

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Colloquy of Montbéliard. Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century.* By Jill Raitt. Oxford: Oxford University, 1993, 226 pp., n.p.

Because of the gulf that is fixed between historians and theologians, historical theologians live in a virtual academic no-man's land.

The theologians, who live on one side of the canyon, frequently run into difficulty because they fail to take account of the concrete historical situation in which theology is formulated. Such theologians too often make rash and insupportable generalizations, a failure from which they might have saved themselves with a little more historical savvy. Historians, who live on the other side of the canyon, too often seem squeamish about theological intricacies, which they seem to find uninteresting, unfathomable, or unimportant. Other considerations dominate their minds and texts.

Raitt, an historical theologian, avoids both failings. She lays out adequately the cultural and political setting in which the Colloquy of Montbéliard took place, bringing to life some of the major protagonists, ideas and the historical setting of what was one of the most significant theological and political struggles of the sixteenth century.

Following Luther's death, Lutheran theology experienced a consolidation. Given that the success of the Reformation was still uncertain, the Lutheran reaction was natural. But the Lutheran consolidation created tension with Zwinglians and Calvinists who felt the need to press on theologically.

After the Peace of Augsburg (1555), tensions between Lutherans and Calvinists intensified considerably because Lutheran Protestantism was now a legal religion in the Empire while Calvinism was not. The 1577 Formula of Concord set the stage for the crisis in Montbéliard.

The central theological issue at Montbéliard was the nature of Christ's presence in communion. The self-named "authentic" (*gnesio*) Lutherans, led by J. Andrae, insisted on the *communicatio idiomatum*, the communication of the properties of both of Christ's natures such that what can be said of his divine nature can be predicated of his human nature. The Gnesio-Lutherans were "ubiquitarians" where the Calvinists were not. For these Lutherans, if one denied the actual physical presence of Christ in the Supper, one was a rationalist and perhaps even a Deist.

In defense, T. Beza rejected the communication of properties as contrary to Christ's nature and argued that, though the Calvinists did not believe in a corporeal presence, they did believe in the "true" presence of Christ in the supper. Beza appealed to the same passages offered by Andrae, and on the doctrine of election he appealed to Luther's *De Servo Arbitrio* ("On the Bondage of the Will") to show that, on this issue if not on others, it was the Calvinists who were closest to Luther.

Raitt shows that though both sides began with the principle of *sola Scriptura* and thought of themselves primarily as Biblical theologians, both sides also accepted the authority of Aristotle and used the Aristotelian categories routinely.

In a single volume Raitt brings to life an era previously cordoned off as a period of dry scholasticism. She describes these difficult debates with fairness and

compassion. At the same time Raitt avoids vague, unsupported generalities and draws a compelling picture of two key personalities. Calvinists have often been depicted as theological storm troopers marching across Europe. In contrast, Raitt clearly shows that, for most of the sixteenth century, Calvinists were besieged on all sides. In this context she has shown the political danger that can result when we are unwilling or unable to tell the truth about each other's theology. In this regard, Raitt's analysis of the accounts of the Colloquy written afterwards is especially helpful. We should be most grateful to her for her good work.

Scott Clark  
Oxford University, Oxford, England

*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament.* Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider. Translated by Virgil P. Howard, James W. Thompson, John W. Medendorp and Douglas W. Stott. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–93. German original: *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (1980–83). Pp. xxiv + 463; xxiv + 555; xxiv + 566 (including English-Greek index), \$39.95; \$49.99; \$49.99.

This originally German work appears to have found a largely positive reception in North America. There are a number of features that make the *EDNT* more user-friendly than the work it may be used to supplement and update, i.e., the *TDNT*. (1) The at-times-excessive emphasis on diachronic components of word meaning has been corrected. The *EDNT* generally focuses on the meaning of a given term in the various corpora of the NT, referring to extra-Biblical usage only where it is judged relevant for the word's use in the NT. (2) The length of the entries is more appropriate for an initial survey of the occurrences of an expression in the NT than the essays contained in the *TDNT*, whose length is often prohibitive. (3) From a practical standpoint the *EDNT* is in many ways the ideal tool for the busy, at least mildly Greek-literate pastor or the conscientious exegete. It puts a wealth of helpful information, including bibliographical information for further study, at his or her fingertips that should greatly increase the quality of sermons and individual and group Bible study. (4) The volumes are well translated and published.

While the practical benefits of this new reference work are substantial, the purist may still register the following cautions. To begin with, what exactly is an "exegetical dictionary"? Apparently this designation refers to a hybrid between a lexicon and a theological dictionary. The term "dictionary" may simply indicate that entries are organized alphabetically. Usually the expression is also taken to denote a certain objectivity and general validity that elevates the work over specific interpretive issues. Doubtless, however, an "exegetical dictionary" involves linguistic, historical, theological and exegetical judgments that are to a significant extent dependent on a given writer's viewpoints on any number of issues. This leads to the second concern. The authors claim that the *EDNT* considers recent developments in linguistics without presupposing any one theory. This very issue, of course, led to the need for Kittel's *TDNT* to be corrected, if not replaced, in the light of Barr's critique in *Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961). In view of the seriousness of the concerns raised by Barr and others, the above-quoted assurance by the authors of the *EDNT* appears unduly glib. Exactly how were recent linguistic viewpoints considered? And which ones? A foreword of the scope found in the *Greek-English Lexicon* by Louw and Nida would be necessary to lay out the procedure. Still, there seems to be an occasional intermingling of the study of words and concepts. The meaning of individual words at times blends with connotations derived from their use in their respective contexts to the extent that denotation and connotation are not adequately distinguished. Overall, one

gets the impression that, despite assurances to the contrary, recent linguistic insights have not been faced in their full consequences so that the *EDNT* rises only partially above the limitations of its predecessors.

A case in point is the article on *apostellō* ("send"). The *TDNT* features an essay by K.-H. Rengstorf that is divided into three sections, tracing the term in secular Greek (2 pp.), the LXX (OT) and Judaism (3 pp.), and the NT (3 pp.). The entire discussion is based on the author's conviction that *apostellō* differs semantically from another word, *peptō*, which also means "send." Rengstorf attempts to document this thesis in his survey of ancient literature. Where there appears to be no difference in the usage of these two words, such as in Josephus or Luke/Acts, the author claims that these authors were unaware of the general usage of these terms in their day. But how credible is it to charge a writer such as Luke, who displays a significant degree of literary sophistication in his writings, with linguistic incompetence in his use of a term that occurs twenty-six times (not counting compounds) in his writings? This seems to be a rather desperate expedient to be able to maintain the validity of one's own general theory. Overall, one is left with the impression that the essay prejudices the result of contextual exegesis of NT passages where *apostellō* is found, in at least two ways: (1) By giving preeminence to diachronic analysis, the meaning of words in earlier centuries appears to be presupposed in later writings, including the NT. (2) Not word meanings, but entire Biblical concepts, are the real subject of study.

