

BOOK REVIEWS

New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. Edited by Willem A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997, vol. 1: li + 1156 pp., vol. 2: xlix + 1152 pp., vol. 3: xlix + 1296 pp., vol. 4: xlix + 1322 pp., vol. 5: vii + 834 pp., \$199.99.

Biblical lexicographers are enjoying the publication of a number of new and important dictionaries over the past several years with more to appear on the horizon. David Clines' *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, begun in 1993, continues to appear steadily, with vol. four (*yodh-lamedh*) now available. The German third edition of Koehler and Baumgartner is now complete with most of the volumes in English translation already available. Volume nine of Botterweck and Ringgren's *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (*mārad-nāqâ*) is the series' most recent release, and Mark Biddle has translated Jenni and Westermann's classic work *Theologisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament* (1997). Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie completed their *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* in 1996. To these may be added the forthcoming *Princeton Classical Hebrew Dictionary*, edited by J. J. M. Roberts, and most significantly the *Old Testament Dictionary of Semantic Domains* under the guidance of J. P. Louw and sponsored by the South African Bible Society. It is in this context of lexicographical ferment that the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (hereafter referred to simply as "the *Dictionary*") appears.

The *Dictionary* is a major accomplishment in itself and one is hard put to criticize a work of such scope and magnitude. More than two hundred scholars from more than 25 countries and 100 institutions contributed to roughly 3000 lexical and topical/subject entries. This five-volume work of approximately 1200 pages each took eight years, one general editor, six associate editors and six consulting editors to complete.

The *Dictionary* is presented as the OT counterpart to Colin Brown's *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, completed 20 years ago. Its scope and conception, however, are quite different. In chiasmic fashion, the main body of the work—the lexical dictionary—is preceded on the one hand by introductory, methodological essays and followed on the other by a dictionary of topical/subject studies. The introductory essays are ten in number and total more than 200 pages in themselves. Compiled together as a "Guide to Old Testament Theology and Exegesis," the essays cover a wide variety of subjects from textual criticism to linguistics and theology. The inclusion of these essays greatly enhances the value of the set. Immediately after the lexical entries is found a dictionary of topical articles covering such subjects as people, places, events and concepts of the OT as well as articles on the theology of every OT book. This part of the *Dictionary* is approximately 1000 pages and includes some 1300 references to relevant lexical entries. These articles also enhance the value of the set. They include, for example, the articles by J. Gordon McConville on "Deuteronomic/istic Theology," Terence Fretheim on "Yahweh" and Alan Millard on "Writing."

Another area in which the *Dictionary* differs from Colin Brown's work, and indeed paves new ground, is in its correlation with semantic domains. Now, we must

be careful here because the work is not a semantic-domain dictionary like Louw and Nida's *Greek-English Lexicon*. But it does include an index of more than 2000 semantic fields that indicate related words and it then refers the reader to the main lexical entries by the assigned Goodrick and Kohlenberger numbers. These 2000 fields are apparently finer subdivisions of what were originally 750 semantic domains. The semantic field index is included in the index volume (vol. five) along with a Hebrew word index, Scripture index, subject index and index correlating the Goodrick and Kohlenberger numbers with Strong's.

Perhaps the most significant contrast with Brown's work has to do with the nature of the lexical entries themselves, because they differ both conceptually and methodologically. The simplest manifestation of this is to observe how the lexical articles are arranged. In Brown, the articles are arranged alphabetically based on concepts, e.g. "love" or "evil" and within each article are discussed the related Greek terms. VanGemeren's work, however, is arranged strictly alphabetically by each Hebrew word. At the end of each lexical entry are listed the relevant semantic fields and words but these are not as exhaustive as the entries in the semantic field index are.

It should be noted too that the provenance of each dictionary is quite different. Brown's was a translation and update of an originally German work whereas VanGemeren's dictionary is primarily a North American and more specifically a U.S. effort. A survey of the contributors reveals that about 120 of the 206 contributors or roughly 60% are from U.S. institutions. Contrast this with only 3 of 89 contributors for vol. 1 of Brown coming from the U.S. Because of all of these differences, it remains a question whether the *Dictionary* can truly be considered a complement to Brown.

One minor complaint may be interjected here. Though all the articles and lexical entries are signed, there is no table or index listing at a glance all the contributors along with their specific contributions. Brown does include such a table. Such a listing would have been helpful, because scholars and students often prefer to see who contributed what in such a major work. The future CD-ROM version may have such a list.

When one comes to the individual lexical articles, one finds them generally helpful but briefer and more preliminary than one might find, for example, in *TDOT*. In the series of entries I studied, for instance, the page count for *na^car*, "boy, lad, servant," was only four compared to the treatment in *TDOT* of 12 pages. For *tap*, we have barely a page but in *TDOT*, four. For *yeled*, however, *TDOT* only devotes one brief paragraph whereas the *Dictionary* has almost a full page. Still, *TDOT* devotes 13 pages to *ʾādām*, but we find only five in our *Dictionary*. The same could be said for *ʾiš* (14 vs. 3) and *zāqēn* (10 vs. 4).

A pleasant surprise was to find that the same scholar had written most of the entries for terms in the semantic domain for which I was interested, namely, the semantic domain of persons distinguished by their stage in the human life cycle, whether the young, the mature grown-up or the aged. Thus, it was Victor Hamilton who composed the entries on *tap*, *yeled*, *na^car*, *ʾādām*, *ʾiš*, *geber*. Similarly, Paul Wegner did the entries on *zāqēn* and *šēbā* "old age." If one is to take into account semantic domains, it surely makes sense to have one scholar write the entries for all terms belonging within the same semantic domain. This design was nowhere mentioned but I learned later that it was intentional. Nevertheless, the lexical entries tended to focus on the one particular word although some consideration of other terms within the semantic domain was taken into account. On the whole, however, a fuller semantic-field analysis is left to the reader to conduct by way of the references to related semantic domains and terms at the end of each article and in the index volume. On this note, the references supplied are extremely helpful and I would dare say exhaustive, since many terms are included which one would not normally think of or might easily pass over.

At the semantic level, the lexical entries tended to provide usages of the word in question rather than clear definitions, that is, what does such-and-such word *refer* to and how is it *used*. This is a problem for the vast majority of Biblical lexicons save Louw and Nida and therefore not unique to VanGemen's work alone. Dictionaries have tended to rely on glosses and reference for describing and determining meaning. Nevertheless, glosses are inadequate and reference is not the same as meaning. Hamilton has put in an admirable effort in his study of *na'ar* and comes close to my own assessment of this difficult lexeme. After listing the referents, he concludes "that one meaning of *na'ar* is that it refers to any young person from infancy to just before marriage." He also notes the correlation with the English word "boy" which can denote gender "It's a boy," family relationship "I have one boy and one girl," soldiers "support the boys overseas," etc. (This has been observed by other scholars as well.) Finally, he suggests that it can also designate "a (civil) servant or soldier/scout (under the authority of his superior)." In all this, Hamilton does not quite come out and state that the term really has two separate and distinct meanings, one referring to age, i.e. "a male, young person" and the other referring to function, i.e. "servant" as I and other lexicographers would contend. Nevertheless, Hamilton is sensitive to the practice of sound linguistics and observant of syntactic data. He rightly eschews previous etymological understandings of the term and observes how *na'ar* in construct seems to signal more the second meaning of the term as "servant." Unfortunately, Hamilton's treatment of *tap* is extremely brief and not as perceptive as Locher's in *TDOT*. It is quite clear, for example, that the term can and does include "women and children" as well as simply "children" at times in the Biblical text. Data from the LXX confirms that the term has more to do with "the members of a family as dependents of a male head of household, often women and children."

In addition to the usages of the term in the OT and the semantic field references at the end, each lexical article includes (1) data from the ancient Near Eastern cognate languages such as Egyptian, Ugaritic and Akkadian, (2) data entitled "post-biblical" from the LXX, Qumran and Rabbinic writings and (3) a bibliography. But the *Dictionary* is not consistent in the latter two items; some articles will have the post-Biblical material, some will not. Most of the major articles will have a bibliography and they appear to be complete, although they are not necessarily exhaustive. On the positive side, they have the advantage of including materials published after *TDOT* and then some. For example, in his treatment of *na'ar*, Hamilton lacks one article in Spanish, but includes some in modern Hebrew that are not mentioned in the German work. Still, not every Hebrew word is treated. The hapax *tapap* "to trip, take quick little steps" is not discussed, nor is it listed separately but mentioned briefly under *tap* whose etymology with *tapap* is quite questionable.

Perhaps the most serious criticism is the delineation of semantic fields, at least in the situation for *na'ar*. Both BDB and Koehler-Baumgartner have as a separate and distinct meaning for the term, the gloss "servant." Hamilton alludes to this possibility in his discussion. Yet the term is nowhere listed as part of the semantic field for "servant/slave" along with terms like *ʿebed*, as it should be. A separate semantic field for this area of meaning is not listed in the dictionary entry for the term, nor is the word listed under that same semantic field in the index volume. A separate topical article on the subject of "slave/servant" briefly mentions *na'ar* but passes over it much too quickly. As detailed and exhaustive as the semantic-field references appear to be, it is possible for a term to be left out depending upon how the meanings are delineated in the individual lexical entries. The *Dictionary* does not explain in detail how the semantic fields and connections were arrived at in the first place.

In sum, it appears that limitations of time and space have restricted the nature of the lexical entries in terms of the depth, completeness and semantic sophistication

one might find in, for example, *TDOT*, Jenni and Westermann's *THAT* or Louw and Nida's NT dictionary. The virtue of VanGemenen's work, however, is that it is a completed work (unlike *TDOT*) and that it covers the vast majority of Hebrew words (unlike *THAT*).

Perhaps the *Dictionary's* greatest contribution is in the methodological essays at the beginning of the work. To take one example, Peter Cotterell's essay on "Semantics, Interpretation and Theology" brings the latest linguistic sophistication to bear on Biblical interpretation. Reminding the student of the utmost complexity of language, he appears to strike the proper balance between the nihilistic tendencies of reader-response theory and the notion of a complete, objective reading of texts. For him, authorial intention is important and discourse meaning the final arbiter for text meaning. To take another example, John Walton's article on "Principles for Productive Word Study" is an excellent summary of both the promise and pitfalls of Hebrew word studies. Most articles of this type are really "How *not* to do a Word Study" but Walton's goes further by establishing for the student a basis and outline for actually working through the process. It should be required reading for all students in exegesis.

The topical articles at the end of the *Dictionary* are an additional asset, although one may quibble with some of the particulars of each discussion. The article on the theology of Ruth, for example, borders on over-theologizing when it suggests that Naomi's one occasion to invoke the divine name *Shaddai* demonstrates the book's view of God as being the "cosmic ruler of the universe." John Hartley's contribution on the theology of Job is sound, balanced and well worth reading. I particularly appreciated his observation that in the important *crux interpretum* of Job 42:6, traditionally rendered "I repent in dust and ashes," the normal Hebrew word for repent (i.e. *šûb*) is not used but the word *niham*. Still, his contention that the "redeemer" of Job 19:25 whom Job longs for is in reality God expects a bit much from the interpreter. His analysis of Job's restored prosperity after the trial also ends up sounding like a reaffirmation of the very principle the book was written to deny, namely, that wickedness will always lead to punishment and righteousness to prosperity. J. Gordon McConville's article on "Deuteronomic/istic Theology" was particularly well-appreciated.

The *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* is a combination of theological lexicon, anthology of essays on theology, exegesis and hermeneutics and Bible dictionary. While the lexical entries may lack the certitude, completeness and consistency of the larger theological dictionaries, the essays and articles add to making the *Dictionary* a valuable resource for seminarians, pastors and scholars alike.

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Cultural Anthropology and the Old Testament. By Thomas W. Overholt. Guides to Biblical Scholarship. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996, ix + 116 pp., \$13.00 paper.

Although anthropological approaches to OT studies are not new (e.g. note the survey and critique in J. W. Rogerson, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* [JSOT, 1984]), they have acquired particular prominence over the last two decades. One of those most responsible for the growing interest in this sort of interdisciplinary study is Thomas Overholt, whose work has centered on comparing the accounts about prophets in the Bible against the background of more contemporary indigenous prophetism. The reader, therefore, has a first-rate guide into the discussion of the pos-

sible contributions of cultural anthropology to OT studies and can interact with multiple examples offered by a seasoned practitioner.

The book is divided into three chapters. The first begins by presenting Overholt's understanding of the nature of culture. He follows Geertz' well-known dictum that culture is a "web of significances" by which humans represent and order their world. From this perspective on culture, it naturally follows that what the scholar using anthropology in Biblical studies also should look for are patterns of thought and behavior that are inscribed in the text. Because modern interpreters obviously cannot be direct participant observers of ancient Israel in the same manner that anthropologists can be of actual societies, scholars need to utilize anthropological theories and field studies to analyze what is available to them: the textual data. The patterns of culture held by the Biblical writers, he believes, are accessible through their descriptions of life and in the portrayals of their characters. In other words, what Overholt is arguing for is a comparative approach in which anthropology can illumine the social realities and worldviews of ancient Israel. He also makes a long distinction between the broader contextual backdrop that he believes this approach can offer and debates over the historicity and the accuracy of the Biblical accounts; the former can be gleaned from the text, the latter would require other kinds of evaluative tools.

Chapter 2 is an extended comparison of the Elijah and Elisha narratives with studies of shamanism from around the globe. Overholt underlines a series of elements that these accounts and shamanism have in common, especially the resuscitation of the dead. He suggests that this shamanistic worldview is in tension with the predominant theology of the Deuteronomistic history. This tension within the narratives would reflect the reality of such a conceptual conflict in Israel where different forms of Yahwism coexisted. The first part of the third chapter proposes that divination was very common in ancient Israel, even though only certain kinds (such as lots, Urim and Thummim, and dream interpretation) apparently would have been acceptable to the prevailing theology; the second section presents summaries of the interdisciplinary work of Carol L. Meyers, Paula McNutt, James Flannigan, and Frank Frick. The book closes with an extensive bibliography (pp. 101–110).

This introductory text overwhelmingly reflects Overholt's interest, available in his other published work, in the prophetic narratives. The last chapter, however, does include the insights of other scholars who highlight other sections of the Hebrew canon. His work can help scholars rethink traditional interpretations—the most obvious case offered here, of course, would concern the identity and actions of Elijah and Elisha. Personally, I was struck by some of his observations, as by coincidence I was reading simultaneously with this book the story of the conversion of a shaman of the Amazons (M. A. Ritchie, *Spirit of the Rainforest: A Yanomamö Shaman's Story* [Island Lake, 1996]). This kind of data might lead Biblical scholars to acquire a greater clarity of understanding of the world of ancient Israel, as well as more precision and complexity in their views of Israel's religious life.

At the same time, scholars will need to evaluate his analyses of the Biblical texts and his application of anthropological theory. For example, I did not find myself convinced of his "man of power" and "prophet" distinction (pp. 46–47). On the other hand, his discussion of divination in the third chapter relies heavily on Frederick Cryer (*Divination in Ancient Israel and Its Near Eastern Environment: A Socio-Historical Investigation* [JSOTSup 142, 1994]), whose work by no means has encountered universal acceptance (cf. the review of this book in *JBL* 116 [1997] 725–727). Perhaps my primary criticism of Overholt is his willingness to concede ground too readily in matters of historicity (e.g. pp. 19, 40). Perhaps this posture reflects debates he has had in the past with Robert Carroll (which surface in the footnotes) and others, who are so very skeptical of the reliability of the Bible.

In spite of these observations, this work does enrich OT study, because it asks new questions. And that, at the end of the day, cannot but deepen our understanding of the OT.

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The Study of the Ancient Near East in the 21st Century: The William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference. Edited by Jerrold S. Cooper and Glenn M. Schwartz. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996, x + 422 pp., \$39.50.

