. Nashville: Abingdon, 1979, 400 pp., \$10.95.

In his inaugural address in 1936 Joh. de Groot, professor of Semitic languages and OT exegesis at the University of Utrecht, asserted that "the vessel of literary criticism will have to be docked for entire reconstruction, before it will be able again to render reliable auxiliary service; the repair I fear will last very long" (cf. G. Ch. Aalders, *A Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* [1949] 29). Aalders observed: "This fear, indeed, seems to be fully justified." Thirty years later this "repair" is still continuing, as is exhibited in this volume.

Hayes delineates the basis for Biblical study from the perspective of modern scholarship committed to the critical reconstruction of the OT. Among the most quoted sources are the writings of Julius Wellhausen and the modifications of his theory by H. Gunkel, S. Mowinckel and G. von Rad. He also brings into focus the importance of the canon and textual criticism as basic to the study of the OT.

The concept of OT canon as authoritative literature is emphasized by Hayes in his opening chapter. For the Jews the recognition of writings as "sacred and authoritative" began with Jesus ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus 44-49) in the second century B.C. and reached a "decisive stage" in A.D. 70-100, although the exact manner in which developments took place cannot be determined (p. 33). Consequently "the early church did not inherit a closed canon of normative scriptures from Judaism" (p. 34). Subsequently the early Church developed its own OT, which was more inclusive than the Hebrew canon. The formation of the OT canon is nothing more than a type of human activity.

In discussing "positions and practices within the church and scholarship" concerning the origin of the OT canon, Hayes does not include the option that written material beginning with Moses was recognized as authoritative and that by about 300 B. C. the OT canon of the Jews was essentially complete and regarded as complete and authoritative by Jesus and the NT writers. For this view in current scholarship see G. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (1974); R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1969); M. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (1972); and others.

Basic to OT study is the concern for an authentic text. In a brief survey of the transmission of the text and the problems involved in a reconstruction of its most original form, Hayes introduces the basic rules and principles in textual criticism that are essential for study and interpretation of the Biblical text.

Beginning with literary criticism and interpretation in the early synagogue and Church, Hayes surveys Biblical study through the Middle Ages and the Reformation era. This historical-critical approach as projected by Julius Wellhausen he hails as the nineteenth-century triumph in Biblical studies. After a brief analysis of form criticism he delineates its application to the various types of literature in the OT.

For the study of the Pentateuch Hayes considers the four-source theory (JEDP) of its origin as basic. After considering challenges to this position by E. J. Young, U. Cassuto, K. Kitchen and others, he asserts that "the documentary approach to the Pentateuch has been accepted by a majority of OT scholars" (p. 174). The contributions of tradition criticism and the theology of traditions and literary sources are regarded as projecting the most recent advances for further study of the Pentateuch.

Recognizing the Pentateuch as a historical document edited about 400 B. C., Hayes delineates the influence of Pentateuchal sources in the Joshua-2 Kings account as well as the theological perspective of Deuteronomy. 1 and 2 Chronicles provide something of a parallel history, while Ezra-Nehemiah supplies the later developments.

Scholarship in Israelite prophecy is surveyed from the nineteenth-century conclusion that "prophets are older than the law" to the current basic quandary of form-critical research on prophetic speech that "there is no consistent, clearly definable structure to prophetic address which can be applied in a majority of cases" (p. 277). Although the writing may have begun in the prophet's lifetime, it was edited and reedited so that the final edition often concluded with a word of hope. The process of writing "as well as the final composition of the prophetic books are matters on which only very tentative and hypothetical observations can be given" (p. 278).

In his approach to the Psalms the author gives special attention to the form-critical research of Gunkel, Mowinkel and A. R. Johnson, followed by a stimulating chapter on wisdom literature. In the concluding chapter apocalyptic literature is discussed with focal consideration given to the book of Daniel as a second-century-B. C. composition. The central figure in this book "probably does not reflect any historical personage, but instead is to be associated with the legendary wise and righteous man Daniel" about whom numerous traditions existed with only a few included in this book (p. 368).

For those who consider the OT as a purely human work in its historical setting, this volume offers an introduction to the traditio-historical approach as a basis for reconstructing the OT. More than thirty years ago I was advised by a University of Chicago professor that the *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1941) by R. H. Pfeiffer under whom I was studying was the last volume to be written from the Wellhausen perspective. Since then, however, numerous volumes have been published where the authors are committed to the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis as the basis for interpreting the OT. By way of example note the following: G. A. Larue, *Old Testament Life and Literature* (1968) 31-33; H. K. Beebe, *The Old Testament* (1970) 122; J. K. Kunz, *The People of Ancient Israel* (1974) 52.

An Introduction to Old Testament Study together with other volumes projecting the reconstruction of the OT have limited value for those who consider the OT to be the Word of God and who take a theological approach that gives recognition to divine revelation, inspiration and authority. Peter C. Craigie (*The Book of Deuteronomy* [1976] 76-77) states the problem rather succinctly as he considers the question of interpreting the OT: "How are theology and the scientific method to be related? On the one hand the Bible is a body of revelation; it is the inspired word of God. That this is so is maintained as an act of faith and conviction by the Christian. . . . On the other hand, the divine took historical form in a book, and the contents of that book had historical settings as word and deed. It is the historical setting that opens the Bible to scientific examination in terms of its history, language, and literature." Craigie is keenly aware that it is not easy to maintain a balance between the theological and scientific approach to the OT. For those who acknowledge God as the source of the OT, though its mediation is human, it "means that the scientific method is employed with certain limitations. These comments do not mean that this work is ahistori-

cal or ascientific, but the role that the historical and scientific method are granted is, relatively, a subsidiary one. Insofar as scientific and historical criticism are an aid to understanding, they are valuable, but they are not considered to be the *sine qua non* for interpreting the Old Testament."