Expectantly one turns to the *EDNT* to see whether or not and, if so, how these deficiencies have been remedied. Instead of the eight pages of the *TDNT* article, the equivalent entry in the *EDNT* covers only one page. Rather than proceeding diachronically, the author of the *EDNT* essays begins immediately with a survey of the term's occurrences in the NT. This brief inventory is followed by a discussion of the meaning and usage of *apostellō*. We are informed that "the vb. means *send forth, send out*." The author then proceeds to substantiate this assertion in this rather lengthy phrase: "When it is not used to circumscribe the successful completion of a messenger's journey (for the purpose of delivering an object or a piece of information) but is sharpened to focus on the purpose and goal of the event in question and hence on the sending forth and completion of the assignment, the vb. assumes the meaning of *commission*." At the end of this section, almost as a throwaway remark, it is noted that "the meaning of ἀποστέλλω in the NT is determined by its connection, mediated by the LXX, with Heb. *šālah* as well as with the understanding found there of 'send' and 'let oneself be represented.'" Parts 3–4 provide discussions of the usage of *apostellō* in the synoptic gospels and John. The latter part presents a sketch of the author's (J.-A. Bühner) own thesis that John developed pre-Johannine confessional traditions (such as Acts 3:20, 26; Rom 8:3; Gal 4:4) under the influence of Jewish teaching about sending into the basis for Christological legitimation. *Apostellō* in John, according to Bühner, thus "denotes commissioning and authorization from God."

The *EDNT* article is indeed an improvement over the essay in the *TDNT* in its more synchronic orientation (i.e. its focus on the NT usage). Here, however, the problem of an "exegetical dictionary" surfaces. What is said to be part of a term's meaning is in fact provided by the respective contexts in which the term occurs. For example *apostellō*, by itself, in John hardly "denotes commissioning and authorization from God" (cf. e.g. 1:19 where priests and Levites are sent by the Jews from Jerusalem and where *apostellō* is used). This information is rather supplied by words such as *ho patēr* used in conjunction with *apostellō*. The essay thus turns out to be a linguistically not so sophisticated study of the various NT passages where the term under consideration occurs, coupled with an effort to provide larger conceptual categories that accommodate the various uses. Moreover it should be noted that the data allow for other reconstructions than the one given by the author. This, however, is not noted, thus giving the impression that the analysis set forth in the essay is the only

possible reading of the evidence. Diachronic connections, likewise, are merely asserted without adequate discussion. In this regard the *EDNT* does not replace but merely supplements the *TDNT*.

The individual entries are of course of different quality, depending on the respective author. As other reviewers have already noted (e.g. D. L. Bock, *BSac* 150 [1993] 111–112), some individual contributors adopt an unduly negative stance toward the historicity of usage. The teachings of Jesus and the role of the evangelists are occasionally viewed disjunctively, with the result that the contribution of the latter is overemphasized while the part of the former is diminished. It should also be noted that North American readers are supplied with the translation of a work already over ten years old (the bibliographies to vols. 2 and 3 are updated until 1990). In the light of the rapid developments in the discipline, this constitutes a time lag that should at least be acknowledged. Finally, the effort to market this work as an international effort is surprising, not to say inaccurate, since the vast majority of the contributors are German. Apart from the ethical implications of this practice, one may consider the lack of collaborators from Anglo-American and third-world scholars a limitation of the work's scope, assuming that at least some helpful NT scholarship is done by non-Germans.

Overall, these volumes will serve the pragmatist well. Purists, on the other hand, may be left longing for a linguistically more sophisticated and methodologically more rigorous alternative to Kittel's dinosaur achievement.

Andreas J. Köstenberger  
Briercrest Bible College, Caronport, SK

*Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer: Ergänzungsband.* By Klaus Beyer. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1994, 450 pp., DM 198.

In 1984 Beyer published a 779-page *magnum opus* (his *Habilitationsschrift*) devoted to the analysis of the Aramaic materials from Palestine, beginning with texts from about 200 BC (the earliest Aramaic Dead Sea scrolls) and concluding with texts from about AD 1300 (Samaritan inscriptions). The book comprised an introductory chapter outlining the development of the Aramaic dialects, Beyer's own reading of each text along with a German translation, a grammar of the materials (here Beyer added earlier Aramaic materials as well, including Biblical Aramaic and Imperial Aramaic), an Aramaic-German lexicon, a register of proper names, a German-to-Aramaic glossary, and indices of Biblical references, people, places and topics. In 1986 a slightly modified English translation of the book's introductory chapter appeared under the title *The Aramaic Language: Its Distribution and Subdivisions* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht). Now Beyer has added a supplementary volume organized in tandem with the original work. The purpose is threefold: (1) to interact with the critics of the earlier publication, working through the first book section by section; (2) to bring the corpus up to date with Beyer's own reading and translation of the numerous relevant texts that have become available in the meantime; and (3) to update the bibliography and grammatical discussion.

Thus the present supplement is not intended to stand on its own, and the reader must keep Beyer's 1984 book close at hand for constant reference. That requirement does not entirely hold, however, for the considerable portions of this study that are devoted to the reading and translation of new texts. Beyer has added seventy-six new texts from the Aramaic Dead Sea scrolls, Judean desert finds such as the Babatha

archive, and inscriptions, principally synagogue inscriptions. The table of contents marks each new text with an asterisk.

Just as was the case with the 1984 volume, the present work is very much a mixed blessing. On the credit side of the ledger, all scholars interested in Aramaic and the disciplines that make use of the language—such as NT study—will welcome here a very convenient collection of a wealth of linguistic and bibliographic material. Further, Beyer is an original analyst of texts and proposes many new readings for the texts here collected. Unfortunately his originality often slides over into the idiosyncratic and the arbitrary, and that is the debit side.

Numerous scholars and reviewers found fault with Beyer's 1984 dialect analysis, for his dialects sometimes spring full-blown from a single text or inscription. These "dialects" are mere chimeras. They never existed. Beyer is insufficiently attentive to sociolinguistic aspects of the dialect problem. Also, in his grammatical portion he incorporates earlier materials, as indicated. That is a problem if what one is interested in is the question of how the Aramaic of Ezra or Daniel, for example, differs from that of the Dead Sea scrolls. Thus, sometimes too much material is analyzed under the same rubric, whereas at other times dialects multiply like rabbits. Beyer's classification of the various forms of Aramaic that may have existed in Palestine over a period of more than a millennium is completely unconvincing and arbitrary. And yet he has many interesting and useful suggestions.

The same general characterization often applies to Beyer's treatment of individual texts. For example, in his handling of the fragments of 1Q20, belonging to the *Genesis Apocryphon*, Beyer arranges the fragments in an order that he never justifies and numbers their lines in accordance with that order. My own research on these fragments (in collaboration with B. Zuckerman) has demonstrated that the fragments belong in an entirely different order and that in fact joins can be found, enabling one to reconstruct from the six fragments a single column of nineteen lines. Of course none can fault Beyer for being unaware of research that had yet to be published. The fault lies in the impression he gives. His arrangement leads the reader to believe that Beyer has reconstructed a text when in fact he has not. He has merely arranged materials in arbitrary fashion. At the same time, however, Beyer's treatment of these 1Q20 fragments definitely advances knowledge over the earlier edition of J. T. Milik, for he has succeeded in teasing some correct new readings out of these difficult portions—arbitrariness mixed with brilliant insights.