This collection of 16 articles plus “Prologue” and “Epilogue” was published as a “permanent record” of the William Foxwell Albright Centennial Conference, held at the Johns Hopkins University in May 1991. The articles are organized under six sub-headings: (1) “The Contextualizations of Near Eastern Art,” (2) “The Integration of Archaeological and Textual Data,” (3) “The Technological Revolution in Archaeology and its Ramifications,” (4) “Philology and the Study of Ancient Literature in the Post-modern Academy,” (5) “From Ebla to Deir Alla: New Paradigms for the Early History of Semitic Languages and Scripts” and (6) “Ideology, Propaganda and National Consciousness in the Ancient Near East.” A dedicatory article to the conference’s honoree, “William Foxwell Albright: The Man and His Work” by Peter Machinist, completes the volume.

The prologue by the editors outlines the background of the conference and a descriptive outline of the tome’s contents. In the initial article, “Constructing Context: The Gebel el-Arak Knife,” Holly Pittman compares the artwork on the famous knife of predynastic Amratian/Nagada I Egypt (4th millennium BC) with various artifacts of the Late Uruk phase in Mesopotamia. Pittman defines the cultural interplay as one of Egyptian borrowing of “visual formulas” but not of ideas or meanings. In Betsy M. Bryan’s, “Art, Empire, at the End of the Late Bronze Age,” she demonstrates how the various art forms of the 18th, 19th, and 20th dynasties in Egypt evidence political shifts in Canaan, whereby city-state rulers from locales such as Megiddo and Tel el-Farah utilized Egyptian art motifs in their decorated wares as forms of individual self-expression rather than client vassalage.

Richard Zetter, in “Written Documents as Excavated Artifacts and the Holistic Interpretations of the Mesopotamian Archaeological Record,” calls for an integration of the archaeological record with the work of Semitic scholars so as to assure a more holistic approach to understanding ancient Near Eastern societies.

In his trend-arresting article, “Toward a New Periodicalist and Nomenclature of the Archaeology of the Southern Levant,” Israel Finkelstein calls not only for a shift in period designation, replacing the present Neolithic—Bronze—Iron nomenclature with Formative—Proto-Urban—Urban—Intermediate—Proto-National States—National States, but also for the shifting of some of the traditional dates for the periods. For example, he suggests that the last phase of the MB be extended to through the 16th century BC, or even into the 15th century with the campaigns of Thutmoses III.

Recent developments in technical fields of underwater archaeology and archaeo-metallurgy are the subject of “Underwater Archaeology in the Near East: Past, Present, and Future” by George F. Bass and “Near Eastern Archaeometallurgy: Modern Research and Future Directions” by Vincent C. Pigott.

In “Sailing to Babylon: Reading the Dark Side of the Moon,” Piotr Michalowski describes the present status of the field of Assyriology in light of recent trends in lit-

erary analysis. He decries the “steadily shrinking” field of Assyriology in American universities and calls for colleagues “to integrate our research and teaching with other disciplines and make stronger efforts to break out of our scholarly isolation” (p. 193). With reference to Biblical literary studies, Adele Berlin delineates seven elements of her “new hermeneutic,” many of which will sound like the old hermeneutic to evangelicals. Her approach is refreshingly conservative and stabilizing in the world of the radically evolving hermeneutics of this decade. In “Defining Egyptian Literature: Ancient Texts and Modern Literary Theory,” Antonio Loprieno suggests the present crisis between “structuralism” and “deconstructionism” will continue with the next century. Yet, he sets forth an Egyptian literary theory that focuses upon fictionality, intertextuality and reception.

Three articles address developments in Semitic studies: “The Linguistic Classification of Eblaite: Methods, Problems, and Results” by Manfred Kreberlink; “New Directions in the Study of Semitic Languages” by John Huehnergard; and “Semitics: Directions and Re-Directions” by Stephen A. Kaufman. All three address the need for the application of linguistic theory to their respective fields.

In “Ancient Propaganda and Historical Criticism,” Mario Liverani reflects that modern political ideologies and propaganda may be as detrimental to modern historiographic research as its ancient counterparts. Baruch Halpern, in one of the lengthiest articles in the volume (47 pp.), “Sybil, or the Two Nations: Archaism, Kinship, Alienation, and the Elite Redefinition of Traditional Culture in Judah in the 8th–7th Centuries B.C.E.” has moved beyond the realm of historiography outlined in his book *The First Historians* (1988). He suggests that Israelite history was propaganda that reflects “the appropriations of populist revolutionary rhetoric by the elite” (p. 330). Furthermore, regarding the prophets, he states: “Literary prophecy, riddled with appeals to the past, made history into the proving ground for revisionist theology, for an elite philosophical system” (p. 333). Halpern’s approach seems devoid of the issues of ethical standards and covenant faithfulness that are at the heart of the message of the Hebrew former and latter prophets, reducing their words to propaganda without piety. In “Contextualizing Egyptian Representations of Society and Ethnicity,” John Baines addresses the variety of issues from archaeological and literary study that contribute to our understanding of the ideologies of ancient Egyptians. Like others in this volume, he rightly calls for a more interdisciplinary approach to the study of the ancient Near East.

Machinist’s concluding tribute to W. F. Albright echoes from the life of the founder of American Palestinian archaeology the need for a broad, comprehensive, interdisciplinary, self-sacrificing approach to ancient Near Eastern studies. To be ever growing and changing, ever pursuing knowledge of the ancients and its sources, ever seeking to understand the present reality in light of the past, is truly a life-long noble endeavor exemplified in this one who “seemed to tower out of another age” (p. 385).

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The Origins of the Ancient Israelite States. Edited by Volkmar Fritz and Philip R. Davies. JSOTSup 228. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996, 219 pp., \$49.00.

The history of the study of the history of Israel provides an enlightening insight into the ironic fact that the more that is known about the world of Israel’s origins the

less confidence there is in the OT record of those origins, at least in some circles. It seems that the OT's own credibility has come to be viewed in inverse proportion to the wealth of data being provided from archaeological and other extra-Biblical sources. There was a time when the historicity of the so-called pre-patriarchal period (Genesis 1–11) was suspect, then the patriarchs were consigned to aetiology, the exodus and Mosaic period to legend, and the conquest and judges era to Heilsgeschichte. Now it is fashionable to challenge the historical reality of Saul, David and Solomon, and even the likelihood of a united monarchy at all. One awaits the logical conclusion that there was no pre-exilic Israelite community and that the OT is pure fiction from beginning to end.

Admittedly, the skeptical view of Israel's history that gives rise to this assessment is a minority position, but it is one vigorously argued by some of the contributors to this volume, most notably Thomas L. Thompson, Niels Peter Lemche, Philip R. Davies and Graeme Auld. More moderate points of view are promoted here by Baruch Halpern, Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger, Diana Edelman, Nadav Na²aman, Walter Dietrich and Volkmar Fritz.

In the introduction Davies addresses the charge that he and certain others are "minimalizers" in terms of their acceptance of the OT as a reliable record of history by asserting that "What 'minimalizers' are doing is minimizing the extent to which the biblical account is taken as reliable history. Nothing else" (p. 12). But he opens himself to the legitimacy of the charge by finding fault with those who take as their premise the assumption of the historicity of the Biblical account (p. 14). Surely it is not improper to grant the OT a fair hearing before condemning it as fraudulent.

Thompson's essay is mainly devoted to an attack on William Dever and his conviction (so Thompson) that "there has been no other history of either Israel or Palestine than that of a critically revised, reconstructed one from the Bible" (p. 28). It is true, of course, that Dever has vacillated in recent years over the issue of "biblical archaeology" and its role in determining Israel's history. Nevertheless, Thompson's implication that Dever is a Biblicist comfortable with fundamentalism is a serious and deliberate misreading of Dever.

Halpern's contribution, "The Construction of the Davidic State: An Exercise in Historiography," is an excellent analysis of 2 Samuel 8 (what Halpern calls, after ancient Near Eastern analogues, a "display inscription"). He helpfully demonstrates the manner in which the text integrates David's foreign (especially military) affair without forcing them into some kind of chronological sequence. He concludes that "large parts of our information on the United Monarchy stem from roughly contemporary sources" (p. 75).

In the second major section, devoted to the sociological approach to Israel's history, Schäfer-Lichtenberger deals with various sociological models of early statecraft and suggests that David's form must be understood as a transitional type in which some characteristics of the typical early state might be observed (p. 105). Lemche, on the other hand, asserts that "there was no state in ancient Judah before the end of the eighth century BCE at the earliest" (p. 109). In fact, he argues that the Bible itself never claims such a thing!

The third section deals with historical sources. Most helpful is Edelman's chapter, "Saul ben Kish in History and Tradition." She begins with the methodologically acceptable caveat that "all claims and statements made in the biblical texts begin as testimony that may or may not provide accurate information about the subject matter they purport to describe" (p. 144). It is clear, however, that she is inclined to take quite seriously the Bible's account of Saul and his reign, despite her concluding comment that one ought to shy away from "an orthodox understanding of the past" since that would jeopardize proper, objective historiography (p. 159). Na²aman's essay on

“Sources and Composition in the History of David” is also extremely helpful and serves, among other things, as a corrective to the almost nihilistic skepticism of the Davies-Thompson-Lemche school of thought. To Na²aman, “There is nothing impossible about the account of David’s conquests [in 2 Sam 8]—the only problem is whether or not it really happened” (p. 183).

As a volume reflecting the diversity in the current debate on the history reality of the united monarchy, this is must reading. One may be enlightened, challenged, informed, dismayed or peeved in turn, but that, it seems, is what the book is intended to do.

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The Philistines in Transition: A History from ca. 1000–730 B.C.E. By Carol S. Ehrlich. Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 10. Leiden: Brill, 1996, xii + 235 pp., \$72.25.

This work, a revision of a 1991 Harvard dissertation, is extremely useful for anyone interested in the Philistines in their own right, and not just in their role as enemies of Israel. It is the first book-length treatment of Philistine history during the period indicated in the title; prior to this, the vast majority of treatments of Philistine history have focused primarily on the Philistines’ origins and entry into Canaan, well before 1000 BC. The parameters for Ehrlich’s discussion are the beginning of the Philistines’ entanglements with David (ca. 1000 BC) and the Assyrian conquest of Philistia (ca. 730 BC). Despite much discussion as to the nature and extent of David’s subjugation of the Philistines, these dates are two important milestones in Philistine history and form natural demarcations for Ehrlich’s treatment.

The first chapter introduces the Philistines and sketches previous treatments of them, especially focusing on their earlier history. Chapter 2 deals in detail with the Philistines’ decline from a position of expansive dominance in Canaan ca. 1000 BC to one of retrenched, defensive holdings in Philistia proper at the end of the 10th century BC, due to their defeats by David and the Egyptians. Chapter 3 chronicles what little can be known of Philistine fortunes in the next two centuries. Here, the Philistines managed to hold their own within Canaan, but they never were able to pose the threat to their neighbors that they had previously. Chapter 4 covers the Philistines’ contacts with the Assyria, beginning with their paying of tribute to Adad-Nirari III (810–783 BC) and ending with their subjugation as a vassal state by Tigath-Pileser III (744–727 BC). These four chapters complete Ehrlich’s discussion, which takes up 104 pages. Ehrlich then devotes two lengthy appendixes to presenting and discussing (1) each Biblical text dealing with the Philistines in the period in which he is interested (pp. 105–166) and (2) each relevant Assyrian text (pp. 167–194).

With his careful assessment of all relevant data from the Bible, Assyrian records, and past and present archaeological excavations, Ehrlich has managed to present a comprehensive picture of the Philistines during a period in which their place on the world stage had diminished but certainly not vanished. It is of interest to note that, although he by no means credits every Biblical text with being 100% accurate, he does for the most part treat the Bible as a document containing essentially accurate information about the Philistines. No Persian- or Maccabean-era inventions does he see here (significantly, minimalist Biblical scholars such as G. Ahlstrom, R. Coote, P. Davies, T. Thompson, J. Van Seters or K. Whitelam do not even appear in his

bibliography). Ehrlich has rendered a fine service to those interested in an in-depth study of the Philistines in this period of their history.

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Jerusalem I: From the Bronze Age to the Maccabees. By Graeme Auld and Margreet Steiner. Cities of the Biblical World. Macon/Cambridge: Mercer University/Lutterworth 1996, xii + 100 pp., \$16.95 paper.

This concise guide to ancient Jerusalem introduces the reader to the city by taking into account the archaeological and historical data available to date. The authors present the material in a readable, fresh manner, packing a great deal of information into the brief framework. The four main chapters orient us to the city, trace Jerusalem's historical development, examine information about the temple and royal houses and discuss matters of "life and death." The concluding chapter is a helpful field guide to the ancient city for the modern visitor, including a walking tour by points of interest mentioned in the book. A helpful bibliography of mostly European and Israeli sources, an index and numerous illustrations add value to the work. By virtue of the title, we may expect to see a second volume on Jerusalem beginning with the Maccabean or Roman era.

While the period discussed overlaps OT history, this work is more academically oriented than Biblical. It is most helpful in providing a current summary of scholarship to date, because working from primary sources of different strata of archaeological studies can be confusing. Yet the reader should be advised that many interpretations presented here may be questioned by others, but due to brevity many arguments are not considered.

Regarding the biblical data, a good deal of energy is devoted to promoting Auld's hypothetical source behind both the Kings and Chronicles accounts (see his *Kings Without Privilege*, reviewed in *JETS* 39/3 [1996] 475–476). Biblical history is approached with a typically academic concern for reconstruction. Almost no attention is paid to Jerusalem's function religiously and theologically, even in discussing the temple. This work should not be viewed so much as a summary of Biblical archaeology but rather as a work written within the larger framework of ancient historical studies.

The book will be of interest to the reader who wants a brief, current, scholarly introduction to ancient Jerusalem. The reader with a theological interest and a high regard for biblical history may be disappointed. This contrasts with Hershel Shanks' earlier introduction, *The City of David: A Guide to Biblical Jerusalem* (1973). While topics overlap and styles are similar, Shanks keeps his focus on the biblical reader. Auld and Steiner's book is more thorough and obviously more current, but I would still rather pocket Shanks' book on a trip to Jerusalem.

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Yahweh the Patriarch: Ancient Images of God and Feminist Theology. By Erhard S. Gerstenberger. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.

Yahweh the Patriarch is a translation of *Jahwe—ein patriarchaler Gott? Traditionelles Gottesbild und feministische Theologie* (Kohlhammer, 1988). The thesis

of the book is twofold. On the one hand, the monotheism of the Bible is thoroughly patriarchal and therefore unacceptable in our day. Accordingly, the ancient image of God as Father/Patriarch is "scarcely usable in theology today" (p. 11). We need images that express God's solidarity with humanity, e.g. sister, brother, friend. On the other hand, holding fast to the monotheism of the Bible provides the most liberating possibility for a truly egalitarian theology. "At least in theory, belief in one God includes the greatest possible openness to the justified claims of the equality of all people. . . . A plurality of deities contradicts the principle of equality because it gives new theological life to the differences that must be overcome" (p. 110).

Yahweh the Patriarch in its main thrust will be of little use to evangelicals, owing to the faulty view of the Bible upon which the thesis is constructed. Underlying Gerstenberger's thesis is a view of Scripture that is out of accord with the Bible's own view of itself (as well as the articulation of that view in the ETS statement of faith). Some representative quotations make Gerstenberger's view of the Bible clear. "The Bible cannot provide us with a timeless and universally binding image of God" (p. 81). "The so called 'dissolution of mixed marriages' (Ezra 10; Nehemiah 13) was only the first episode in a long history of Judeo-Christian hatred of women" (p. 92). "Both creation stories are an insult to today's self-conscious woman" (p. 127). "In retrospect, the Judeo-Christian tradition has come to be recognized as more or less inimical to women . . . the roots of this discrimination lie in the normative biblical texts and the predominantly patriarchal images of God they present" (p. 151). Can a "Biblical theology" in any meaningful sense of that phrase arise from such a view of the Bible?

There are some ironic benefits in reading this book, as Gerstenberger with refreshing candor effectively undermines some false starts by feminist interpreters. For example, readers seeking support for an egalitarianism before the fall will find little, if any, support in this volume. With regard to Genesis 1–2 Gerstenberger says (p. 88), "It is scarcely difficult to recognize here a reflection of a male worldview, with its patriarchal hegemony and its higher valuation of male functions such as protection and work. . . . The notion that the woman is then man's helper in the sense of being his 'savior' in modern wishful thinking. . . . There is no syllable in either story describing a democratic equality of the sexes." Gerstenberger discredits the matriarchal hypothesis of a paradisiacal goddess worship that existed prior to an aggressive takeover by patriarchal religion (pp. 20–21).