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Crisis and Story: Introduction to the Old Testament. By W. Lee Humphreys. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield, 1979, xv + 313 pp., \$12.95.

In its form this volume would make an excellent introductory college textbook. It is well laid out with an easily-read type face, wide margins, clear and precise chapter headings and subheadings, numerous black-and-white photographs (often taken of familiar scenes from an unusual angle), nine time charts, eight simplified maps, twenty short bibliographical notes, a glossary and a subject index. The major problem from a conservative evangelical point of view is that the work is written as though that point of view did not exist. The documentary hypothesis, for example, is outlined well, but no indication is given of any dissent from that theory. Evangelical scholars, with one exception, are not represented in the bibliographies. The author states that he has attempted to construct an introduction that would meet the needs of seminaries, church-related colleges, and the religion and humanities departments of secular institutions. If evangelical schools are excluded from the first two categories, he would appear to have reached his goal.

The book is written from a historical rather than a theological perspective, beginning with the empire of David and Solomon and continuing to the uprising of Bar Kokhba. It is divided into two parts: the first, the religious traditions of ancient Israel; the second, the rise of Judaism. Three crises (note the first part of the book's title) form the framework of the history: the capture of the Canaanite city of Jerusalem, the destruction of that city by Nebuchadnezzar, and the further destruction of the city by Rome in A. D. 70. Within that arrangement almost every chapter begins with a series of primary readings in the Bible or Apocrypha. By this means the student is invited to read part of every OT book except the Song of Solomon and part of every Apocryphal book except 1 Esdras. The bibliographies, occasionally annotated, provide a good selection of recent literature with both Christian and Jewish writers being represented. One wonders, however, if *IDB* needs to be listed as often as it is. It appears 95 times in twenty bibliographies. It is absent from none and is mentioned ten times in one of them and nine times in another. But perhaps the author's rationale is that if college libraries do not have large Biblical holdings, they will at least have *IDB*.

Throughout the volume the author clearly summarizes the conclusions that have become critical orthodoxy. The origins of the Israelite nation are thought to be "obscure" and the composition of the people to be "complex." Tradition, which is seen to "suggest" that the nation could trace its roots to the twelve sons of Jacob, is set aside in favor of historical probability as outlined by Noth, Bright and Mendenhall. Samuel and Saul are understood to represent two groups within Israel who are seeking to govern the nation: Samuel the old federation, and Saul the new monarchic faction. Two of the stories (the second part of "Crisis and Story") that are strong creative forces in the nation are the Moses-Sinai story and that of David-Zion. These, which are found to be in conflict, are reinforced, attacked, reinterpreted and so forth by later generations of Israelite prophets and writers. Especially at the times of crisis are they adapted to the current needs of the nation. In the process of adaptation, material such as the old Yahwist and Elohist epics are incorporated.

Such an approach will mean that Humphreys' book will probably not find a place on evangelical campuses as a textbook. He has, however, indirectly challenged evangelicals to produce a college-level introduction of comparable attractiveness.

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Commentary on the New Testament. By E. M. Blaiklock. Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1977, \$9.95.

The former professor of classics at the University of Auckland and popular Bible expositor has written a brief commentary on the NT in 271 pages of double-column text. With such limited space it is difficult for a commentator to do more than sketch the flow of thought in each book and to express personal convictions regarding the NT, yet Blaiklock does so in a most colorful fashion. The elegant and exacting language of the commentary, much appreciated by this reviewer, will unfortunately be lost to the average Christian. However, Blaiklock exudes such an enthusiasm for the historical reliability of the NT and for the life-changing power of the Word of God that no reader will fail to miss his major thrusts. As a devotional commentary, laced with gems of insight regarding life in the world of the first century A. D., the book will prove helpful for the educated layperson.

The weakness of the commentary is that it tries to do too much in too little space. It is difficult for one person to comment on all the NT books with equal acumen; this fact is evident in Blaiklock's commentary. For example, his comments on Revelation (22 pages) are most valuable in providing essential data for the proper interpretation of the book, while his exposition of Romans (13 pages) glosses over many key issues. In the area of textual criticism his comments on Mark 16 are fairly precise, yet his conclusion on the place of John 7:53-8:11 in John's gospel ignores the more important pieces of evidence. Perhaps more problematic are the overly simple characterization of the Jewish parties in the gospels, the overemphasis on Stoic influence in 1 Corinthians, and the repeated attempts to solve apparent contradictions in the NT with one-sentence solutions.

In short, such a brief commentary cannot be expository, historically illuminating, apologetic and devotional in an adequate way. This commentary would have been better had its purpose been more precisely delineated prior to writing. As a devotional commentary Blaiklock's volume can be recommended. For those concerned with scholarly precision and exposition in a brief commentary, they will have to look elsewhere.

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