With respect to the new materials collected in the supplement volume, "arbitrary" describes even what Beyer has decided to include. For example, he has now added his own reading of the *Copper Scroll* (3Q15). This is at least a surprising find in a collection of Aramaic materials since the *Copper Scroll* is not in fact an Aramaic text. The work is composed in a vulgar dialect of Hebrew somewhat akin to Tannaitic (rabbinic) Hebrew. Beyer includes it because he believes it contains many "Aramaisms." But what, precisely, is an Aramaism? For the period of the scrolls, one scholar's Aramaism is another's dialectal Hebrew. Beyer attempts no answer to this thorny question. Leaving that fundamental matter aside for the moment, another question arises: Why not also include other Hebrew texts that contain Aramaisms? For example, 4Q385<sup>a</sup> Pseudo-Ezekiel offers numerous words and forms that might be categorized as Aramaisms. Yet Beyer neither includes this text nor addresses its exclusion. Indeed, once the Pandora's box of Aramaisms has been opened, one must wonder: How many Aramaisms must a text witness before it merits inclusion? Hundreds of Hebrew works from the second-temple period might find their way between the pages of Beyer's supplement if one takes this approach to its logical (if absurd) conclusion.

In sum, the present supplement volume is a welcome addition to Beyer's earlier publications on the Aramaic of Palestine. The work is rich in content and ideas. Yet

it must be used cautiously, and its treatment of text, in particular, must always be compared with other scholars' handling of the same materials. Through this winnowing process perhaps seventy-five percent of Beyer's new suggestions will waft away in the breeze. What remains on the threshing floor, however, will be a desirable and very useful harvest.

Michael O. Wise  
University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

*New Testament Textual Criticism: A Concise Guide.* By David Alan Black. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994, 79 pp., \$7.99 paper.

Like other books by Black, this one "attempts to make the findings of scholarship accessible to a wide readership." Not much longer than a good dictionary article, it is indeed a "concise" guide. The large type and generous line spacing, however, make it inviting to the eye.

Three short chapters deal succinctly with the purpose and materials, the history and method, and four selected examples of applied NT textual criticism. Two appendices summarize types of errors in textual transmission and the grouping of witnesses into text types. A third provides a handy "worksheet" for guiding beginners (and rusty oldtimers) in their own evaluations. The book ends with Scripture and subject indices.

Brevity is both the strength and weakness of this booklet. It can be easily read at one sitting, and no reader of average intelligence will have difficulty with it. It is clear as well as concise. But no one of average curiosity will be satisfied with it. It necessarily leaves many questions unanswered. The practical examples are helpful but too few to give more than a tantalizing taste of the process. Although three other theories of NT text criticism are sketched, and in spite of intending to be "shamelessly neutral" regarding them (p. 43), Black clearly (and rightly) prefers the "reasoned eclecticism" represented, for example, by Metzger and the Alands.

The advantages of this book over other short presentations are portability and the frank recognition that scholarly tools need not be packed in "scholarese." It will not substitute for a standard text like Metzger, but it will be a welcome summary and supplemental guide for struggling students. Others will find it a useful refresher.

Richard Erickson  
Fuller Theological Seminary, Seattle, WA

*Scribes and Scripture. New Testament Essays in Honor of J. Harold Greenlee.* Edited by David Alan Black. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992, xvi + 135 pp., \$22.50.

The desire of friends and colleagues of J. Harold Greenlee to recognize his forty-five-year career has resulted in a well-deserved tribute to this well-known scholar, teacher and missionary, whose wide-ranging contributions are evident in the brief biography and full bibliography with which the volume opens.

G. Fee begins the contributions with "textual-exegetical" observations on three passages in 1 Corinthians (1:2; 2:1; 2:10). The variants examined are three of nineteen where he differs from the *UBSGNT*<sup>3</sup>-*NA*<sup>26</sup> text and include the only two places (1:2; 2:10) where he differs from both the "standard text" and G. Zuntz. Fee successfully reminds the reader of a point on which Greenlee always insisted—namely, that

textual criticism is not an end in itself but also bears on the meaning of the text. He also demonstrates the synergistic relationship between exegesis and textual criticism, for in each of these three instances it is internal exegetical evidence, not external, that is decisive in reaching a decision regarding the text.

M. Silva's excellent investigation of the text of Galatians in the four oldest (reasonably) complete witnesses (p<sup>46</sup>, Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus) provides a vivid reminder of how little information is included in our critical apparatuses, even NA<sup>27</sup>, and how much insight can be gained from full collations of our witnesses. It is a fruitful study of a neglected area.

F. F. Bruce discusses twelve instances of textual variation in the book of Hebrews. In the much-discussed variation between *chōris* and *chariti* in 2:9, he agrees with many recent interpreters in concluding that *chariti Theou* is a secondary correction of *chōris Theou* but rejects the latter as the original text. He suggests it is an early marginal gloss that made its way into the text. His conclusion is a reminder that emendation ought perhaps to play a larger role in NT textual criticism than it is generally given.

This point is reinforced by S. Kubo's examination of Heb 9:11–12. After highlighting some of the difficult interpretive problems in this passage he concludes that one may either make sense of the syntax, but at the expense of contradicting the central thesis of the book, or make sense of the passage theologically, but at the expense of syntactical coherence. He opts for the latter approach and is thus led to propose an emendation to make sense of the syntax.

J. K. Elliott's contribution examines some aspects of NT linguistic usage. He focuses on the position of *ekeinos* in the gospels and Acts, the position of the dative of *autos* in John, and the use of *pros me/eme* in the NT.

D. S. Dockery uses the topic of "Life in the Spirit in Pauline Thought" as a means of investigating the question of development in Paul's theology. In the end he accepts a perspective outlined by R. N. Longenecker. His final summary reminds us of how much Paul modeled himself after Jesus: "Liberty comes through struggling and obedience, and glory through suffering."

D. L. Allen applies a discourse-analysis approach to the text of Philemon. Aware that many readers will be unfamiliar with his approach, he offers a helpful introduction and definition of terms. The conclusions he reaches are very similar to those achieved by other approaches (such as rhetorical criticism).

B. M. Metzger offers a nice overview of policies and issues faced by the NRSV translators with regard to text, punctuation and vocabulary. It is an excellent brief introduction to some critical aspects of this important translation.

Finally, D. A. Black takes up the difficult matter of translating poetry. In asserting that poetry has "something to say *beyond* the denotative meaning of words, however difficult this connotative meaning may be to discern," he rightly and helpfully focuses our attention on a critical aspect of the translator's task.

Readers of this stimulating collection of essays will no doubt wish to join the contributors in extending congratulations to the recipient of this well-deserved tribute.