Evangelical readers will, however, find good grist for the theological mill in Gerstenberger's work. Gerstenberger, for example, provides clear insight into the popular religion (domestic cult with much female leadership) of the OT era that existed alongside the official religion (national cult with exclusively male leadership), though he errs in granting the former a legitimacy foreign to the Biblical text's own valuation (see e.g. his discussion of Jeremiah 44). Gerstenberger also sounds a clarion call for the church to follow Christ in his identification with the poor and the oppressed. Here Gerstenberger enables us as evangelicals to hear the text speak where we have too often been deaf to its message.

A significant threat that runs through the entire book is the great divide that exists between the preindustrial and industrial eras: "The historical cleft between the two periods simply disallows an unreflective application of biblical and traditional ecclesiastical norms to the contemporary relationship between the sexes and to modern gender roles" (p. 105). The changes in gender roles that have resulted from the industrial revolution seem to be the norm for Gerstenberger, requiring a jettisoning of Biblical norms regarding gender. While Gerstenberger fails to subject the changes in gender roles to the norms of the Bible, has the evangelical community wrestled with the impact of industrialization sufficiently to see clearly how the norms of the Bible apply in a society significantly different than the preindustrial society of Biblical times? Gerstenberger provides grist for this mill as well.

In the end, however, Gerstenberger, in attempting to reimage God in light of feminist reality, falls prey to the criticism he himself levels at others: "The common denominator of all criticism of false gods, domestic and foreign, is the recognition that human beings, overestimating their own abilities, invent a deity, desiring to hitch it to the wagon of their own egoistic or group interests" (p. 129).

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A Small Glimmer of Light: Reflections on the Book of Genesis. By Steven Saltzman. Hoboken: KTAV, 1996, xix + 202 pp., \$25.00.

Saltzman has shared his reflections on the synagogue readings of the book of Genesis, probably based on his comments on the Sabbath Paresah readings. His particular topics relate to themes Bible characters faced in their day but that also affect deeply everyday problems of hurting individuals, dysfunctional families, the pain of loss of loved ones, the tears people shed over misunderstanding between family and friends and so on. Saltzman deals with these problems with sympathy, wisdom, wit and sometimes outright scorn and even at times taking a stand against HaShem, the name used of God to express his uniqueness and ultimate oneness, particularly when justice and compassion are lacking in the unanswerable problems of life.

Some examples provide an interesting understanding of the text: The tower of Babel decision to build a city and tower "to throw off the yoke of HaShem's presence and usher in an age . . . to the glory of humanity," is regarded as "the confinement of their own self-imposed space" and this unity "is not founded on a person's right to stand before his creator in a relationship of mutual respect" (pp. 27-28). In an exquisite analysis of the relationship of Ya'akov with his wives, Lea and Rahel, Saltzman describes Lea as unloved by her husband who only cared for Rahel. Lea tries through the birth of her children to win her husband's love, only to be rebuffed, and finally, with the birth of Yehudah, she says "I will praise HaShem" (p. 94) and with that acknowledgement, although she cannot change Ya'akov, she still can thank HaShem and "was the first person to ever offer a prayer of thanksgiving to HaShem" (p. 95). When analyzing Ya'akov's response after the misuse of Dinah and condemnation of Shim'on, Saltzman describes the patriarch at his worst. When he remained silent after what happened to Dinah, she became more a sister to her two brothers, Shim'on and Levi, who avenged her honor by killing off all those of Shekhem. But only then does Ya'akov become angry and agonize that the family was in peril for their lives from the other inhabitants of the land and the two brothers have to point out their father's lack of feeling for Dinah in Gen 34:31.

Saltzman's resources are from the Mishnah, Gemara and Midrash, following an exegesis frequently seen among the rabbis, which may be questionable from an evangelical point of view. One technique is the play on words: When Ya'akov was renamed, "Yisrael," one "can hear 'Yashar El,'" meaning "he who is upright with the help of HaShem" (p. 111). Judaism also places a strong emphasis on what man can accomplish and is expected to do; even though God may seem far away and entirely unmoved by what man goes through, he still is expected to imitate God in the midst of life's various circumstances. Saltzman reflects what many rabbis would also say concerning the state of the world in Noah's day. God can become even irrational when he would seek to destroy life on earth. Why? Because human beings did not embody all the qualities that he wants them to have! Finally, a curious observation occurs when Abraham's second wife, Keturah, is actually Hagar because the patriarch wanted to make up for all the pain she had endured.

Notes and citations appear in endnotes, allowing the reader to follow through on additional research. The evangelical is invited to read what is a good Jewish exegesis of Scripture and derive many valuable insights.

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The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18–50. By Victor P. Hamilton. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, xx + 774 pp., \$44.00.

Genesis 1–11:26. By Kenneth A. Mathews. The New American Commentary 1A. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996, 528 pp., \$36.99.

Victor Hamilton teaches OT at Asbury College in Wilmore, Kentucky. The second volume of his two-volume commentary on Genesis is welcome five years after the publication of the first. The reasons for the delay are unclear, since the publishers stated in the preface to the first volume that the work “was planned and written as a single volume.” The untimely death of the original series editor, R. K. Harrison, and the transition to a new editor, Robert Hubbard, could have contributed to the delay. There appears to have been some minimal updating of bibliography to include some items appearing as recently as 1992, but most of the work was apparently finished upon submission of the first volume. There is no introduction to this volume, only a brief “Author’s Preface” and an abbreviation list, the introduction for all of Genesis being included in vol. 1.

While external features of the NICOT series such as dust-jacket, cover color and trim size have changed, the internal layout of the volume will be familiar to those acquainted with the series. The Biblical text is divided into sections for comment. These run from larger cycles (Isaac/Jacob, Joseph), through pericopes (which correspond exactly to chapter divisions in all but three cases), to episodes ranging in length from one to fourteen verses. Comment is restricted to the lower two levels, which seems a missed opportunity to explain what unites a cycle, setting it off geographically, chronologically or theologically from its neighbors. Why bother with cycles if they are not worthy of discussion?

The discussion of each pericope begins with Hamilton’s own translation. In footnotes, text-critical and linguistic points relevant to the translation are made. These would generally be of use only for the more serious student rather than the lay reader. If this is the case, one wonders why the Hebrew is transliterated. The discussion is of such a depth that one would need to know Hebrew (and Greek) to follow much of it, so why not use the scripts of the languages concerned?

Many pericopes have a paragraph of general discussion, summarizing it and placing it within its context. Then follows the verse-by-verse commentary. Where relevant, at the pericope’s close there is a section entitled “The New Testament Appropriation,” where NT citations are considered. The volume ends with indexes of subjects, (modern) authors, Scripture references and Hebrew words.

A single review cannot do justice to as detailed a work as faces us here, so sample soundings will suffice to illustrate the benefits (and pitfalls) of using the volume. Hamilton is especially strong in linguistic and historical areas, such as trying to place Joseph’s job description in Potiphar’s household (39:4) and the Egyptian kingdom (41:40ff), or determining the Egyptian meanings of names (e.g. 41:43). These points are important for an academic understanding of the text, but would be of less interest for one seeking to preach it. The author does show sensitivity to the psychology

of some passages. Lot's daughters' impregnation by their father (19:31), while objectionable, is not condemned outright, since they are motivated by a world that seems to them to have lost its male population. Tamar's motive in sleeping with her father-in-law (chap. 38) also is shown to have more validity than his motive in sleeping with her.

On the literary level, Hamilton is somewhat less sensitive. For example, he misses an excellent opportunity by failing to note that the only two people said to be good-looking in form and feature are Rachel (29:17) and her son Joseph (39:6). This common feature made both compellingly attractive to at least one member of the opposite sex (Jacob and Potiphar's wife). The shared description could well indicate a close similarity in appearance, explaining why Jacob was so partial to Joseph, not only his son in old age but also the image of his beloved, and deceased, wife.

Having stated in vol. 1 that an evangelical position is not necessarily tied to a monolithically Mosaic authorship, Hamilton indicates that the logical reading of 36:31 argues that the Edomite kings list is composed after the reigns of either Saul or David. This is a refreshing change from some of the hermeneutical gymnastics that must be used to argue for a Mosaic source for the verse. While unabashedly evangelical in his view of the nature and authority of Scripture, the author shows that he is comfortable moving beyond a strictly fundamentalist understanding of the text.

In sum, the volume is a very valuable work, though more for the academic than the ministry practitioner. The latter will find it a useful source, especially for matters historical and linguistic, as well as the discussions of NT contexts. It will most probably not be their predominant reference source, however.

Kenneth Mathews, OT professor at Beeson Divinity School, has made an excellent beginning in his (apparently) two-volume work on Genesis. The modern author index indicates that information was gleaned from across the spectrum, liberal and conservative, Jew and Gentile, male and female, as well as modern (up to 1995) and classical (Calvin and Luther receiving note). This breadth of reading is encouraging in that this can shatter the stereotypes that have been raised by the series' home being among the more conservative Southern Baptists.

As appropriate for a book so fraught with matters of controversy, Mathews spends a good portion of the volume (over 20%) on introductory issues. The commentary proper includes five excurses ("Translating 1:1-2," where, after a useful 8-page discussion, he opts for a traditional interpretation rather than seeing it as a title or supporting the gap theory; "The Image of God," an excellent, well-documented discussion in 9 pages; "The human soul," 3 pages on the difference between an OT view of a unified body and soul versus a more schizophrenic Philonic view of their bifurcation; ancient Near Eastern mythology's views of civilization's origin, briefly restricted to Mesopotamia and Phoenicia; and "Revelation of the Divine Name," arguing for a Targumic type of interpretation of Exod 6:2-3, where a fuller understanding of the nature of One who carried the already known name Yahweh is intended). The volume concludes with indexes of subjects, modern authors and Scripture citations.

The first major introductory section (16 pages) concerns Genesis' structure, using the *toledot* formula as a structuring feature. In exploring "Genesis and the Canon," Mathews usefully places Genesis in its context of Pentateuch, the Mosaic community established at Sinai and the NT. He summarizes six theological aspects of the book (promise, God and the world, human life, sin, civilization and covenant), some in a very cursory manner. A lengthy section entitled "Interpreting Genesis" touches on this from Jewish and early Christian perspectives, but then more narrowly focuses on suggestions regarding its composition. A readable summary of the development of source criticism from Wellhausen through Garrett is augmented by looking at some of the newer, literary readings such as structuralism, reader-response and deconstruction-

ism. While not giving individual critique of the views, the author states that “any literary method whose philosophical assumptions drive a wedge between history and the referential value of the text for knowing reality undercuts the assumption of the bible (*sic*) itself” (p. 4).

Readers will find the two final introductory sections of great use. The first deals with ancient Near Eastern parallels to motifs found in Genesis (creation and humanity, Eden, long life spans and the flood). The second, “Creation and Contemporary Interpretation,” addresses Bible–science issues. Mathews eschews a strictly naturalistic explanation, but also warns against holding too narrow a creationist position that goes beyond the purpose of the text. The bibliography in both of these sections is extensive and will guide interested readers further into the subjects.

By way of example for the commentary proper, we will look at the layout of the discussion of the first section, 1:1–2:3. The section begins with an outline, followed by a single paragraph that grippingly highlights its theological significance through statements regarding function, genre, grammar and structure that pull the reader into what will follow. The next section, “Literary structure,” explains why the section is seen to end in 2:3 rather than v. 4 and other issues such as the material’s schematic layout arranged by acts of creation. A theological overview spends 11 pages looking at the concept of God as Lord and the appropriate response of humanity, in both cases ranging through both testaments.

Discussion then moves to the level of subsection, the first being 1:1–2, which also has a theological introduction. The introductions are useful because they provide more than a simple reiteration of what the passage says, in a short span providing useful grist for reflection. Then, at the verse level, the NIV text is reprinted, followed by detailed comment. In the commentary section itself, Hebrew is transliterated with English glosses, but Hebrew script is used in the frequent footnotes. From the very outset, Mathews has his eyes aimed far wider than the actual text itself, as in 1:1 where he elucidates the eschatological purpose of the phrase “in the beginning,” in one paragraph referring to 6 different texts from both testaments.

Since the first Bible verse is so crucial, every word is analyzed in great, but very readable, detail. Mathews does not hesitate to take positions that might be unpopular with some readers of this review (though that does not mean he is wrong!). He denies a clear articulation of the Trinity in the verse, though stating that it implies a plurality within a single God here and in v. 26. While holding that God can, and does, create *ex nihilo*, Mathews shows that the verb in this verse cannot carry the burden of proof for that doctrine.

Several other controversial points are worthy of note. Matthews argues, for example, for a nonliteral use of “day” in Genesis 1. He also finds in Genesis 1 and 2 the equality of male and female in their function as rulers, representing God on earth, and retaining God’s image even after the fall. He affirms a “portrait of an egalitarian couple” in Genesis 1, but holds that hierarchy is also evident there, though not stating it, or even less demonstrating it, as regards the human couple. From 2:18 he states an equality of personhood with difference of roles for the two genders, going into more detail on the latter point in relation to 2:23. He argues from the literary structure of chap. 2 for the leader-follower model to proceed God-man-woman-animal. He does not make clear why that structural ordering has more theological weight in the discussion than does the prior ordering given in Genesis 1. Here Mathews states that increasing significance is evidenced throughout the chapter, which would then place increasing importance going from plants to animals to man to woman, which would completely alter his hierarchical model. Which should be given priority in establishing a hierarchical view, or, maybe a more important hermeneutical question, where within the actual reading of the texts themselves does such a view prove itself?

Mathews does provide a small bibliography on the subject of the role of women, with representation from the broad spectrum of views currently proposed.

Mathews has done the church a valuable service in presenting in a readable form a good balance of exegetical information as regards historical, literary, linguistic and cultural matters as well as theological reflection. Serious students of the text will find material of interest, but it is also accessible to the layperson. Preacher and teacher will be well served by consulting this commentary.

Both of these writers show that the days are gone, if they ever existed, when one could write a commentary in a conservative vacuum. Since all truth is God's truth, one can seek insight from the spectrum of interpretation, sharpening one's own views by interaction with a breadth of dialogue partners. Both help us encounter some of these partners and model the Christian approach to differences in opinion. They exhibit clarity of thought and expression with respect for those with which one disagrees, characteristics which need to find much more place in contemporary scholarship, whether conservative or liberal.

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Reading the Fractures of Genesis. By David M. Carr. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996, x + 388 pp. \$39.00.

With this book Carr wades into the convoluted field of Pentateuchal criticism in an effort to bridge the gap between diachronic and synchronic approaches. The book makes no attempt to interpret Genesis, nor does it reintroduce the various methodological approaches to "reading" Genesis. Rather, Carr presents a highly detailed proposal for the formation of the book of Genesis, followed by an attempt to demonstrate how diachronic study can positively benefit the synchronic task.

Carr utilizes a top-down approach in his reconstruction of the compositional history of Genesis. After a brief chapter on methodology, Carr moves from the youngest textual strands backward toward the oldest. Beginning with P, Carr describes competing views on the extent and nature of each textual layer, defends his own views on the strand in question, and illustrates his view with detailed examples on classically difficult texts (e.g. Flood Narrative, Table of Nations). This is followed by an identical section on the non-P material, and a summary chapter demonstrating the positive effect of such diachronic analysis on synchronic study.

Carr describes his critical method as "intratextual." He accepts the typical critical tools for identifying sources (mainly doublets, ideological and terminological discrepancies and *Wiederaufnahme*), and is strongly impacted by Tigay's empirical models. The "intratextual" portion describes the (assumed) ideological motives of the writers and compilers. In Carr's mind, the writers and compilers of Genesis were deliberately creating an "irresolvably multivalent mix," a "multivoiced text." They attempted to preserve and build on the authority of the text while, at the same time, transforming it.

Carr's assessment of the evolution of the book is not unique. His P source is nearly identical to that of Wellhausen and Holtzinger, although he gives a somewhat broader role to R_p (notably in chap. 10). In the non-P material, Carr has abandoned the J(E) source, and follows the compositional approach of Rendtorff and Blum. His vision of the evolution of Genesis has five stages. (1) The primeval history and two versions of the Jacob-Joseph cycle (Judean and Israelite) were in independent circulation. (2) The primeval history and the Judean version of the Jacob-Joseph cycle were com-

bined together under the structure of the promise theme resulting in "proto-genesis." (3) Revisions were made to "proto-genesis" under deuteronomic influence (chaps. 14–15 were also added independently). (4) In the early post-exilic period, P composed his own version of Genesis "designed to replace the account on which it is dependent" (p. 312). (Carr argues that non-P was the Genesis of the exilic and post-exilic lay leaders, whereas, P was the Genesis of their priestly contemporaries.) (5) R_p merged proto-genesis with P. As a rule, R_p's goal was preservation, by either duplicating accounts or merging them where they overlapped. "R_p allows the non-P material to depict a more chaotic narrative world than that found in P, and yet has P envelop that world in order" (p. 317). The end result of this amalgamation is a text that consciously deconstructs itself. Competing theologies act and react to one another creating a "multivoiced whole."

This, argues Carr, is the real meeting-place of synchronic and diachronic study. Carr's vision of "synchronic study" is located on the radical edge of literary studies. Reader-response, deconstruction and feminist interpretation are his principal agents. Consequently, it is no surprise that a diachronic study that posits theological intolerance between the various layers of the text and a synchronic analysis that denies single textual meaning and emphasizes tensions and contradictions can happily coexist as partners in a common cause.

There are two major problems with this scheme that render it untenable: one of motive and one of hermeneutics.

Carr follows Blum in proposed a *Sitz im Leben* of Persian sponsorship for R_p's product. The missing element in this scheme, however, is motive. It is difficult to imagine an ancient Near Eastern redactor who is conscious of fundamental theological differences between two texts and yet merges them with the full knowledge that he is creating an ideological and cultic mishmash acceptable to no one. Blame cannot easily be placed at the feet of the Persian court. If it is a late-exilic, court-sponsored document, why was it not written in Aramaic, and what hope could there be that the Jewish community would accept a religious document cultivated by a foreign regime? By the time that Carr has finished describing him, R_p looks suspiciously like a late 20th century post-modernist.

The hermeneutical issue is more fundamental. For Carr, the meanings of a text are located in the different socio-cultural environments that produced the different portions of that text (pp. 4–5). What he fails to recognize is that merged texts result in the creation of a new text. Presuming that a given book of the Bible was the product of many hands over many centuries, the end product would not be a jigsaw puzzle composed of hundreds of disunified bits of text. The result is a new text with a new message. A lack of cohesion in form and texture does not necessitate a lack of coherence in meaning (cf. R. Rendtorff, VTSup 40 [1988] 298–303). This recognition, missing from Carr's proposal, has produced some of the most creative work on the Hebrew Bible in recent years and has done much to reinvigorate the field of OT theology.

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Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary. By Richard S. Hess. TOTC. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996, 320 pp., \$11.99 paper.

In this most recent addition to the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series, Richard Hess gives us what is certainly the best, currently available, and up-to-date

commentary on Joshua written from an evangelical perspective. Hess is thoroughly familiar with the whole range of contemporary Joshua studies including its literary, historical, archaeological and theological dimensions. He provides competent overviews and assessments of current discussions on all these matters along with his own conclusions. He provides abundant evidence that many features of the book (he discusses nine of these on pp. 26–31) can best be explained by tracing their origin to the 2d millennium BC, although he comments that this “commentary will not attempt to ‘prove’ the historicity of any part of Joshua . . . it will accept the work as preserving authentic and ancient sources that attest to events in the late second millennium BC” (p. 31).

In a very useful discussion of the theology of the book (pp. 42–53), Hess calls attention to four theological themes: “Holy war and the ban;” “the inheritance of the land;” “God’s covenant with Israel;” and “the holy and redeeming God.” Hess regards the holy war concept as something not unique to Israel, but rather as an ancient Near Eastern political ideology that Israel shared with other nations of that time (e.g. Mari, Moab, Egypt). What he does see as unique to Israel is that “God did not approve of all wars” (cf. e.g. Ali [p. 43]). In developing his discussion of the holy war theme, Hess traces the theme on into the NT and sees Christ as “the victim of the holy war that God wages against sin (2 Cor 5:21). The earthly army that Christ leads introduces the other focus of holy war: the engagement of Christians in a lifelong spiritual struggle against the powers of sin and evil (2 Cor 10:3–5; Eph 6:10–18) This war also requires the total extermination of the enemy. It allows for no involvement with sin, but demands a complete separation from it” (p. 46).

Hess places the boundary lists of chaps. 13–21 in a covenantal context. He notes that this important section of the book is not only placed between the covenant ceremonies of Joshua 8 and 24, but it also corresponds in placement with the legal stipulations of other Biblical covenants and serves the function of defining the fulfillment of promises made to the nation’s ancestors (see pp. 40, 47, 59). The land is clearly presented as a divine gift with ownership remaining with God. The use and enjoyment of the land and the life it sustained were gifts from God for which he is to be worshipped and praised. Here too Hess traces this theme into the NT and suggests that the tension in the book of Joshua between the land as something already given in its entirety and yet as also something which Israel must still occupy is the way in which God still works with his people. He comments: “For Christians, the promise of victory over sin and death has been accomplished through Christ. However, this must be claimed through a life of faith in Christ’s work and of faithfulness to him (Rom 3–8). The theme of the inheritance of the land thus provides a model for the Christian life” (p. 47).

Interspersed throughout the commentary proper are seven “Additional Notes” addressing specific issues arising in the book of Joshua that have provoked extended discussion, but little agreement on conclusions. These provide good brief surveys of each of the issues along with nuanced assessments of the available evidence. The topics addressed are: (1) etiologies, (2) the archaeology of Jericho, (3) the date of the entrance into Canaan, (4) the archaeology of Ai, (5) Joshua’s altar on Mount Ebal, (6) the location of Heshbon, and (7) a partial or complete conquest. At the end of the book there are 9 maps, for the most part dealing with various tribal allotments. In the commentary proper Hess gives particular notice to literary techniques and close readings of the Hebrew text. All in all, this commentary is a very welcome and useful addition to the TOTC series.

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1 Kings. By Jerome T. Walsh. Berit Olam. Collegeville: Liturgical, 1996, 393 pp., \$39.95.

Berit Olam is a "multi-volume commentary" that focuses on the final form of the Biblical texts in the belief that an appreciation of their qualities as literary works can aid in an understanding of their truth. Walsh's fine treatment of *1 Kings* is thus a kind of narrative theology. He states that "the narrative quality of a work is independent of its correspondence to an external 'real' world" (xii). The relationship between the books and history, therefore, remains tacit. In practice, his views about authorship and historical criticism appear from time to time, and turn out to be rather orthodox in critical terms (he takes for granted the traditional theory about the "Succession Narrative," for example, and also the "Deuteronomistic History"; see e.g. pp. 28, 37–38). But these tenets remain in the background. As he points out, when he says "the author" he normally means the "implied author" (explained as a reader's construct on the basis of the text); access to the historical author of *1 Kings* is "difficult, if not impossible" (p. xviii).

The real interest is in narrative. The facets of narrative interpretation break down into structural analysis, verbal techniques, an awareness of the narrator and implied author, plot and point of view, and characterization. The project thus determines the procedure. The text is analyzed into larger units (ultimately *1* and *2 Kings*, though only the former is actually dealt with); these are broken down in sections spanning a chapter or group of chapters, and finally into smaller units measured in verses. The analysis at every level displays the text in terms of literary patterns, chiasmic, concentric and other forms. The commentary focuses on the small units, while stepping back frequently to see them in the context of the larger canvas, *1–2 Kings* and beyond. This always produces stimulating reflection, not least for the preacher.

The main strength of the work is in its sustained exposition of the narrative. The following features may be mentioned. (1) Narrative analogies are highlighted, such as the ironic analogy between Bathsheba and Abishag (p. 6), or, beyond *1–2 Kings*, between Elijah and Moses, where Elijah is seen as the prophet "like Moses," yet who does not quite match his predecessor (pp. 287–289). (2) The force of the Hebrew is often well elucidated, by observing word order, alliteration, repetition and other features. For example, the word plays involving *melek* and the name Adonijah (1:13–14, 18–21, pp. 11, 13) have a definite effect, namely to show Bathsheba's loyalty to David. (3) The speeches of the characters have a certain power by virtue of the careful choice of word and phrase. Thus Nathan cleverly presents the issue of succession as putting Adonijah at odds with David, diplomatically deemphasizing Solomon's claim (p. 17). In the same category are characters' slight alterations of reported words. David himself prefers "throne/God of Israel," rather than "of David." Thus in 1:30 (contrast 1:17) Walsh finds in David's words "a subtle repudiation" of ancient Near Eastern royal ideology (p. 19; cf. p. 42). *1 Kings* 2:2–4 is a further important example. The text has been typically interpreted as a deuteronomistic conditionalizing of the dynastic promise in *2 Samuel* 7. Walsh rightly insists, however, that one must ask why *David* relays the matter thus to *Solomon*, and suggests that David (or the narrator) implies some danger to the promise in its being borne now by this particular successor (pp. 39–40). Similar points are made concerning Solomon's dedicatory prayer (p. 112, n.). The value of this kind of question to the text is that, viewed in this way, *Kings* cannot be a mere repository of deuteronomistic ideology. Rather, what is usually recognized as deuteronomistic phraseology is seen as part of an integrated and purposeful narrative, and its subtle development of character plot.

Fourth, and perhaps most interesting, is the characterization itself. Solomon especially comes in for close scrutiny, and in contrast to many treatments that divide

his reign into good and bad periods, Walsh perceives (rightly, in my view) serious doubts about Solomon, suggested by hint and omission, from the beginning of the narrative (p. 34). Even his self-proclaimed youthful naivety in the prayer for wisdom (3:7) invites doubt in view of the Macchiavellian ruthlessness with which he has disposed of personal enemies in the opening chapters (p. 77). The prayer of dedication too seems to focus unhealthily on himself (p. 113).

The approach taken results in a highly illuminating close reading of the text of 1 Kings. It is successful because it is open and refreshing, by no means hidebound by prevailing critical views. The treatment of the prayer of dedication, for example, happily avoids the much repeated misconception that it promotes a deuteronomistic theology of transcendence in contrast to a priestly theology of immanence. Instead, Walsh rightly finds the deliberate deployment of a variety of theological strands behind the text, and declines to see it in terms of false polarizations (pp. 110–112).

The commentary leaves some methodological questions unanswered, in my view. Who is, after all, the narrator? The obscurity on this means that questions of context are not convincingly addressed: While monarchic and exilic horizons are alluded to from time to time, there is no theoretical synthesis of how various contexts might be reflected. (The brief remarks on the meaning of the word *ʿabal* [p. 28] nicely reflect the confusion I find on this point.) At times too, the narrator's voice seems to equate in practice with the characters' voices (pp. 19, 22, 35). This "final form" treatment is weakest, therefore, in its theory.

Even so, Walsh's commentary is probably one of the best available on 1 Kings, because of its rich and insightful reading of the text, its explanation of Hebrew linguistic and syntactical forms for Hebraist and non-Hebraist alike, and not least because of its reverence in matters of theology and piety.

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Three Faces of a Queen: Characterization in the Books of Esther. By Linda Day. JSOTSup 186. Sheffield: JSOT, 1995, pp. 254, \$45.00.

Scholarly interest in the book of Esther remains lively, and this monograph is no exception. Originally a Ph.D. dissertation under D. T. Olson at Princeton Seminary, it explores new terrain by studying Esther's "three faces," i.e. her characterization in each of the three ancient versions (M [MT], B [LXX] and A). Day pursues literary interests, not redactional ones (p. 18). Specifically, she assesses the differences between the three portraits (p. 10). The introductory chapter sketches Day's theoretical framework for treating literary characterization and defends the selection of episodes for study. She offers no definition of "characterization," but obviously she understands it as a character's various traits rather than the author's strategy of presenting them. This absent definition is the reader's first clue to what I regard as the major weakness of Day's work—terminological and methodological imprecision.

Two lengthy chapters follow and form the bulk of the book. In chap. 2 ("Comparative Analysis"), Day offers detailed analysis of the character of Esther in nine episodes in which the queen looms large. First, she lays out the versions of each episode verse-by-verse in parallel columns, but unlike K. Jobes' recent book, Day also provides her own "literal" (Day's term) English translation of them. She underlines any Greek and Hebrew text that, in her "best judgment" (p. 29), portrays Esther differently from its parallel(s). Second, Day highlights differences in wording to assess how such textual variants impact the characterization of Esther. For example, she notes

how the expanded v. 6 of episode 6 in "A" (MT 7:6) "reveals more interaction between Esther and the king" (p. 125) than do its two parallels.

Finally, Day analyzes the characterization of Esther in each episode in each version. Thus, concerning Esther's climactic revelation of Haman's plot against the Jews, Day observes that Esther is confident, courageous and rational in A, empathetic toward the Jews and emotionally oriented in B, and "an extremely balanced person" in M (pp. 130–134). In all candor, I found this chapter to be very tedious reading, but in fairness to Day I see no other way to present the "guts" of her analysis than the tack she takes. In any case, Day has laid out a rich interpretive lode to be mined. And Day's comparative method visually highlights differences between versions, for example, episodes narrated by only two versions (e.g. Episode 3 [only B and A] and Episode 9 [only M and B]) or told in particularly terse style (e.g. Episode 4 in M). Further, comparisons often serve to tease out insights from the text that one might otherwise miss. For instance, juxtaposing the assassination-plot pericope in B and M (MT 2:22) shows how subservient Esther is to Mordecai ("in the name of Mordecai") at this point in the narrative (p. 165).

On the other hand, I find some of Day's inferences to be questionable. To cite one example, when Esther risks her life to approach the king (Episode 4), A and B stress Esther's turbulent emotions, while M portrays Esther as "a strong person" (p. 103). But I am hard pressed to see how M by itself justifies Day's characterization of her as "without need of others," "assured" and "in control of the situation." Further, what does M say that supports Day's claim that "being in the king's presence causes [Esther] no anxiety" (p. 103)? For me the methodological issue concerns the extent to which the very juxtaposition of texts in effect creates a new text (or at least a new context), with its own unique perspective, rather than illumines the meaning of the originals.

In chap. 3 ("Comprehensive Analysis"), Day draws together the results of the previous chapter, discussing ten traits of Esther's character (e.g. her type and level of authority, her activity/passivity, her emotions, how religious beliefs affect her). Again, readers will enjoy many of Day's insights, especially her discussion of the more "religious" Esther in A and B versus the more "secular" one (my terms) in M. In my view, one of her greatest contributions is to introduce readers not used to working with A and B to their fascinating world. But some of her categories (e.g. "Connection with the Jews," "Relationship with the King") strike me as more the language of sociology than of literary characterization. I suspect that such terminological mixing goes back to the absent definition of characterization noted above. However, the categories Day uses in this chapter's concluding discussion of traits particular to each version (e.g. intelligence, altruism) escape this criticism.

In chap. 4 ("The Implications of this Study"), Day compares the portrait of Esther to those of women in Greek novels and in Judith. She concludes that none of the versions represent "an explicit reworking towards the Greek novel genre" (p. 221), their many similarities notwithstanding, and hypothesizes that the redactors of A and B may have shaped their portrait of Esther to highlight similarities between her and Judith. Finally, Day concludes with a provocative discussion of the implications of multiple editions of the Esther story for canon criticism and feminist hermeneutics. In her view, Esther's "three faces" illustrate the theses of canon critics such as J. Sanders and Donn Morgan and exhibits two points of feminist hermeneutics: the pluralism of the Biblical canon itself and the paradigmatic character of the Esther story for women seeking to transcend traditional Biblical understandings of them. Day's discussion merits careful, serious reflection because it sets the three Esther traditions in a context other than that of traditional textual criticism. It raises the question as to their relationship, both textually and conceptually, to each other and to

other reuses of Biblical traditions (e.g. midrash, rewritings by Josephus). In other words, what is the difference between an original "tradition," a text, a redacted text, a midrash and a "re-written Bible" (Day's term, p. 238). On the other hand, by apparently accepting all three versions as equally authoritative, Day's view still faces one common critique of canon criticism, namely, that it seems to accord canonical status to any religious literature produced by any ancient religious community and hence empties the concept of canon of any real meaning.