Michael Holmes  
Bethel College, St. Paul, MN

*The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary.* By Thomas L. Brodie. New York/Oxford: Oxford University, 1993, xv + 625 pp., \$55.00.

The subtitle identifies what the author holds to be original in his approach. Arguing that Johannine studies have in recent years split into two branches, those

focused on historical questions and those concerned with literary questions, Brodie for the most part opts for the latter course and links it to a theme that has been gathering increasing attention: spirituality. In some ways his subtitle would be more accurate if it read *A Literary and Spiritual Commentary*—assuming that “spiritual” is assigned contemporary and ill-defined content, rather than, say, Johannine or Pauline content.

The foundational structure Brodie works out is defined by “the most basic elements of human reality,” *viz.* “time,” “space,” and “the stages of life, particularly the stages of believing.” As for time, Brodie divides the book into three parts, defined by Passover feasts: part 1, from the beginning to the first Passover (1:1–2:22); part 2, from one Passover to the next (2:23 to chap. 6); part 3, the third year, subdivided into two sections, *viz.* toward death and the final Passover (chaps. 7–12), and the final Passover and epilogue (chaps. 13–21)—which means, of course, that mention of the Passover is the climax of the first two sections but not of the third. As for “the complementary role of space or geography,” Brodie draws attention to the “striking” fact that in John’s gospel Jesus goes up to Jerusalem not once but several times. The first such journey takes place during the feast of part 1, the second (“the feast of the Jews,” 5:1) is set in part 2, and the third (“the feast of tents,” 7:1–14) during part 3. All of these references are “highly schematic and symbolic,” which “does not necessarily mean they are unhistorical, but it highlights a dimension other than history.” This schematic movement depicts a move away from “Jerusalem” and toward “Galilee”—away from the Jews and the cultic to the Gentiles and the spiritual.

Thematically the “central focus” of the fourth gospel is “a portrayal of the diverse processes through which one embraces life.” Christology, as important as it is in John, serves soteriology. Each stage, corresponding to the three parts, marks spiritual advance. The first year, reported in part 1, is “the youthful stage in which life seems positive, and believing is relatively easy.” The second “reflects a middle-aged stage in which the awareness of sin and dividedness makes believing more difficult.” The third “reflects a more advanced stage in which the shadow of death threatens to destroy both life and belief.” This schema is worked out in conjunction with fairly predictable treatments of community/church, eucharist, believing, and so forth. A complementary aspect to the design of the book is that “life in general, the whole experience of a believer, is a process of descent and ascent. The life one received from God is gradually poured out until the final descent into death, but at the same time there can be an increasing ascent to God.”

The commentary works its way through the text with these priorities constantly constraining the discussion. Brodie interacts briefly with many of the major Johannine scholars from Westcott to Beasley-Murray (though some of the omissions are surprising). On the whole, he cites authors in order to buttress his position. Only rarely does he attempt an evaluation that evenhandedly weighs one of his proposals for structure and theme with those of other scholars.

The result is a well-written commentary notable for the consistency and clarity of its viewpoint. Scholars whose primary field is the Johannine corpus cannot afford to ignore this work. Nevertheless I must draw attention to two weaknesses, one relatively minor and the other very major indeed.

The relatively minor weakness is that in my view most of the major structural and thematic choices do not stand up to close scrutiny. The gospel of John is so interwoven that simple structures almost always break down under criticism. Is it likely that a first-century book that openly advertises itself as being a witness to Jesus and an exhortation to belief in him should be read primarily as a handbook of spiritual progression? How do “time” and “space” relate to the substantial numbers of literary structures Brodie largely ignores? And when the “essence of John’s theol-

ogy" is summarized as yet one more popular twentieth-century theme—"Jesus as the Spirit-giving healer of human dividedness"—all my antennae start sensing peculiar combinations of reductionism and anachronism.

But the more serious problem is that this book, despite its numerous suggestive insights, is a stellar example of much that is wrong with contemporary exegesis. It focuses so minutely on a peculiarly narrow and well-defined "reading" of a text that it leaves the text behind. I worry about "rhetorical" or "reader-response" or "structural" or "historical" readings of this or that Biblical text—not because I do not learn from them, but because the focus chosen is so narrow that the text is always in some measure distorted. The best and richest exegesis habitually looks at a text from many perspectives, even if it does not always deploy the contemporary and sometimes heavy-handed literary jargon. Long before the rise of literary criticism, the best exegesis looked for structures, themes, transitions, layering, and so forth—along with history, theology, relation to other Biblical books, and much more. But a commentary that selects one or two perspectives and rigidly restricts the view of the text by these perspectives always obfuscates more than it clarifies. One appreciates the clarifications but wishes they could have been embedded in a more helpful publication. Such works win a generous proportion of positive reviews, but the biggest block of commentary purchasers—namely, pastors—soon sense there is something amiss and go back to standard commentaries. The novel approach has its fifteen minutes in the sun and is soon out of print.

D. A. Carson

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

*New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition.* Edited by D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer and G. J. Wenham. Leicester/Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994, xiii + 1455 pp., \$39.99.

This commentary, first published in 1953 and substantially revised in 1970, now is offered in a third edition that is a worthy successor to its storied predecessors. While it retains the same name, it is virtually a new work: The editors state that "nothing remains from 1953 and little from 1970" (p. vii). The Bible text used as a base has moved from the RSV to the NIV, 51 commentaries are entirely new, and the remaining 15 are thoroughly revised. The 12 introductory articles from the second edition are replaced by seven new ones. Sometimes several of the former are combined into one of the latter. For example, revelation, canon, inspiration, authority and hermeneutics are found in the single article on "Approaching the Bible" in the third edition, whereas authority, revelation and inspiration—but not canon or hermeneutics *per se*—are covered in two articles in the second edition. A few articles have dropped out completely (e.g. ones on OT theology, wisdom, and intertestamental history). The new edition has 50 new maps and diagrams (versus nine in the second).

Forty-six contributors have produced the new edition (versus 51 in the second). Twelve of these also contributed to the second edition. The new edition is similar to its predecessors in its international makeup: Its contributors are primarily from British Commonwealth countries, with a handful from the United States.

What can be said of the content and the theological stance of the new edition? No higher compliment can be paid it than to say that, in some respects, they are essentially the same as those found in its predecessors. That is, the same reasoned conservative stance on critical issues and the same lucid summaries of the contents of the respective books, with at least passing attention given to the most important

cruxes of interpretation, are found in all three editions. The writing in all three editions is clear and uncluttered. On standard critical issues that divide conservative and liberal scholarship (e.g. authorship and date of the Pentateuch, historicity of Jonah, date of Daniel, authorship of the pastoral epistles) the contributors to the third edition still opt consistently for traditional conservative positions, but not without thoroughly surveying the options and giving positive evidences for their positions.