Though in my view it could use some methodological and terminological tightening, Day's book models a fruitful new approach to the three Esther versions. I hope that other researchers will pursue other literary faces in the Esther stories. Also, others will have to tell us more than Day does about these illusive things called "religious communities" and their intentions for the literature they left behind.

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A God of Vengeance? Understanding the Psalms of Divine Wrath. By Erich Zenger. Translated by Linda M. Maloney. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996, xi + 104 pp., \$13.00 paper.

The long-standing question of the imprecations in the psalms merits sustained and careful reflection. One welcomes, therefore, this new study from the Professor of Biblical History at the University of Münster. Zenger's thesis is that "the 'psalms of enmity' are a way of robbing the aggressive images of the enemies of their destructiveness, and transforming them into constructive forces" (p. vii). He sustains his thesis by setting forth the problem in chap. 1, by exegeting seven relevant texts (Psalms 12, 139, 58, 83, 137, 44, 109, in that order) in chap. 3. His final chapter calls for the reinvigoration of such laments in the liturgical life of the Christian church today.

Zenger aims to challenge the dismissive rejection of the imprecations by high-minded liberalism without lapsing into what he calls "fundamentalistic biblicism." His proposal is summarized by pp. 84–85: "[T]he psalms of vengeance participate in the revelatory dynamic of the Bible within different contexts, and exercising different functions. . . . [T]hese psalms confront us with the reality of violence and, especially, with the problem of the perpetrators of this suffering and their condemnation by the judgment of God. In the process, they very often compel us to confess that *we ourselves* are violent, and belong among the *perpetrators* of the violence lamented in these psalms. *In that way*, these psalms are God's revelation, because in them, in a certain sense, God in person confronts us with the fact that there are situations of suffering in this world of ours in which such psalms are the last thing left to suffering human beings—as protest, accusation, and cry for help" (emphases his).

Zenger's argument is the most illuminating, in my opinion, when he expounds the theme of divine judgment as the theological substructure of the imprecations in chap. 3. However, the "fundamentalist biblicistic" reader will also encounter not a few theological and hermeneutical infelicities that aid Zenger's argument in no material way but only detract from the strengths of the book.

Zenger could have nuanced his position by lingering longer over the personal dimension of the imprecations, which, it seems to me, is their most striking feature. We do not wince when a Biblical prophet pronounces doom upon the enemies of God. But Psalm 139, for example, personalizes it: "Do I not hate them that hate thee, O LORD?/"

And do I not loathe them that rise up against thee?/I hate them with a perfect hatred;/I count them my enemies" (vv. 21–22, RSV).

Zenger does not address this issue adequately. John L. McKenzie (in "The Imprecations of the Psalter," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 111 [1944] 81–96) distinguishes insightfully between the *odium abominationis* and the *odium inimicitiae*. The former is the hatred of objective moral censure, while the latter is the hatred of merely personal malice. The imprecations in the Psalter, by any fairminded reading, are to be construed as wholly consumed with the cause of righteousness, not at all with the pettiness of self. As a result, they are not psychologically incompatible with the law of love. The mean-spirited *odium inimicitiae* is a sinful hatred, embittered toward a person, whether good or evil, with personal spite. The mentality of *odium abominationis*, however, is more complex. This hatred abominates a person only because he embodies evil. Were repentance to be demonstrated, this hatred would dissolve into affection. It is always ready to love, if that which requires condemnation is removed from the equation. This conditional assessment of others is, indeed, the very way we judge ourselves in the private counsels of our own consciences. This is not to say that we are split personalities in a neurotic sense, but only that the complexity of moral assessment underlying the biblical imprecations is a daily commonplace rather than a theologically scandalous "problem" in Scripture. To put the imprecations in a true perspective, their ultimate expression is not to be found in the Psalter but in the words of our blessed Lord, who will say to his enemies, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt 25:41). Measured by this criterion, the imprecations of the Psalter may be understood as pale but meaningful adumbrations of the final confrontation between evil, in its attempt to destroy the rule of God, and God, in his refusal to un-god himself and his determination to create a new universe "where righteousness dwells."

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The OG and Th Versions of Daniel. By Tim McLay. Septuagint and Cognate Studies 43. Atlanta: Scholars, 1996, xvii + 286 pp., \$39.95.

In this revision of a University of Durham thesis (1994), McLay examines the relationship to one another of the Theodotion and Old Greek (OG) versions of Daniel. The translation technique of each version is examined and the findings applied to discussion on the nature of the links between the two versions. Related text-critical comments are also made on the MT. A final chapter examines Theodotion's relationship to *kaige* in light of the *kaige* characteristics delineated by a number of key scholars.

Conclusions on the links between versions are based on a close study of four key passages: 1:1–10, 2:1–10, 3:11–20 and 12:1–13. Each is analyzed in terms of morphology, syntax and lexicology. McLay concludes that the translator of Theodotion worked independently of the OG. In making the case, he argues that apparent dependence of one translation on another is more likely to be explicable in transmission-history terms. While working from Ziegler's critical edition, McLay reconstructs a critical text of OG using more recently available papyrus 967 evidence. The analysis of the four passages, which makes up the bulk of the thesis, is generally well done and the conclusions convincing. Although he does not address the question directly, the author endorses the conclusion of Albertz in *Der Gott des Daniel* that a different hand is responsible for the OG translation of Daniel 4–6, and provides much useful

raw material for further study of that question. The section on *kaige*, although not well integrated into the wider study, provides compelling evidence that Theodotion Daniel is no more than a “distant cousin” of *kaige*-Theodotion, sharing with it a similar approach to translation.

The thesis does not quite deliver on its promise to apply the work on the Greek versions to textual criticism of the MT. Such comment as there is tends to be piecemeal rather than conclusive. At the same time, I remain uneasy that the study works from such a small sample of texts. A weakness arising from this is an ambivalence about whether or not the translators display a theological *Tendenz*. Although adopting a conservative approach on one hand, McLay tantalizes with his comments on a “subliminal” process of interpretation. By the nature of the study’s parameters, there is also little attention paid to the significant pluses and minuses between versions.

This is a useful book in the field of Greek Daniel research, but not one for the faint-hearted. It is highly condensed, and the insistence on using a large number of abbreviations is a challenge. Referencing the text by the author’s own line numbers rather than by verse also provides problems. Furthermore, there is some carelessness evident in formatting and editing.

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The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English. Edited by Florentino García Martínez. Translated by Wilfred G. E. Watson. Second edition. Leiden: E. J. Brill; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, 519 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Florentino García Martínez is a member of the international team of scholars working on the Dead Sea Scrolls and heads the Qumran Institute at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He has authored numerous books and articles on subjects related to the Scrolls and serves as editorial secretary for *Revue de Qumran*. As his credentials reveal, he is uniquely qualified to pull together a volume such as this. The first edition appeared in Spanish under the title *Textos de Qumrán*.

Others have published English translations of the scrolls—e.g. Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (Penguin, 1987); Theodor Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (Doubleday, 1976); Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (Penguin, 1992). Though valuable, these books do not contain the number of manuscripts that this volume makes available. As advertised, García Martínez has provided the most comprehensive one-volume English edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the market.

Scholars believe the eleven Qumran caves have yielded between 800 and 850 documents. Of these 225 or so are Biblical manuscripts. Another 275 to 300 are too brief and fragmentary to warrant inclusion in a volume like this. So García Martínez has published about 200 of the most important non-Biblical manuscripts so that interested readers, without any knowledge of Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic, can appreciate the riches of this vast collection of Jewish literature dating from the late Second Temple period. He offers the reader a literal, neutral translation of the Scrolls and admits he is hesitant to reconstruct the text in lacunas except when parallel passages or formulas render the conjecture nearly certain. Since he does insist on such a literal translation, at points the English does not flow well and readers may be left uncertain as to the meaning of the texts. For ease of reading some may continue to prefer Geza Vermes’ *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, but for serious study of the texts García Martínez’s labors provide the greatest fruit.

One useful feature of this book is that the editor includes multiple copies of the available documents so students may compare the tradition history of the most important documents. For example, chap. 1 contains not only the Cave One copy of "The Rule of the Community," but also 11 more fragmentary copies of it from Caves Four and Five. To assist students in comparing the English with the Hebrew or Aramaic texts, García Martínez adds column and line numbers to his translation. Because he anticipates the publication of a companion volume, *Introduction to the Literature from Qumran*, in the near future, the editor proffers little comment on the meaning or significance of these documents in the present book.

García Martínez begins the book with an "Introduction," which details the history of the manuscript discoveries and publications. He provides a brief and sober account of the intrigue which has surrounded the Scrolls since their initial discoveries. He covers matters relating to the excavation of Khirbet Qumran and concludes the Scrolls were copied and preserved by the sectarians who inhabited this desert settlement. He is a proponent of the "Groningen hypothesis"—namely, that the sectarians should not be simply equated with Essenes. He theorizes that the Qumran community originated in a split among Palestinian Essenes over matters relating to the calendar, feasts, purity laws, worship and temple practices, among other things. Led by the Teacher of Righteousness, the community that deposited the Dead Sea Scrolls withdrew to the desert to prepare for God's eschatological visitation.

With the release of many documents previously monopolized by the small, elite Scroll team, specialists and nonspecialists have rediscovered what W. F. Albright called the greatest archaeological discovery of the 20th century. García Martínez has labored extensively and expertly to provide what is destined to become the *standard textbook* of primary resources of Qumran's non-Biblical collection. For those who teach and those who want to study the Dead Sea Scrolls in translation, García Martínez deserves our gratitude.

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Wisdom Texts from Qumran. By Daniel J. Harrington. The Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls. London: Routledge, 1996, 117 pp., \$16.95 paper.

This work's series is designed as a concise guide to the principal varieties of literature from the Dead Sea Scroll collection. It is intended as a popular presentation for anyone interested in the scrolls, particularly for undergraduate or graduate students in Biblical and Second Temple Jewish studies.

Harrington provides new translations and a thorough analysis of selected Qumran wisdom texts. Although scholars have long recognized the significance of the sapiential tradition of OT and NT studies, this is a rather new item on the agenda of Qumran scrolls research. Harrington collects and offers commentary on some of Qumran's significant wisdom material in light of other wisdom literature from Biblical and extra-Biblical sources.

Along with most scholars, Harrington accepts the Essene hypothesis, yet he correctly notes that it is difficult to conclude what is unique in their theology and practice, given the nature of the library's collection.

After surveying the primary resources of Israel's wisdom tradition (chap. 2), Harrington provides a brief description of Biblical wisdom texts and targums from Qumran (chap. 3). The 11 caves around Qumran yielded copies of Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Sirach. He provides exposition on two passages out of a targum of

Job from Cave 11 (11QtgJob). He devotes chap. 4 to wisdom psalms from the Cave 11 Psalm scroll (11Q Ps^a = 11Q5). In chap. 5 he provides translation and commentary on a text warning of Lady Folly (4Q184)—the antithesis of Lady Wisdom—and practical instruction (4Q185). The centerpiece of the book, however, is Harrington's translation and commentary on a document known as "Sapiential Work A." Six fragmentary copies of this document were found in Caves 1 and 4. It describes a nonmonastic society engaged in commerce and family relations. Like other Qumran wisdom texts, it sees wisdom as a gift from God, a way of life the faithful should pursue and transmit to their children. A recurring phrase, "the mystery that is to be/come," demonstrates that wisdom was never far removed from eschatology.

In chaps. 8–10, Harrington synthesizes the results of his investigation and offers his own thoughts on the nature of "sectarian" wisdom and its relation to Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. In the end he finds that Qumran wisdom texts cohere with other wisdom material from the same period in both content and form. The Jewish wisdom tradition, he concludes, calls into question the need to look to more remote models for understanding Jesus (e.g. as a Cynic philosopher).

This is a well-researched, well-written and useful introduction to a field of Qumran research that has received scant attention. Harrington's translations are lucid and his expositions sound. Scholars and students alike will appreciate its clarity and sober conclusions. Any investigation into Jewish wisdom during the Second Temple period would do well to start with this book. If Harrington's work is indicative of the rest of the series, Routledge Press and its series editor, George Brooke, can certainly be proud.

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Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans: Primary Readings. Edited and introduced by L. H. Feldman and M. Reinhold. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1996, xliii + 436 pp., \$48.00 paper.

In this collection Feldman (Yeshiva University) and Reinhold (Emeritus, Boston College) undertake to make available to a wide audience material drawn from literary, epigraphical, papyrological and numismatic sources from the 4th century BC to the 6th century AD. Although the publisher's comment on the back cover describes the book as a "comprehensive treasury," the editors' preface portrays the contents more accurately as "representative selections." The term "comprehensive" would more accurately describe the magisterial work edited by M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols., Jerusalem: Israel Academy, 1974–84), which presents the primary sources in their original languages with extended introductions and bibliographies.

The idea of the present volume is to show the relationships of the Jews to their neighbors, with emphasis on governments, intellectuals and the masses. To this end the selections are arranged topically and accompanied by brief introductions, bibliographies of English works and sparse explanatory notes. Since the book is aimed at nonspecialists, it includes prefatory methodological advice, a brief (perhaps too brief) description of each source and a glossary of recurring terms. Each chapter contains a black-and-white illustration from ancient times, although several of these date from time periods much later than that of the book. The book also includes a list of suggested topics for further research, a general bibliography and thorough indexes.

A summary of the chapter titles indicates the scope of the volume: "The Greek Discovery of the Jews," "The Beginnings of Hellenization in Egypt," "Jewish Life in Other Diaspora Countries," "Pro-Jewish Attitudes by Governments and Intellectuals," "Conversion and 'God-fearers,'" "Jews in Palestine," "Jewish Revolts" and "Criticism and Hostility Toward Jews."

Anyone who subscribes to the motto "*ad fontes*" must applaud this effort. It makes much of Stern's material available at a fraction of the cost. As with any anthology, one might quibble here and there with the editors as to what has been included and what has been omitted. One particularly hopes that the book receives wide usage in seminary classes that explore NT backgrounds, patristics and Jewish-Christian relations. Those interested in the ancient roots of anti-Semitism will be especially helped by the 90 pages of material on criticism and hostility toward the Jews.

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How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and Historical-Critical Methodology. By Wilhelm Egger. Translated by P. Heinegg. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, xxxvi + 232 pp., \$29.95.

This translation of the 1986 German original is intended to serve as a guide to scholarly work on NT texts. It attempts to integrate "classic" diachronic methods with newer synchronic methods and proposes a four-step approach: (1) preparatory work, (2) synchronic reading, (3) diachronic reading and (4) actualization. Preparatory work includes establishing the form of the text (textual criticism), gaining a first orientation to the text and translating the text. Synchronic reading examines the text using semantic analysis, pragmatic analysis and analysis of textual genre. Diachronic reading addresses issues related to source criticism, tradition criticism and redaction criticism. Actualization approaches the text to seek orientation in constructing and coping with life. Egger believes that the particular strength of the method that he proposes is the inclusion of synchronic methods. The result is "a methodological expansion of historical criticism" in which "comprehensive systematic observations of textual phenomena become a deliberate research step" (p. 67).

Egger has undertaken an ambitious task. In effect, he attempts to introduce the reader to twelve scholarly methods in a single book *and* to integrate those methods into a comprehensive approach to reading NT texts. In the end, he has been more successful in the latter effort than in the former. His overall method proceeds logically and makes good sense. He is to be commended for his emphasis on the phenomena of the text in its final form and for his concern with "actualizing" the text. By including these areas in his method, Egger provides a good balance to the tendency of the historical-critical method to focus on the prehistory of the text while neglecting other important aspects.

The discussion of individual methods, however, is overly brief. The section on semantic analysis will serve as a case study. The discussion of textual semantics (pp. 85–101) is too concise both in its explanation of method and in the examples it uses. Egger points the reader to a series of technical works, but he does not provide enough information for the nonspecialist to follow the discussion. One detailed, carefully explained example would have been more helpful. The discussion of word, motif and word field (pp. 101–111) is clearer, but gives no indication of how the insights gained are useful in understanding the text. The discussion of narrative analysis (pp. 111–124) is also easier to follow, but the results obtained seem insignificant. In a book that

is intended to “provide the beginner with access to this sort of exegesis” (p. 152), it is essential that the explanations given be easy to follow and that the examples used be meaningful. Too frequently, this book falls short in both areas.

Despite the inclusion of synchronic methods in his overall approach, Egger remains well within the historical-critical camp. His presuppositions are decidedly diachronic. He assumes that the Biblical texts have undergone an extensive process of revision and editing (pp. 17, 31, 152). Some texts “betray the influence of christological confessions and other post-Easter soteriology, post-Easter experience of mission and persecution, [and] the attempt to unravel obscure sayings of Jesus” (p. 34). In his discussion of source criticism (pp. 155–163), for example, he posits only models of incoherence. He does not address proposed solutions of coherence, but rather assumes an evolutionary editorial process. He approaches the text with a hermeneutic of suspicion rather than a hermeneutic of goodwill.

At the footnote level, Egger interacts primarily with German and French works, which is natural given his context. That interaction, however, is weak in the areas of epistolary and rhetorical analysis, and the discussion of textual genre seldom moves outside the realm of historical narrative. Also missing from the text is any consideration of oral theory and composition. This latter discipline holds the solution to many of the apparent inconsistencies raised by source and redaction criticism and strengthens the argument for the coherence of the NT documents.

Although it has admirable aims, this book falls short of reaching them. It might be asking too much of a single book to accomplish all that Egger sets out to accomplish. There are books, however, that approach the task of reading the NT with detailed explanations, carefully explained examples and a commitment to the unity of the text. Unfortunately, this book is not one of them.

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The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation. Edited by Richard Rohrbaugh. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, x + 240 pp., n.p.

In the last 25 years of Biblical studies, the standard historical-critical method (concerned with the authors' intents in their historical context) has been augmented by three other broad methods of inquiry: theological, literary and social scientific studies. The series of articles in this book is concerned with the last of these. Judging by the title, the authors cannot be faulted for not incorporating literary or theological approaches, but the reader of this volume should be aware that the book is intentionally unbalanced in its purview. There seems to be a deliberate neglect of such matters as intertextuality, literary theory, rhetoric and hermeneutics. Also, the social sciences by their very nature seek general truths through broad observations of large (and often cross-cultural) populations; hence, they do not analyze and cannot explain unique phenomena, and they attempt to explain particular phenomena using general patterns and principles. With these caveats in mind we can ask what the book has to offer.

This book is the second produced by The Context Group, an ongoing seminar of scholars concerned with appropriating the methods and findings of the social sciences (sociology, economics, psychology, anthropology) in the study of the NT. Actually, the book is mostly anthropological, so the title is a bit misleading. According to the editor, none of the authors in this book were trained in the anthropology of the Mediterranean world (p. 10). Nevertheless, the goal of the book is “to provide a handbook for

both students and colleagues wishing to know where to begin in a field in which they were not trained" (p. 14). The book is divided into three parts "Core Values," "Social Institutions" and "Social Dynamics." Each chapter uses cross-cultural social theories to highlight various aspects of the NT that, according to the authors, have until recently been interpreted with ethnocentric presuppositions. The great value of using the social sciences to interpret the NT lies in removing ethnocentric interpretations, provided that the social science itself is not used in an ethnocentric way (of which Bruce Malina accuses Wayne Meeks, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor and Gerd Theissen: pp. 55-56).

Each chapter in the book provides a brief introduction to a pertinent topic, the history of its study, how it might apply to the study of the NT and an annotated bibliography of important works dealing with the question. All questions are well-written and accomplish the task of introduction admirably. If one reads in the field of historical Jesus studies, for instance, and finds discussion of Mediterranean Jewish peasant life confusing, this book will give an excellent bibliography for helping to alleviate the confusion. It introduces the secular work done in the field as well as any work that has applied social science to NT studies. The latter are relatively few since the field is so new.

Readers will find the different chapters more or less helpful, depending on their current interest, so a listing of titles and authors is appropriate: "Honor and Shame" by Halvor Moxnes, "Understanding New Testament Persons" by Bruce J. Malina, "Kinship" by K. C. Hanson, "Clean/Unclean, Pure/Polluted, and Holy/Profane: The Idea and the System of Purity" by Jerome H. Neyrey, "The Preindustrial City" by Richard L. Rohrbaugh, "The Ancient Economy" by Douglas E. Oakman, "Patronage and Clientage" by John H. Elliott, "Meals, Food and Table Fellowship" by Jerome H. Neyrey, "Millennialism" by Dennis C. Duling, and "Ancient Reading" by Lucretia B. Yaghjian.

Who will benefit from using this book? Pastors might find that the cursory introductions will whet their appetite for more detail, but they will be frustrated by the lack of accessibility of further bibliography unless they are connected to a university library. Scholars in the social sciences will have already read most of the major books discussed. New Testament scholars have probably picked up on current trends in their respective areas of interest through footnotes in books which have already appropriated social theories. If none of the above apply, a reader will find this book an excellent place to begin to traverse this type of study.

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The New Heavens and the New Earth: Hope for the Creation in Jewish Apocalyptic and the New Testament. By David M. Russell. Philadelphia: Visionary, 1996, vi + 266 pp., \$18.00 paper.

The author's interest in the redemption of the physical creation began in his childhood. The mountains near his eastern Tennessee home were being devastated by strip mining operations, and yet the sermons he heard seemed concerned only with spiritual salvation. The "challenge" of this study is therefore "to demonstrate that the apocalyptic motif of the 'new heavens and a new earth' preserves an important and positive role for the *present* creation" (p. 6). To meet this challenge, Russell explores two issues. The first is whether the Bible, especially apocalyptic literature, has any

interest in creation, and the second is whether the expectation of a new heaven and a new earth constitute a call to escape from this world.

In chap. 1, "Creation and Apocalyptic," the author describes the chief contribution of apocalyptic literature as the depiction of "the cosmic reach of God's redemptive purpose" (p. 23). Without apocalyptic literature, redemptive theology collapses into anthropology. Moving to creation and redemption in the OT, Russell finds the affirmation of a creation that is good, but now degraded by the fall and its aftermath. In Israel's covenant, God himself owns the land, and the tithe, firstfruits, Sabbath, etc., all have an ecological perspective. Jewish apocalyptic literature is the focus of chap. 3, and once again he finds no disparagement of the natural order, only the awareness that it has been impaired by human sin and (mostly by implication) will be restored in the age to come.

Concerning the NT, Russell agrees with those who hold that "the New Testament . . . reflects a general apocalyptic orientation . . . in its anticipation of a radical transformation of the present world order . . . through the supernatural agent of God" (p. 136). The most important themes here in chap. 4 are Jesus and the kingdom of God, Jesus the proclaimer and inaugurator of a new creation, Paul's hope for the creation in Romans 8, and the destruction and renewal of the creation in 2 Peter 3 and the Revelation of John.

Russell has explored just about every text that explicitly or implicitly expresses God's concern for the natural order. The problem here is that this theme is only a minor chord in the Biblical symphony of redemption, since the natural environment was of little concern in Biblical times. But the ability of modern technology to change (and pollute) the planet reminds us that what has been a minor theme must now receive more attention. The Church that expects new life in a renewed earth must first take seriously the protection of the world which now sustains every human. As C. S. Lewis wrote, "Because we know that the natural level is also God's creation we cannot cease to fight against the death that mars it. . . . Because we love something else more than this world, we love even this world better than those who know no other" ("Some Thoughts," *God in the Dock* [Eerdmans, 1970] 150).

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Till Jesus Comes: Origins of Christian Apocalyptic Expectation. By Charles L. Holman. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, xli + 181 pp., \$12.95 paper.

Far from joining the virtual scholarly flight from the apocalyptic, Holman has convincingly argued for the importance of apocalyptic eschatology in early church preaching and for the Biblical perspective of a dialectical tension between expectation and delay being part of Jesus' own outlook (p. 136). While he may have shared certain eschatological ideas with his contemporaries, "No other person saw himself at the center of the great event to come as did Jesus" (p. 137). And this book has a special interest in explaining how it was possible to maintain a living tension between expectation and ongoing delay.

The growing edge of apocalyptic eschatology in the NT milieu seems to be the concept of two ages with a supporting collage of motifs: woes, an anti-god figure, apostasy and extreme persecution (p. 40). The source of apocalyptic is not in Persia or Zoroastrianism (cf. Norman Cohn) nor in the Hebrew wisdom movement (cf. G. von Rad) but in the prophetic tradition (Paul D. Hanson).

Nevertheless, as Holman recognizes (Part One), the roots of Israel's hope are to be traced to its premonarchical covenants. In the literature of the two centuries preceding the Christian era (Part Two), the Daniel tradition set the place where expectation becomes a way of reckoning with delay (p. 82). With the Jewish material roughly contemporary to the time of the origins of Christianity delay comes even more into focus with the recurrent "how long?" question. Answers come in appeals to divine sovereignty, encouragement of expectation so that "the theme of an imminent end is basically a way of coping with delay" (p. 98).

The fundamental and distinctive aspect of Christian apocalyptic is that hope has been and is yet to be realized in Jesus (Part Three). With the Christ event transforming and explaining hope—rather than being the mother of Christianity (Käsemann)—apocalypticism was a useful vehicle through which to express eschatological expectation (pp. 157–158). Furthermore, the nonfulfillment of the parousia did not present any more of a theological crisis than it did for Judaism; both reinterpreted their traditions in the face of new challenge.

Holman notes (Part Four) that, for us, the time has grown "very long" (p. 160). Following Ladd, we could claim that the parousia has always been "imminent" in that within any generation it could come (p. 161). The linking of mission and eschatology means that "the time of the grand triumph of God in history is both within his sovereign ordering of history and within the contingency of human obedience to the commission" (pp. 165–166).

This balanced book is written for a wide spectrum of readers who are being introduced to the breadth of material needed to deal with this theme. At times, one wished for a more obvious line of argument so that it was clearer what place particular arguments and material had in the larger argument.

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The History of the Christ: The Foundation for New Testament Theology. By Adolf Schlatter. Translated by Andreas J. Köstenberger. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997, 426 pp., \$29.99.

This work surveys Jesus' life from the preparation for his ministry through his teaching as an offer of God's grace to Israel to the opposition leading to the cross, and concludes with a brief treatment of the resurrection narratives. Schlatter wears his learning lightly and provides a very readable overview that is nonetheless profound because of his comprehensive knowledge of the history and of the issues. His commentaries on Matthew and John, his *History of Israel* and his *Theology of Judaism* detail the scholarship that undergirds the perceptive sweep of the present volume and gives it a depth lacking in most popular presentations of Jesus' life and thought.

In *The History of the Christ* he weaves together the teachings of all four gospels and gives attention to a variety of themes. Jesus spoke of himself as the fulfillment of Scripture and as the one whom God sent to Israel. His call to repentance rendered his ministry a confrontation with many, not just for that motif but because he addressed it to religious people while at the same time overlooking the sins of those who repented. He confronted the rich for allowing money to draw away their love from God and provoked the churchmen, the Pharisees, because their piety was subverted by pride and was focused on glorifying Israel rather than glorifying God. Assuming a

corporate view of man, Jesus treated the nation and its cities as units with a common will and thus as objects of a corporate indictment, and he put special responsibility on the religious leaders for the destiny of the whole.

Jesus' ethical pronouncements were not a demand for improvement but were "parts of his call to repentance" (p. 140). Like the Baptist, Jesus rejected the piety of mysticism that seeks only an internal unity with God and proclaimed history and nature as the places in which God's kingdom was to be realized. Thus, he both "separated the kingdom more strongly from the present than the rabbinate did, and . . . simultaneously set it into the present more visibly than the rabbinate did" (p. 123).

With all its strengths the volume, first published in 1923, is dated in some respects. Schlatter misjudged a number of issues because he lived before scholarship was alerted to them. For example, he underestimated the affinities between Jesus' teaching and rabbinic methods of exegesis, i.e. midrash patterns and exegetical rules. And he was unable to take advantage of the great discoveries at Qumran. But these matters by no means diminish the abiding value of the book.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this work is that Schlatter lets the gospel texts speak for themselves. He is able to do so because, unlike the Epicurean perspective of many modern scholars, he presupposes a theistic world-view like that of the evangelists. The more we distance Jesus' miracles from history, he writes, "the farther we distance ourselves from the real events" (p. 191). Schlatter's affinity with the Biblical viewpoint allows him to listen to the whole text even when he must leave some of its tensions unresolved. But by patient elucidation of the gospels in the context of a vast knowledge of their content and background, he does resolve, clarify and illumine many gospel features that others find puzzling or incomprehensible.

The translator has resisted "the tendency to impose on Schlatter [the] gender-inclusive language" (p. 9) of some present-day writers and has thus avoided the rather heavily feminist accent in, say, the translation of Schlatter's *Romans*. He is to be commended not only for providing an accurate and clear rendering of the German text but also for giving this generation of English-speaking students the rich fare of a Biblically faithful theologian.

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Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament. Edited by Richard N. Longenecker. McMaster New Testament Studies. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, xi + 308 pp., \$25.00 paper.

This book inaugurates the McMaster NT Studies series sponsored by McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario. The series intends to "address particular New Testament themes that are of concern (or should be) to Christians today" (p. ix). The plan is to publish annual symposium volumes that are both scholarly and pastoral, written in a manner that captures the interest of laypeople, theological students and ministers. In the present book, 13 scholars share the "overarching thesis" that "each of the New Testament writers presents the concept of Christian discipleship in a manner related to his own ideological background and perspectives, the perceived needs and understanding of his audience, and the specific details of the situation addressed" (p. 6).

The editor begins the book ("Introduction") by tracing the meaning of "Christian discipleship." He gives a linguistic overview of such terms as "those of the Way" (ἱ

ὁδός), “disciple” (μαθητής) and “to follow” (ἀκολουθεῖν) found in the NT as well as in the parlance of antiquity (e.g. LXX, Talmud, rabbinic writings). The survey is terse yet broad in scope to function as a preview of what is further discussed in detail by the other writers.

L. Hurtado (“Following Jesus in the Gospel of Mark—and Beyond”) sees the 12 disciples in Mark as representing the calling and equipping of Jesus’ followers for discipleship roles, and as demonstrating, as seen through the Twelve’s failures and eventual restoration after their desertion and denial, the paradigmatic hope for subsequent disciples who may also fail their master (pp. 24–28). Moreover, the juxtaposition of their failures and Jesus’ exemplary behavior highlights the demands of discipleship and portrays him as the object and paradigm of discipleship. In similar fashion, T. Donaldson (“Discipleship in Matthew’s Narrative Strategy”), who uses narrative criticism, views the original disciples’ function primarily as a model of what is involved in being a member of Jesus’ “people.” We learn what it means to be a disciple by identifying with them, learning from their successes and failures and, above all, in joining them as they listen to Jesus’ teachings. R. Longenecker (“Taking Up the Cross Daily: Discipleship in Luke-Acts”) sees discipleship depicted in somewhat broader categories. Source-critically (e.g. Luke’s use of Q, passion and travel narratives) he finds that, although the disciples still model the essential characteristics of Christian discipleship, Luke does not limit the portrayal of discipleship to the Twelve. He purposely interchanges, for example, “disciple/disciples” with “brother,” which delineates more the concept of familial oneness and equality, to depict Paul in Acts as the exemplary lifestyle to imitate. L. Belleville (“Imitate Me, Just as I Imitate Christ”: Discipleship in the Corinthian Correspondence), L. Jervis (“Becoming like God through Christ: Discipleship in Romans”), and G. Hawthorne (“The Imitation of Christ: Discipleship in Philippians”) all emphasize this *imitatio* theme of Paul, God and Christ, respectively, in their writings. M. Hillmer (“They Believed in Him: Discipleship in the Johannine Tradition”) examines a variety of terms—some relational in nature (e.g. “believe,” “remain”) and others action-oriented (e.g. “follow,” “bear fruit”). He concludes that these terms are summed up in Thomas’s confession, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28), which defines discipleship for the Twelve and all succeeding generations of disciples. J. Weima, on the other hand, believes (“How You Must Walk to Please God”: Holiness and Discipleship in 1 Thessalonians”) that ethical expressions, such as “holiness” and “righteousness,” as opposed to sexual immorality and idleness, characterize discipleship. The difference between the Johannine tradition and 1 Thessalonians seems to be one of orthodoxy versus orthopraxis. In the epistle to the Colossians (M. Knowles, “Christ in You, the Hope of Glory: Discipleship in Colossians”), it would seem the matter is not one of “either-or,” but both-and. Knowles argues that the “letter translates an exalted theological vision of Christ into practical considerations of personal and corporate conduct” (p. 180). Discipleship, in this letter, demands a choice between competing visions of the cosmos: One that promises mystical access into the divine realm justifying asceticism and escapism, and another where, being “in Christ,” faith is demonstrated within the disciples’ life and within their context of Christian community.