In some respects the new edition moves beyond its predecessors. Most obviously, most of its articles are entirely new, and they take into account the scholarship of the last quarter of a century. The articles give a bit more evidence of engagement with the critical scholarly mainstream than some of those in the earlier editions, an indication that evangelicals themselves are becoming more engaged in the academy. One helpful new feature is the short bibliographies at the end of each article, with entries arranged in ascending order of complexity.

For almost two decades I have recommended the *New Bible Commentary* to students, pastors and laypeople alike as by far the best one-volume commentary in English. I will continue to do so with this new edition. It is truly a work made to last well into the 21st century.

David M. Howard, Jr.  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

*Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar: 27th Edition.* By James D. Martin. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1993, 225 pp., \$29.95.

Old yielding place to new, A. B. Davidson's *Hebrew Grammar*, successively revised by McFadyen and Mauchline, now appears in a form radically revised by Martin. While earlier editions assumed students' familiarity with Greek and Latin grammatical categories, the 27th edition assumes, realistically, that they command few English grammatical categories. It also avoids the unnecessary use of vogueish linguistic jargon. The weak verb is woven into the presentation of the strong, so that students are not blindsided by the shock of a new mountain to climb after memorizing the strong verb. The pace of presentation is rapid, perhaps too much so, with insufficient noting of real-text detail. But then this edition is meant to squeeze into the reduced courses of the modern curriculum. I consider this text full of potential for effective teaching if it is supplemented by the instructor's own charts and tables as needed for fullness of explanation and ease of memorization.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of this grammar is the fact that it is complemented by a new computer grammar for basic Biblical Hebrew entitled *Computerised Introductory Hebrew Grammar*. W. Johnstone has produced such a program for both PC and Macintosh users, cross-referenced to this new edition of Davidson. The computer program summarizes each chapter of Davidson and provides a key to its exercises. It uses sound, shows how to form the Hebrew letters, explains the basics of grammar, gives exercises with corrections, and scores the student's result. Successful completion of the program is the equivalent of a one-year university course.

T. and T. Clark also offers as a companion volume a new edition of Davidson's *Hebrew Syntax*, thoroughly revised and updated by J. C. L. Gibson.

Raymond C. Orlund, Jr.  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

*Surprised by the Power of the Spirit: A Former Dallas Seminary Professor Discovers That God Speaks and Heals Today.* By Jack Deere. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993, 299 pp., \$17.99.

One of the joys of my life is reading. Nonetheless, I do not find it too difficult to put down most books that I read. The book under review is an exception. This is the rare book that captured my interest from the first page and was thought-provoking and engrossing to the end. The book opens with the story of how Deere changed his mind on the issue of spiritual gifts. The phrase "changed his mind" is too tame, for Deere's whole life was transformed. He was previously an avowed cessationist, but he came to believe, primarily through the ministry of J. White, that the gifts of the Spirit were operative today. Subsequently he became involved in ministry with J. Wimber and P. Cain, and he relates a number of incidents in which the Spirit worked in supernatural ways.

A narrative element is woven through the entire work, for Deere wants to communicate that his new-found theology makes a difference in the life of the Church. It would be a tragic mistake, however, to write off Deere's thesis because it is based on "experience." Indeed, I was stunned that the reviewer of his book in *Christianity Today* (January 10, 1994, pp. 56–57) said that the fundamental flaw of his work was that it was based on experience instead of Scripture. It is invariably true that our theology is refracted through our own experience. Deere himself acknowledges that we all come to the text with certain preconceptions and ways of viewing the world. But those who read the review of Deere's book in *Christianity Today*—and have not read the book itself—would probably be surprised to learn that Deere provides a substantial Biblical defense (in both section 2 and the appendices of the book) for his view of spiritual gifts. This work cannot be dismissed merely by claiming that it is based on experience. Those who disagree must show why his Biblical exegesis is faulty.

What is the substance of Deere's Biblical case? He argues that those who contend that the gifts have ceased have failed to provide a convincing exegetical defense for cessationism. 1 Cor 13:8–13 teaches that the gifts will cease at the coming of Christ, not when one reaches spiritual maturity or when the NT canon is completed. Deere says that no compelling Biblical evidence has been offered for the cessation of the gift of apostleship, even though the Twelve had a distinctive role among the apostles. Nor can one sustain the thesis that supernatural gifts were limited to a few (*viz.* the apostles and their close associates). A number of people who were not closely associated with the apostles had spiritual gifts according to Acts (e.g. Agabus), and the fact that spiritual gifts were given to members of the church (1 Cor 12:8–10) demonstrates that the gifts were more widespread (cf. Gal 3:5).

Some believe that if the gifts are operative, then all people who are sick should be healed or that people with the gift of healing today should have the same ability as the apostles. Deere responds by showing that not even Jesus and the apostles had the ability to heal at will. Jesus healed when the power of the Lord was present to heal and in submission to his Father's will (Luke 5:17; John 5:19, 30). There were occasions when he was unable to do miracles (Mark 6:5–6; Matt 13:58). So too the apostle

Paul had the gift of healing, but that does not mean that he could heal anyone at any time (Phil 2:25–27; 1 Tim 5:23; 2 Tim 4:20). Deere also argues that people with the gift of healing and other gifts will have varying abilities and power in the exercise of their gifts. Thus the gifting of the Twelve and Paul was more powerful than that of virtually all Christians today. We recognize, for instance, that Billy Graham is more effective with his gift of evangelism than most other believers. We should not be surprised, therefore, to discover that some people exercise a more powerful gift of healing than others.

A variety of reasons are adduced from the Scriptures as to why God heals: It brings glory to God, shows compassion for the hurting, opens doors for the gospel, is a manifestation of the kingdom, etc. In any case no gift should be eschewed—even tongues, for we are commanded to diligently seek spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:31; 14:1). Deere clearly does not believe that God always heals, acknowledging that God sovereignly heals as he wills. Nonetheless, he cautions that people may miss the blessing of healing because of apostasy, legalism and lukewarm faith.

The presence of abuses, Deere contends, does not invalidate the exercise of gifts. The first letter to the Corinthians demonstrates this, for the church had many problems even in the area of spiritual gifts. But Paul did not conclude that the gifts themselves were invalid, nor did he forbid their practice. Nor should a movement be rejected because of strange physical manifestations. Deere appeals both to Scripture and J. Edwards to show that physical manifestations are not incompatible with a work of the Holy Spirit.

One of the most powerful sections of the book is the third, where we are exhorted to seek God with passion. It is possible to seek the gifts and not the Giver, but Deere encourages us to seek God and his gifts. Deere rightly argues that passion for God cannot be severed from the emotions. Those who teach that all God desires is the external obedience of his commands have failed to reckon with the affections in constructing their view of the Christian life. This chapter reminded me of J. Piper's book, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*.

I have devoted most of the review to a description of Deere's views because I wanted people to hear him instead of merely reacting to him. For a full-orbed perspective one must read the book. I believe that Deere's central thesis is correct. Cessationism cannot be sustained through a careful study of the Scriptures. The spiritual gifts are still operative today, and we are exhorted to seek them diligently. Like Deere, I was trained in cessationist circles, and I am extremely grateful for the Biblical training I received. Indeed, I believe that the very exegetical method they taught me led me to renounce cessationism. The text should always be reforming our inherited theology.