These nine articles comprise the first two major divisions of the book, “Gospels and Related Materials” and “Pauline Letters,” while the remaining four articles are categorized under the third division, “Other Writings.”

Discipleship in the last four articles is seen as (1) emulating the past exemplars of faith that entails shame, severance of social ties and patient endurance of suffering (W. Lane, “Standing Before the Moral Claim of God: Discipleship in Hebrews”), (2) having authentic Christian existence or lifestyle, in particular with regard to right beliefs (e.g. Jesus as Lord, apocalyptic expectations), wealth, and speech (P. Davids,

“Controlling the Tongue and the Wallet: Discipleship in James”), (3) a journey to heaven fraught with undeserving suffering, and where “faith” is not “belief” but “faithfulness” to doing good, which spells submission to God and to one’s believing companions (J. Michaels, “Going to Heaven with Jesus: From 1 Peter to *Pilgrim’s Progress*”), and (4) victory that comes through death, which results from one’s un-daunting faithfulness to God; the disciple will reign victoriously with the already exalted Jesus, who is paradigmatic for Christian disciples’ life, death and eternal life (D. Aune, “Following the Lamb: Discipleship in the Apocalypse”).

One of the strength of the book is that the respective authors consistently expose the reader to the pertinent scholarly issues related to their topic. Current critical matters are discussed well, using common parlance and in a well-balanced manner. The writers objectively present other scholarly views without holding back their own and without overburdening the reader with technical academic jargon. On a lesser note, the concise “Selected Bibliography” at the end of each article is helpful for further study. It is, however, limited.

Three more points need addressing. First, the criteria for choosing certain books of the NT for review is not stated. Why were some included and not others, for example, Ephesians or the Pastorals? Second, some articles do not give careful attention to the question of continuity and discontinuity of discipleship characteristics for Christians today. The 12 disciples’ frequent failures, and some of their understandings of Jesus and his teachings, were the results of their place in salvation history. Their pre-resurrection understanding of Jesus was of necessity limited. At times, they could only misunderstand because the Holy Spirit had not yet been given to them (see also p. 85). Conversely, being on this side of Jesus’ resurrection and, more significantly, with the coming and help of the Paraclete, as opposed to the disciples’ pre-resurrection disposition depicted in the gospels, our understanding of Jesus’ identity is different. Some of their misunderstandings and failings certainly cannot be paradigmatic for us today. Thirdly, Jervis’s point that Paul probably appealed to the ancient world’s understanding of the task of discipleship—to be God-like—is unconvincing. It is one thing to say the background exists and another to prove that Paul adopted the concept when writing Romans. S. Sandmel’s comments about drawing facile parallels are appropriate here (see his “Parallelomania,” *JBL* 81 [1962] 1–13).

Notwithstanding, the book contributes to filling an existing need. Turning the last page of the book, the reader will feel that a non-burdensome NT introductory course highlighting the theme of discipleship, with brief introductions to some basic hermeneutics conducted intelligibly for laypeople, has just concluded.

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Honest to Jesus: Jesus for a New Millennium. By Robert W. Funk. New York: Harper-Collins, 1996, ix + 342 pp., \$24.00.

The book has its good points. (1) It is as clear an elucidation of Robert Funk’s personal history (in capsule form) and convictions as one could wish. Given Funk’s importance in the ongoing work of the Jesus Seminar, a single autobiographical volume detailing his views is likely to be valuable both now and in the future—consider, e.g. the light shed on the tumultuous fundamentalist–modernist years by Harry Emerson Fosdick’s *The Living of These Days*. (2) It is well written. This may be due in part to the expert editorial assistance he says he received (p. ix), but the

end result is fetching prose and clear lines of argument. And Funk deserves credit for being rhetorically resourceful quite on his own. (3) It rightly calls readers to examine whether they know the Bible they profess to believe. (4) It asks whether Bible readers obey the teachings they say they affirm. (5) It underscores the truth that the Bible is not just a devotional guide. It demands historical investigation. (6) It is honest to life in recognizing the bankruptcy of much contemporary Biblical scholarship. These are just some of the legitimate points Funk makes.

His approach is straightforward, consisting of three sections: "Return to Nazareth" (pp. 17–139), "The Gospel of Jesus" (pp. 143–216) and "The Jesus of the Gospels" (pp. 219–314).

In the first section he lampoons orthodox Christianity, which he tends to conflate with televangelist chicanery and the materialist decadence of suburban American "churchianity." He does not seem to be aware that most Christians in the world are not even white, much less North American. He shows no interest in admitting that many American Christians decry the same hypocrisies that he denounces. The only friend of Jesus is, like Funk, an enemy of historic Christianity. The section as a whole aims toward the goal of enthroning the minimalist findings of the Jesus Seminar. It does this, basically, by tracing out the progress of the post-Bultmannian historical scepticism (minus Bultmann's formal Lutheran creedalism) that has marked Funk's own pilgrimage. As a result, the proper "chronology of the gospels" has Q, Thomas and Oxyrhynchus papyrus 1224 as the real primary sources of whatever we might know about Jesus, which is precious little. These date from 50–60 CE. Next come Mark and the Egerton "Gospel" (70–80 CE). At the third stage we find Matthew and Luke (which are dependent on earlier sources and so often of dubious historical veracity) at 80–90 CE, at a fourth the canonical John (which is largely fictitious) at 90–100 CE, and finally a series of apocryphal or gnostic works at 100–150 CE. Because this last group often echoes Thomas, its Jesus tends to be favored over the one presented by the canonical gospels.

The second section analyzes the meaning of what Jesus says, in its minimalist version, measured against his actions, which are likewise drastically pared down when compared to what the gospels record. The conclusion is that Jesus was a sage, an utterer of aphorisms, an inveterate iconoclast who loved to party, who accepted all sinners freely as long as they made no pretext of being anything other than low-lifers, and who took no thought for tomorrow or anything related to it, including eternal life in the sense of heaven. "It is difficult to imagine Jesus projecting" a heavenly future "for himself or for others" (p. 215). What Funk cannot imagine cannot be true. Faith in future blessings would be self-serving. Heaven is therefore the here and now. We enter it by realizing we are already in it, such as it is. Be confident and bold; else all is lost: "Those who need to be authorized to pass" into God's kingdom, "who feel they must have permission, are not worthy of entrance" (p. 216). "Our ultimate future" is death (p. 29). This is the gospel of Jesus.

The third section is the climactic finale. Most of what Christians have always confessed as true about Father, Son and Holy Spirit is myth. As a result, Funk formulates 21 theses that answer the question, "What difference will it make if this scaled-down Jesus becomes the center of Christian (anti-)confession?" Sometimes based on arguments made earlier in the book, here is where the cards are put on the table. All the classic Christian creeds are out the window (p. 301). Belief no longer matters, just how Christians live (p. 302; cf. p. 29). Christians are no longer to believe what apostles taught (p. 304). They must not even believe in Jesus (p. 304), nor in what *he* taught, unless they can confirm it independently themselves (p. 305). Was it Alice Cooper who sang something like, "No more pencils, no more books, no more teacher's dirty looks"? In somewhat the same vein Funk proclaims an end to divine

forgiveness (not needed); public piety (though pious public iconoclasm is apparently OK); the need for a mediator between God and sinners; God's election of a people, Jew or Christian; blood atonement; resurrection; virgin birth; apocalyptic beliefs; and respect for the general veracity of the NT. All this is the promise of Funk's "Jesus for a new millennium."

It goes without saying that these proposals, if accepted, would bode ill for the future of historic Christianity. For this reason Funk is sure to experience rejection if not scorn from believers unconvinced by the case he mounts. But there is no need here, even if there were space, to give Funk the satisfaction of decrying his attacks on Christian belief on the grounds of their doctrinal faithlessness. For it is not in the area of Christian doctrine so much as in the realm of critical thinking that his book fails.

Funk replaces the creed of Jesus Christ, Son of God, as come, risen and returning with the imperialist claims of postmodernity. What makes the postmodern meta-narrative superior to that offered by the Christian Scriptures—other than the obvious fact that it is currently intellectually chic to affirm the postmodern creed? But this is hardly the tough-mindedness Funk keeps calling for; as Diogenes Allen has written, the only way for Funk's postmodern outlook to apply as universally as he claims is "to forget that the limitations that imprison" other viewpoints "to a time and place apply to it as well" ("Christianity and the Creed of Postmodernity," *Christian Scholar's Review* 23/2 [1993] 124).

Funk fails to deal squarely with more than a few of the issues he treats. He claims to believe in original sin, thus casting himself as a friend of at least some portion of Biblical belief, but then defines it as "the innate infinite capacity of human beings to deceive themselves" (p. 11). This is like saying, "I accept the findings of inorganic chemistry, but I define salt as sodium hydroxide." He argues that the early church was unconcerned about Jesus' earthly life on the basis of the "empty center" of the Apostles' Creed—i.e. the second article skips from "born of the Virgin Mary" to "suffered under Pontius Pilate." But this is to miss the point that what the Creed does mention furnishes the framework of Jesus' earthly days, while its focus on his death reflects the earliest conviction about the effective center of his mission—death on a cross, which implies the life of Jesus leading up to his Passion and the teachings that were instrumental in getting him arrested. It is simply fantastic, historically speaking, to claim that early Christians had no interest in Jesus' earthly life. Yet this is perhaps the major plank of Funk's platform.

A tendency to overstate, to substitute rhetoric for critical analysis and grounded argument, repeatedly vitiates Funk's arguments. Creationists would ban knowledge of Einstein's theories (p. 4). Passion for truth is incompatible with being a Christian minister (p. 5). Historical truth excludes theological commitment, which is of necessity "posturing" (p. 8). Does Funk not see that this is self-incriminating, since he has a theology himself? "The church's sun is setting" (p. 12). Christianity is "anemic and wasting away" (p. 305). Many missiologists, with hard statistics, would completely disagree; and by now even *Reader's Digest* has publicized the selfless bravery of burgeoning Christian masses in far-flung lands. Today I received tragic e-mail news of a beloved Sudanese pastor who recently disappeared suddenly; if past precedents hold true he was kidnapped and is probably now dead. Christianity is not anemic and wasting away in Khartoum; martyrs' blood is preparing a harvest. Funk shows no awareness of the formidable evidence against his theory that belief in Christ is going the way of the Edsel. (Even if it were, would that make it untrue?) But Funk knows how to handle dissenters. Bible scholars who do not agree with him "read poorly, read with inattention, read only to confirm their own biases, read to find fault, or read to foster confrontation," and Bible-believing churches proliferate (this contradicts the

theory that the church is dying) "at a phenomenal rate because they are unable to accommodate each other beyond a few special, political causes" (p. 18).

The book is replete with academic distortions. Jesus is said not to have belonged to "his own everyday world" by virtue of the vision he held (p. 18). Scholars ranging from E. P. Sanders to Vermes to Bockmühl would roundly disagree. In view of the sad history of Germanic Biblical scholarship, one shudders to see Funk's callous trivializing of Jesus' Jewishness (p. 58). The insinuation that we do not have the original words of the NT writings (p. 25) is supported by textual criticism—to say that the earliest manuscripts date to AD 125 is *not* to prove that the traditions they preserve are no older than that—and leaves Funk with no sure basis of his own reconstructions apart from faith in the Jesus Seminar. Interpreting Paul's view of Jesus by comparing it to Osiris in the Isis cult (p. 35) is just one of numerous far-fetched *religionsgeschichtliche* leaps. The idea that oral culture always results in uncontrolled tradition (p. 40) has been powerfully challenged by Riesenfeld, Gerhardsson, Riesner, Kenneth Bailey and others; Funk completely ignores them all. He accuses Raymond Brown, John Meier, N. T. Wright and all other "third questers" of "an apologetic ploy" (p. 65), a betrayal of the ideals of research and true learning. It would appear that the fundamentalists do not have a monopoly on sectarian scholarship.

The book is dotted with cavils against Christian faith that are the verbal equivalent of the infamous crucifix immersed in urine. Among the most memorable, referring to the virgin birth, blood atonement and resurrection: "A steady diet of conception without sex, a salvific blood donor, and perpetual resuscitation goes together with fast food, soft ice cream, and the lottery. It is like a trip to McDonald's, where the menu is fixed, everything is cheap, and patience is not required. Such a diet has made the pious American fawning, flabby, and flatulent" (p. 309).

Perhaps that impressive alliteration marks a fitting point to exit. While the book's merit as a period piece is considerable, its scholarship lacks balance. More so perhaps than the works of most others associated with the Jesus Seminar, Funk's latest contribution is important and successfully crystallizes a synthesis making international impact.

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Pure Kingdom: Jesus' Vision of God. By Bruce Chilton. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, x + 178 pp., \$15.00 paper.

This book is the first in a series called "Studying the Historical Jesus," edited by Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans. It is an examination of the nature of the kingdom of God as represented in the words and deeds of Jesus. The work has much to commend it. It is thorough in its documentation, and the exploration of the historical/scholarly state of the question in chap. 1 is very good. As one would expect from Chilton, both primary and secondary sources are well represented here.

There are, however, several troubling things about the book. (1) It is difficult to determine for whom the work was written. The elementary definitions of such things as "mishna" (p. 46), or "Q" (p. 61) seem to mark the book as an introductory text. These definitions are actually very good, but one wonders why they would be necessary in the work that deals with technical issues and footnote material in both German and French. Thus the question of whether this is an introductory text (judging from the inclusion of these definitions) or a more advanced text (judging from the fine discussions of some technical issues, and the wonderful bibliographic resources) is an

important one. The work is probably too technical for a first- or second-year seminary class (which would need such definitions), yet the definitions are not needed by those who are able to follow the discussion contained in much of the work.

Chilton uses what he calls "generative exegesis" in his work on the gospels. The goal of "generative exegesis" is to "trace how things Jesus did and said generated a movement and produced a memory" (p. 51). He sets up a grid of five coordinates that are found in the book of Psalms (the eschatological coordinate, the transcendent coordinate, the coordinate of judgement, the coordinate of purity, the coordinate of radiation) which are then applied to the teaching of Jesus. While this is potentially a fine methodology, and Chilton does an admirable job of setting it up, some evangelicals will be troubled by the historical scepticism inherent in Chilton's method. Chilton feels the need to determine what "produced a memory" about Jesus because "there is no direct historical information about Jesus, in the sense of a contemporary account written by a person who heard and saw him . . ." (p. 50). This historical scepticism is thus the bedrock of the need for generative exegesis. Chilton asserts that "according to the usual meaning of the word 'historical,' there is no historical Jesus" (p. 50). The fact that this statement appears in the inaugural volume of a series entitled "Studying the Historical Jesus" causes one to wonder how many more books will be written in the series. That this historical scepticism does not extend to all sources is shown by Chilton's heavy dependance on various versions of "Q" as well as statements like "Matthew gives the more accurate version of 'Q'" (p. 67). How Chilton is able to determine the accuracy of Matthew's citation of a work that is no longer extant, and was, according to Chilton, available in a variety of editions, is not clearly explained.