I still have many questions, because I have not often experienced or seen dramatic manifestations of the spiritual gifts. But I have heard too many reputable accounts from people like Deere to think that my experience is the circumference of reality. Ultimately it is his careful exegesis of the Biblical text that convinces me that he is correct in the major thesis of this book. I am not persuaded by every single argument made in the book. For instance, I am not convinced that the gift of apostleship is still available today, but it would take too much time in this brief review to interact with that issue. In any case, it does not follow from the cessation of the apostolic office that the rest of the spiritual gifts have ceased. In conclusion, Deere seems to be right when he says that it is experience, not the Biblical text, that has led most people to become cessationists.

Thomas R. Schreiner  
Bethel Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN

*Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. By Everett Ferguson. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, xx + 612 pp., n.p. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. By Craig S. Keener. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993, 831 pp., \$29.99.

If the strengths of these two studies on NT backgrounds could be combined, our generation would be greatly served. Positively, what Ferguson does in referencing his every detail and what Keener does in moving through the NT book by book, chapter by chapter, verse by verse, offer readers what scholarship has made available in order to understand the NT better. What is a strength in Ferguson, however, is a weakness in Keener, and vice versa.

Designed to be "an indispensable resource for all students of the Bible, accessibly providing the cultural background of every verse in the New Testament," the book by Keener continually frustrates its readers by failing to provide the source for its many culturally relevant observations. One good impression that the reader gets from using Keener's text is that it is virtually impossible to take any passage from the NT and correctly understand it outside of its first-century historical background. Keener succeeds in bringing information once only available in academic libraries to the desktop of the pastor, Bible student, church leader and interested layperson alike. Archeology, politics, geography, history and social setting are but a few of the domains that Keener brings to the forefront of NT studies. Such a great contribution to the advancement of knowledge of the NT era cannot be overstated. It is marred, however, by the absence of any bibliography or notes that would encourage the reader to delve further into the scholarly world from which this information was culled. When reading Keener's fine work, one is reminded of the adage, "Steal a little and they throw you in jail; steal a lot and they make you king." Keener has effectively "borrowed" from every imaginable source to make available to his readership the most comprehensive collection of background material for every passage in the entire NT.

There are, however, a few details that are problematic. Throughout the text Keener refers to the land of the Bible as "Palestine," a term not employed until after the second Jewish revolt (132–135 CE), when the conquering Romans identified the land as "Palestina," a name that was retained until 1948. One wonders whether, by using this anachronistic terminology, Keener is attempting to exercise some kind of political influence on the ongoing discussion of modern boundaries.

Ferguson offers his reader the best in research, thoroughly evidenced in notes and bibliography. The political, social and religious background of the Greco-Roman and Jewish *Sitz im Leben* of the first century CE is clearly presented in the format of a reference work. What Ferguson does in citing the sources leads students to research further as well as to think more confidently about the context of the NT text. Since the 1987 first edition, Ferguson has updated his bibliographies and expanded discussions that were previously presented in a more concise and less accessible form. His understanding of the social setting of the early Church is encyclopedic. In addition, Ferguson supplies extensive quotations in translation from primary sources, which offer sufficient context for the reader to understand the connection with the thought life of those who lived in the first century as well as to gain some insight into the original context of the information.

Keener introduces his monumental backgrounds study with a brief discussion about the need for a cultural-historical commentary, an effectively persuasive *apologia* of his methodology. A two-page bibliography directs the reader to other sources of study of the cultural context of the NT. Maps and charts conclude Keener's text, including a helpful NT world chronology. Ferguson provides his reader with two extensive indices: subjects and Scripture references. He closes with a map of the ancient world.

The works of Keener and Ferguson complement each other well, although Ferguson satisfies more by stimulating the reader to further study by citing the sources. Keener's greater contribution may be that he has exposed the potential of background studies to the understanding of the NT. Ferguson, on the other hand, provides the motivated reader with the true background "sources" necessary to better understand the text of the NT.

Dennis Stoutenburg  
Providence College, Otterburne, MB

*Die johanneische Frage.* By Martin Hengel. WUNT 67. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1993, xiv + 485 pp., n.p.

Hengel, one of the foremost Biblical scholars of our day, has produced a massive assault on the "Johannine community hypothesis" that currently dominates the landscape of Johannine studies. English-speaking readers have received a foretaste of Hengel's views in *The Johannine Question* (SCM/Trinity, 1989), a work based on the five Stone Lectures given at Princeton Theological Seminary in the fall of 1987. In the foreword to that edition Hengel had already alluded to the publication of a more extensive German manuscript, which is now available in the book under review.

Hengel is convinced that the testimony of the early fathers must again be given proper attention. Consequently the lion's share of Hengel's work is devoted to a painstaking analysis of the second-century evidence. Hengel's fundamental contention is that "the Gospel and the letters are not the expression of a community with many voices, but above all the voice of a towering theologian, the founder and head of the Johannine school." According to Hengel, collectives, such as the alleged "Johannine community," seldom create such profound theological works as John's gospel. Great individual thinkers do.

The power in Hengel's assault on the prevailing paradigm lies in the fact that this eminent historian attacks the "Johannine community hypothesis" on historical grounds. According to Hengel there is no independent historical evidence for the "history" of a Johannine community. But while Hengel is conservative when measured against the increasingly speculative mood in North American Johannine scholarship, he does not conclude that John the son of Zebedee wrote the fourth gospel, as has traditionally been held. He rather attributes authorship to "John the elder," referred to by Papias, distancing himself from either side of the issue, conservative or otherwise.

This rejection of the identification of the fourth gospel's "beloved disciple" with John the son of Zebedee is based on the argument that the editors of the fourth gospel could easily have made that identification but refrained from doing so. Hengel appears to presuppose here that the figure of the "beloved disciple" is a creation of the fourth gospel's editors or of an author other than the apostle John. This, however, is the very question that is at issue. What if the apostle John himself created the literary figure of the "beloved disciple" and refrained from identifying himself explicitly with this person in order to remain anonymous?

Hengel himself believes that there was an aging founder figure named John whose death gave occasion to the gospel's publication by his disciples. He even contends that the fourth evangelist and the editor/redactor of the fourth gospel are one and the same person—i.e., that the fourth evangelist himself edited his own work. Hengel does, however, refrain from taking the final step—i.e., concluding that the fourth gospel's author was in fact John the son of Zebedee. This reluctance may be due to Hengel's negative evaluation of the gospel's historical reliability in general (p. 230; cf.

also his "Aufgaben der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft," *NTS* 40 [1994] 321–357, esp. 334–337).

In place of the traditional identification, Hengel prefers to postulate the rather complicated theory of a *Doppelantlitz* (dual face) of the fourth gospel's author in the form of "two different Johannine figures"—i.e., John the son of Zebedee and an "elder John," the founder and head of a school who allegedly came from a Jewish aristocratic milieu (p. 317). The latter figure, according to Hengel, was the fourth evangelist, who invented the literary but not necessarily "unhistorical" figure of the "beloved disciple" in order to establish a connection between himself and John the son of Zebedee. Once again, however, there appears to be nothing in Hengel's work that speaks against an identification of the "beloved disciple" and of the fourth evangelist with John the son of Zebedee. One may legitimately ask whether it would not be more appropriate to consider John the son of Zebedee, the aging apostle, as the fourth gospel's author who, for whatever reason, hid behind the literary pseudonym of the "beloved disciple."

Such a case cannot and need not be made here (but see L. Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, drawing on Westcott, and the work of D. A. Carson). Dare we suggest that Hengel's unquestioned erudition might have complicated matters unnecessarily (cf. Acts 26:24)? Nevertheless, while one may not agree entirely with Hengel's particular reconstruction, and while his contribution may not erode the modern consensus due to scholars' commitment to the prevailing paradigm, the evidence and argument he presents should cause a serious reevaluation of recent trends in Johannine studies.

Andreas J. Köstenberger  
Briercrest Bible College, Caronport, SK

*Jonah: A Commentary.* By James Limburg. OTL; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993, 123 pp., \$20.00.

In the past couple of decades a number of helpful commentaries on the book of Jonah have appeared in English, among them commentaries by L. C. Allen (1976), T. E. Fretheim (1977), H. W. Wolff (1986), D. Stuart (1987) and J. M. Sasson (1990). Now joining their company is the work of Limburg. For those interested in a brief but helpful treatment of Jonah, generally unencumbered by technical data and presenting many fresh insights, this commentary will make a good choice. Its main characteristics are its grasp of the overall message of Jonah, its sensitivity to the literary dimensions of the book, and its readability. But those who are more interested in philological or text-critical help, or detailed assistance on points of historical backgrounds, or thorough interaction with other points of view, are likely to be disappointed.

Limburg understands the literary genre of Jonah to be that of didactic (fictional) story, originally intended for reading aloud. That Jonah is story (rather than historical report, or fable, or allegory, or parable, or midrash) is the most satisfactory way of understanding the book, according to Limburg. He views the story as comprised of the following seven scenes: 1:1–3; 1:4–16; 1:17–2:10; 3:1–3a; 3:3b–10; 4:1–3; 4:4–11. Though its historical setting is in the first half of the eighth century BCE, the book was probably written in the postexilic period, with the song of thanksgiving in chap. 2 being part of the original composition (and not a later addition). With just one exception (2:4 [MT 2:5]) Limburg follows the MT, seeing no need to emend the traditional Hebrew text. Throughout the discussion he regularly calls attention to various

targumic and early rabbinic interpretations of Jonah, which is a very welcome contribution of his work.

Several other features commend themselves. (1) Limburg frequently provides helpful summaries of OT word studies (e.g. “deep sleep,” “appoint,” “distress,” “Sheol,” “swallow,” “abandon,” “love,” “belly”). (2) He offers summaries of general OT teaching regarding various matters that also appear in Jonah (e.g. forty days, fasting, casting lots). (3) He is alert to NT parallels to Jonah, not only in obvious instances (e.g. “three days and three nights”) but in less obvious instances as well (e.g. Jesus’ calming of the sea [p. 58], Jesus and the centurion [p. 85], Paul in Athens [p. 86], Jesus’ weeping over Jerusalem [p. 97], Jesus’ comment about God’s care for the sparrows [pp. 97–98]). (4) Limburg summarizes the theological significance of the pericopes of the book throughout his discussion, thus avoiding an atomistic approach that sees only bits and pieces (see esp. pp. 33–36). (5) Limburg is quick to pick up on literary and structural elements within the book, and he gives attention to figures of speech found in Jonah. (6) Finally, the book provides many interesting allusions to the use of Jonah motifs in modern art, literature and architecture. It is obvious that the author has searched carefully to find examples of Jonah’s influence in modern society.

In the appendix one finds discussions of the following five themes: Jonah in the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books, Jonah in literature from the first centuries CE, Jonah in Judaism, Jonah in Islam, and Jonah and the Reformers. Unfortunately there are no indices for the book.

Here, then, is a commentary that packs a lot into a small space. One could only wish that Limburg had included within the commentary some of the more technical aspects that must have been a part of his own research.

Richard A. Taylor  
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX

*2 Kings*. The Forms of the Old Testament Literature 10. By Burke O. Long. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, xiii + 324 pp., \$29.99 paper.

This second and final volume on Kings in the FOTL series follows the same format as its predecessor, examining the structure, genre, setting and intention of each text unit. As many have pointed out, Long’s emphasis is on the present literary shape rather than the precanonical oral form, and this volume is marked by the same careful and detailed handling of the narrative as the first.

Long devotes the most attention to the “Structure” section, where he outlines the text unit, examines the elements of the narrative, and interacts with other scholarly research. Occasionally he provides text-critical and syntactic insights as well. There is an extensive bibliography for each section.

A glance at Long’s glossary shows that we have come a long way in our ability to identify literary genres. Eissfeldt’s *Introduction*, for example, lists only five genres for historical narrative, whereas Long lists 95 genres and 31 formulas. While many form-critical approaches lose sight of the forest for the trees, the same cannot be said of this work. To be sure, Long does examine individual forms in the “Genre” section, but he consistently gives the reader the larger picture.

If there is general agreement that a form was transmitted orally, Long fairly represents its possible function and *Sitz im Leben* during the precanonical period. It is clear, though, that his main objective is to avoid speculation and to show the shape and function of a text unit in its current literary context. Given Long’s sympathies,

the material under "Setting" and "Intention" could just as easily be subsumed under the heading "Compositional Strategy." By examining the final shape of Kings under the rubric of genre analysis, Long is able to show the dynamics and strategies of the narrative in a way that easily surpasses any results yet offered by traditional form criticism. Far from offering a simplistic "literary reading," Long does not hesitate to identify ambiguities and tensions in the text. Even in these cases, though, he takes pains to show various ways in which the reader could respond to the problem.

At times there seems to be some confusion between "history" as literary genre and "history" as historiography. Concerning the form "History," Long states that "for purposes of literary definition, it is not important whether . . . the events actually occurred as reported" (p. 301). While Long recognizes that meaning is a function of texts rather than the events behind them, it seems that his occasional tendency to tie historical judgments to form categories overshadows this. For example, Long claims that it is characteristic of a "Legend" to "refuse to be bound by a drive to recount real events as they happened" (p. 304) and that it is the purpose of an "Historical Story" to "recount events as they occurred" (p. 301). Was this distinction ever maintained by the Biblical writers? How does such a distinction aid Long in understanding the final form?

The book of Kings has for the most part been ignored by narrative critics, and Long's outstanding work has filled this gap. This valuable exegetical tool serves as a model for those who wish to practice serious literary analysis while interacting with other scholarship past and present.

Michael A. Lyons  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

*Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250–587 BCE.* By Victor H. Matthews and Don C. Benjamin. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993, 327 pp., \$24.95.

In their preface the authors declare that their purpose is to discuss representative social institutions of early Israel and the monarchy to show the reader what the social sciences can do for the interpretation of the Biblical text. The book is structured into two parts: "Ancient Israel As Villages" and "Ancient Israel As a State." Early Israel was a village culture, whereas the monarchy was a city culture or a state.

For early Israel these particular social institutions are discussed: father, mother, farmer, herder, midwife, host and stranger, chief, legal guardian, elder, widow, the wise and the fool. For the monarchy, these institutions are discussed: monarch, virgin, priest, slave, prophet, lawgiver, storyteller. Each chapter first explains the current anthropological understanding of the social institution and then the application of that understanding to specific Biblical texts.

The authors have successfully achieved their goal of illustrating how the social sciences help with interpretation. Positive examples are numerous. Particularly enlightening is the idea that hospitality was not merely a means of loving your neighbor but also a means to determine whether strangers were friends or enemies. In the chapter on midwife the authors make the tantalizing suggestion that the "Rock" metaphor in Deuteronomy 32 refers to birthing rocks, and so Yahweh is the midwife bringing Israel into the world.

While the application of anthropological models to the Biblical text is appropriate and necessary, the authors have occasionally overextended their methodology, forcing the Biblical data into particular sociological models.

In the chapter on the mother, the authors claim that there were few priests in early Israel because every available male was needed to clear the land and, likewise, females did not become priests because they were needed to bear children, the future work force. According to their model, female priests were the product of surplus cultures built on slavery. In short, the organization of the priesthood was based on economic concerns rather than theological ones.

This argument is a *non sequitur*. Throughout history people have endured hardship because they held certain values. Hence a high value on worshiping Yahweh distinctively and appropriately in Israel would have overridden economic necessities. The authors are also hard pressed to explain why during the surplus economy of the monarchy women priests still did not emerge.

In the chapter on the herder the authors claim that the Abram-in-Egypt pericope (Genesis 12) celebrates Abram and Sarai for the virtue of cleverness in negotiating with and outwitting Pharaoh by receiving a generous settlement to leave Egypt.

This interpretation, based on the anthropology of the herder, forces the Biblical text into a cultural model. While the cultural model may exist, the Biblical text itself celebrates Yahweh as the hero, not Abram. Abram is the culprit. His silence after Pharaoh's rebuke is a telling indictment against him. The goods given to Abram are not a generous settlement to leave Egypt but either an expression of Pharaoh's goodwill or the bridal price given to a brother.

Also in this chapter is the conclusion that Psalm 23 does not celebrate Yahweh as the shepherd but Yahweh as the herder. In other words, Yahweh faithfully carries out his covenant as the contract herder on behalf of the owner—Israel or the monarch. While the authors identify “the speaker . . . not as a herd animal, but rather as a livestock owner” (p. 63), they later inconsistently refer to the speaker as sheep without explaining how the referent has changed. In addition the authors surprisingly use John 10:12 to support their interpretation when in fact this passage declares the opposite. Jesus is the good shepherd precisely because he is not a hireling but the owner who has a vested interest in his sheep.

Finally, the placing of some social institutions into either a village culture or a state culture gives the false impression that the institution only existed in, or at least distinctively characterized, that particular culture. For example, almost every passage discussing the midwife, a village institution, is from the monarchical era or later. At its best, this structure emphasizes the discontinuity over the continuity of social institutions in Israel. At its worst, the structure is more pedagogical than real.

Overall this is a valuable book for introducing the student to the agricultural and oriental mindset that many scholars see as pervading the OT. The authors' conclusion are often insightful, at times questionable, but almost always stimulating.

Bing B. Bayer  
Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar, MO

*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*. By Richard R. Melick, Jr. NAC 32. Nashville: Broadman, 1991, 384 pp., \$27.99.

The New American Commentary series continues in the tradition of an earlier nineteenth-century series, *An American Commentary*, in that each of its authors is committed to the infallibility of Scripture and its “divine inspiration, inerrancy, complete truthfulness and full authority.” The unique features of this series, however, as stated in the editors' preface are (1) to show how each section of a book of the Bible fits together, thus making clear its theological unity, and (2) to put the difficult,

intricate and specialized work of the cloistered academy at the service of the whole body of Christ in a manner uncluttered with technical vocabulary. The series makes no claim of breaking new ground or of adding fresh insights into the meaning of the text but straightforwardly tells its readers that it draws heavily on information gleaned from recent commentaries.

Melick, the author of this volume, is also one of the consulting editors of the series and adheres closely to its stated goals. He provides important and useful introductory material for each of the three NT books on which he comments. He gives a clear outline of each letter to show the author's flow of thought (inasmuch as this can be determined). He offers a verse-by-verse discussion of the text. And he displays a knowledge of and interaction with views of recent commentators that differ from his own.

Melick is traditional in his approach to these letters. For example, he holds firmly to the Pauline authorship of Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. He believes that Rome (not Caesarea, Ephesus, or Corinth) was the place from which Paul wrote these letters; and he reaffirms the thesis that Onesimus was a runaway slave returned by Paul to his master, Philemon—now however as a Christian. He is conservative in his theology. He argues that the hymns found in Phil 2:6–10; Col 1:15–20, whether or not they were originally written by Paul, accurately portray Paul's belief in the pre-existence and deity of Christ. He sees Christ as the sole means by which God has reconciled the world to himself, but avoids any possibility that the words "reconcile . . . all things" of Col 1:20 could allow for universalism by interpreting the Greek word *apokatallassō* with two different meanings: "make friends with" and "submit to." This commentary, though not exhaustive or startlingly new, will nevertheless be a welcome addition to the growing number of conservative Pauline studies.

One could have wished, however (perhaps unreasonably), for more than Melick has offered here in this volume. One could have wished, for example, that while affirming the Pauline authorship of Colossians he had argued forcefully and convincingly against the impressive work of W. Bujard (*Stilanalytische Untersuchungen zum Kolosserbrief als Beitrag zur Methodik von Sprachvergleichen*), which he does not mention, and the weight of the academy, which speaks increasingly through words similar to those of J. T. Sanders: "that Colossians [and] Ephesians . . . are pseudonymous and imitate Paul's style and thought is not to be debated . . . but rather accepted as an assured result of historical scholarship" (*Ethics in the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Fortress] 67). Furthermore one could have wished that Melick had taken the time and space to raise and answer—for the benefit of succeeding generations of younger scholars—the question, "Does it matter whether or not Paul wrote any of the letters attributed to him?"

More importantly, one could also have wished for greater clarity, tighter, more convincing reasoning, and more studied caution than that displayed in Melick's statements about the person and work of Christ (see his comments on Phil 2:6–7; Col 1:19–20). No part of the Christian gospel deserves as much careful and demanding thought as do these. For conservative evangelicals this applies equally to briefer, more popular commentaries as to full-blown, critical discussions of the text.