Lest this review seem too negative, let me state that this work has much to commend it. Chilton's examination of the kingdom parables found in Matthew is very good. His statement that some scholars' uncritical attachment to the gospel of Thomas "is fashionable in certain circles because it is not canonical" (p. 72) is politically incorrect, but right on target. The work is certainly valuable and may prove to be a critical addition to the literature on the kingdom. Despite this value, the historical scepticism that underlies the book will be troubling to those who hold to a more conservative view of the gospels.

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New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul. By Frank J. Matera. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996. 325 pp., \$20.00.

Matera does not directly engage the hermeneutical problem of applying NT ethics to contemporary life. His project is different. He probes each writing to find how its ethical vision functioned. Matera finds that the ethical teaching of the NT is inextricably bound up with the message of salvation and can be understood fully only in that light. For Jesus the ethical vision is rooted in the proclamation of the kingdom and for Paul in the "announcement of God's saving justice in Christ" (p. 9). Matera reasons that if the ethical vision of the NT cannot be separated from the message of salvation, then it should not be imposed on those outside the community of faith. As the church addresses contemporary issues, its moral vision "must ultimately be rooted in the New Testament" (p. 10).

Before engaging in his project, Matera discusses various approaches to NT ethics. The diachronic method seeks to dig through the layers of traditions to the moral

teachings of Jesus. Matera's main objections to this approach are that it fragments the NT witness and tends to devalue later NT writings. The synchronic method seeks to listen to the NT as a whole to find unifying themes that can provide a singular moral witness. While this approach preserves the integrity of the NT, it tends to silence individual voices. Matera approaches the task by assuming that the object of NT ethics should be the ethics of the writings themselves, rather than a historical reconstruction or theological synthesis. His method focuses on the literary and rhetorical aspects of each writing; that is, he offers a close reading of the texts in light of their ethical content and evaluates them on how they function to persuade audiences to live a moral life.

The book is not a comprehensive treatment of NT ethics; it does not discuss the ethics of Acts, the general epistles or the Apocalypse. The book's subtitle limits the discussion to the ethical legacies of Jesus and Paul. This means that Matera concentrates on the ethics of Jesus as portrayed by each gospel writer and the ethics of Paul as represented by each letter traditionally ascribed to Paul. The disputed letters of Paul are included in Paul's legacy, as Paul "undoubtedly provided the inspiration for those who wrote in his name" (p. 208).

Matera's treatment of the gospels is representative of his method. He explores the ethical teaching of Jesus as presented individually by each gospel writer rather than the historical Jesus. Since Mark was a source for Matthew and Luke, all three have similarities, such as the moral example of Jesus and ethics being rooted in the gospel of the kingdom. However, since each confronted a different situation and had different sources, each presents a distinctive portrait. For example, in contrast with the Markan Jesus, the Matthean Jesus creates a moral universe through the kingdom parables, and the Lukan Jesus links the kingdom with a new age of salvation marked by a reversal of fortunes. Rather than engaging in source criticism, Matera examines Matthew's sermon on the mount and Luke's sermon on the plain in their respective literary contexts. Redaction criticism, however, plays an important role to discern the distinctive features of each gospel writer. Matera does trace developing themes, but not with the assumption that they depart from the norm of Jesus, but that they represent a further reflection on how Jesus' legacy might apply to a new situation. He finds that John contains many themes of the synoptics, but developed in a new way. He respects the occasional nature of the writings and refrains from harmonization so that each voice has opportunity to speak.

In the final chapter, Matera offers a synthesis of the legacies of Jesus and Paul. This synthesis does not pertain to theological themes as in the case of Hays's *Moral Vision of the NT*, for that would tend to override the message of individual writings—something Matera has taken pains to avoid. Matera's synthesis pertains to how the ethics of Jesus and Paul functioned. For example, his seven theses include the ideas that the moral life of believers "is a response to God's work of salvation," "is lived in and with a community of disciples who form the church" and "is an expression of faith."

Has Matera overcome the problem of ethical diversity in NT? The ethical particulars of each writing remain, since they are developments and enhancements of earlier themes in light of new situations. This development suggests that Matera's project should take us back to a unified message or theme. But this is not the case. Matera is committed to safeguarding the message and ethic of each book. What we glean from Matera's study for today's context is how to move from contemporary theological expressions to contemporary ethics. But then in what sense is the NT ethics normative for us today? Matera does not discuss current issues as does Hays, but he does offer guidelines when discussing the household codes (pp. 223–226). Matera argues that "it is the gospel above all else that is normative for the life and teaching

of the church" (p. 225) but that the normative value of texts like the household codes does not extend to the particulars, since they reflect a specific time and culture.

The value of Matera's book is that he respects the canonical shape of the NT and the occasional nature of each writing, offers guidelines in how to move from theology to ethics, and takes a narrative approach to ethics. "For better or for worse, people are shaped by the stories they hear, and narratives create a moral universe in which characters must choose between good and evil" (p. 13). His exposition of each book is superb. Matera's work represents the cutting edge of studies in NT ethics and is to be recommended.

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The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today. By Everett Ferguson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, 463 pp., \$35.00 paper.

Everett Ferguson, professor emeritus at Abilene Christian University, made his name among Biblical scholars a generation ago with his still widely used *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*. His most recent effort, *The Church of Christ*, travels a different road but bears all the marks of a much-loved area of study to which he has devoted a lifetime of thought and teaching. As he acknowledges in his preface, this book is a Bible class, one that he has taught and developed over a lifetime, no doubt.

To say it is a Bible class is by no means a reproach. Indeed, this is its greatest asset. It is readable yet substantive. It covers all the key issues, does careful exegesis when necessary, and is chock-full of Biblical references for thoughtful students who wish to develop further their own theology of the church.

With six major sections entitled, "The People and the Messiah," "The Church and Her Lord," "The Church and Her Savior," "The Church and Her High Priest," "The Church and Her Bishop" and "The Church and Her Teacher," Ferguson's organization of the material in itself conveys his theology: In all its aspects, the church is rooted in and reflects Christ. All the major concerns of ecclesiology are addressed: Covenant, kingdom, community, the body of Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, membership, worship, ministry, ordination, church organization, ethics, discipline and unity. Yet, nowhere else will one read 14 pages on the doctrine of "assembly" or find a section on the theology of "singing."

The book includes numerous aspects that make it student-friendly. One is the regular appearance of numbered lists, either summarizing key points following involved discussion (e.g. the kingdom, election), drawing out implications from Biblical study (e.g. people of God, the body of Christ), or lining up what can be known Biblically in an area of interest (e.g. "The Spirit in the Life and Work of Jesus," "What is Sin Not?"). Another is Ferguson's patient analysis of the meaning of key terms, whether Greek (body of Christ), Hebrew (covenant), or English (worship).

Some might criticize Ferguson's effort as weak concerning footnotes and bibliography, which he duly acknowledges in the preface. However limited and somewhat dated (rarely reaching into the 1980s), secondary references to which he refers are solid. Contact with the Biblical, authoritative text is this book's chief asset. Perhaps disregarded as old-fashioned by some, most *JETS* readers will find it refreshing in this regard.

Ferguson's roots are in the Stone-Campbell restoration movement. Although churches of this origin usually identify themselves as evangelical, their doctrinal po-

sitions in some areas lie on the fringe of acceptability to evangelical scholars. Unlike evangelicals, whose passion has always focused on Christology and soteriology, Stone-Campbell restorationists have always put their heart, preaching and study into understanding the Church and particularly its unity. Evangelicals can benefit from reading a book like Ferguson's.

As a Stone-Campbell restorationist, Ferguson gives us what we would expect, a thorough section on baptism (30 pages), yet he is no baptismal regenerationist (an accusation often leveled at Campbellites). "Baptism," he says, "is an act of faith, not a work" (p. 169). It is "an objective assurance" (p. 173). But Ferguson distances himself from the Baptist position when he says, "One is baptized not so much in order to join the church as to accept Christ and his salvation" (p. 195).

Ferguson also develops the theme that "the Lord's supper was the central act of the weekly assemblies of the early church" (p. 249), another Stone-Campbell emphasis. Campbellites typically are boldly non-Calvinist, and so we see the emphasis in Ferguson that the Biblical concept of election is corporate with no guarantee regarding an individual in the group (p. 81). The case is laid out Biblically, but without strident rhetoric.

Ferguson shies away from affirming the contemporary miraculous activity of the Holy Spirit (p. 111). Theologically, the Spirit "is dependent and derivative" of Christ's ministry and work (p. 106). This causes him to conclude that "the Spirit has nothing to reveal and nothing to say but what Jesus has taught" (p. 106).

With regard to the current debate among evangelicals regarding the role of women in ministry, Ferguson holds strongly to the view that women's role should be limited, especially in "the assembly" (meaning, no female ministers or elders) based primarily on the common, hierarchical argument (pp. 341-344).

On the issue of church music, Ferguson's volume momentarily degenerates into a narrow and specific reflection of his "Church of Christ" fellowship, one of the three major divisions of the Stone-Campbell movement. This tradition holds that a capella style singing alone is Biblical. Although his discussion is abbreviated, nevertheless he does stress four reasons why "the arguments advanced in support of instrumental music fail to carry the case" (p. 272) for the reader to ponder with no alternative side presented. Readers should not, however, let this one deficiency blind them to what really is an outstanding volume on the church overall.

Those from the Stone-Campbell movement celebrate the entrance of the volume into the evangelical mainstream. This is the second book Eerdmans published in 1996 from someone in this camp (the other being Richard Hughes' *Reviving the Ancient Faith*). No doubt it represents this important movement well, but it has much for all evangelicals to digest. It certainly should be in every institutional library, but it also should find its way into the hands of students, particularly undergraduate, who just want to understand what the Bible says about the church.

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Preaching the Hard Sayings of Jesus. By John T. Carroll and James R. Carroll. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, 174 pp., \$14.95 paper.

Join together a father who has preached for over fifty years and a son well immersed in academic study and teaching NT at Union Theological Seminary (Richmond) and you get a rich collection of insights about Jesus.

In particular, this father and son team write to help readers come to grips with some of the most challenging parts of Jesus' message. In the first three chapters they explore topics concerning discipleship and the "offense of judgment." Some "hard sayings" they discuss are hard not because they are hard to understand but because they are hard to accept. Other hard sayings they investigate are difficult because of the linguistic and cultural barriers between modern readers and antiquity. Chapter 4 examines two parables—the "dishonest steward" (Luke 16:1–8) and "a friend's help at midnight" (Luke 11:5–8)—that illustrate these problems. In chap. 5 they investigate hard texts where Jesus is all too human and how this relates to the doctrine of Jesus as God.

This book is not an attempt to discuss all of the difficult sayings of Jesus. Rather, the authors prefer a more in-depth look at fewer passages. They also do not get into an analysis of the "historical Jesus" or attempt to sift his "authentic" words from the "inauthentic."

The procedure for each of the sayings treated is to give an original translation, an exegetical analysis of key issues, homiletical observations and suggestions for further reading. Although the authors try to keep the exegetical analysis and the sermonic thoughts in close connection, they are not bound to see all texts alike. For the most part they do, but occasionally they go in slightly different directions.

The Hard Sayings of Jesus by F. F. Bruce (InterVarsity) and *Difficult Passages in the Gospels* by Robert H. Stein (Baker) have more problem texts but do not offer what this book does. Although all three deal with "hard sayings," only the Carrolls make the distinct move from text analysis to sermon. While some of the exegetical observations may be debated (cf. the comments on divorce, pp. 52–53), overall this is a fine book full of interesting insights about the text and a good resource for those who preach. The homiletical observations can be used for sermon starters and the beginning point for further observations on the text.

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Hard Sayings of the Bible. By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, Manfred T. Brauch. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996, 808 pp., \$29.99.

No matter what level of study has been attained, many readers of the Bible come away from it confused and even clueless about what certain problem texts mean. At times verses may even seem to contradict other parts of the Bible. Where can a person turn for help? One of the best resources available is *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, written from an evangelical perspective by four competent scholars.

In 1983 F. F. Bruce launched the "Hard Sayings" series with *The Hard Sayings of Jesus*. This was followed by other volumes on the Old Testament by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., on Paul by Manfred T. Brauch and on the rest of the New Testament by Peter H. Davids. After more than a quarter million copies of the "Hard Sayings" series, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* combines the earlier versions and also provides new material. More than 100 new verses were added plus 12 introductory articles addressing a range of questions, such as: "How do we know who wrote the Bible?" "Can we believe in the miracles?" and "Does archaeology support Bible history?"

The texts included in this volume as "hard" sayings are so because differences in culture, time and perspective make information that was perfectly clear to an ancient audience very difficult for modern readers to grasp. Many such texts are cleared up

by discussion of these types of cultural problems. Some texts, it is acknowledged by the authors, are “hard” not because they are unclear but because they are totally clear and rise up to challenge our lifestyles and thinking. For the most part *Hard Sayings of the Bible* deals with the former type of “hard” Scripture.

In analyzing the OT texts Walter Kaiser (who wrote all of the articles on OT hard sayings) looked for texts containing tensions in doctrine and ethics within the books or between authors of the Bible. A few of the OT articles deal with difficulties involving “facts” but most examine theological and ethical questions.

Bruce, mainly in articles dealing with problem passages in the Synoptics, assumes the priority of Mark and the use of Q by Matthew and Luke (along with other special sources). His view of the interrelatedness of the Synoptic material does not seem to affect his exposition of the hard sayings. In addition, he rightly does not see the necessity of sorting out whether or not the verses examined are authentic sayings of Jesus.

Manfred Brauch, in discussing hard sayings in Paul, assumes that his epistles are documents written to address specific occasions, i.e. problems, both of congregations and individuals. Brauch is sensitive about how Scripture should be applied today and warns against universalizing instructions written to a specific situation in Paul’s day. Davids also cautions against too easily applying Scripture today without first grasping what it meant to the original readers.

The book is easy to use. After addressing common questions dealing with the Bible in general in the introductory essays, the hard sayings are organized canonically by chapter and verse, going from Genesis to Revelation. Cross-references point readers to comments on other Bible texts or to remarks in the introductory essays pertaining to the same thought. For example, in the discussion of Adam and Eve’s death in Gen 2:17 readers are also pointed to the discussion in Rom 5:12. In the same way, readers wondering about the discussion of pigs in Mark 5:11–13 are directed to the parallel passage in Matt 8:31–32 for an explanation. In this way readers are led to other texts dealing with their verse that may not have immediately connected with it.

Occasionally the reader will find different points of view on Biblical texts dealing with the same subject. This is due to the multiple authorship of the book and shows that even “experts” can disagree on these matters. The benefit for the reader is that several options are frequently possible on similar passages. This might not have happened if the book had been written by one person.

The Scripture indexes at the rear of the book are very helpful in finding comments on any Biblical passage mentioned in the book, whether it is listed as a hard saying or not. Also, the subject index helps readers find observations on issues that they might not have been able to locate otherwise or that for lack of space were not cross-referenced. One example of this is the phrase “fear of the Lord,” which is not cross-referenced due to its frequency of occurrence. The page reference, however, for Prov 1:7—where the issue is specifically addressed—is found in the subject index.

Hard Sayings of the Bible stands in a long tradition of books designed to help readers deal with texts wrapped in mystery. Some of the more notable ones include the following. In 1874 John W. Haley published what was perhaps one of the most complete listings of problem passages under the headings of doctrinal, ethical and historical difficulties. Entitled *An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, it was republished in 1951. In 1979 Robert H. Mounce contributed a helpful volume entitled *Answers to Questions About the Bible* (Baker). Two of the more recent additions to this genre include Gleason L. Archer’s *Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties* (Zondervan, 1982) and more recently *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* by Norman L. Geisler and Thomas A. Howe (Victory, 1992).

In format and general appearance *Hard Sayings of the Bible* is very much like the texts by Archer and Geisler/Howe. All three cover problem passages from Genesis to Revelation and all contain very usable subject and Scripture indexes. Although *Hard Sayings of the Bible* contains fewer actual topics discussed (*When Critics Ask* covers 800 topics compared to 500 in this text) it generally discusses them in more depth. This accounts for the length of *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, with its more than 800 pages compared to 476 and 604 in the other two. At times “long” is not necessarily best, however. Geisler/Howe tend to be more concise and get to the bottom line of a particular issue quicker, which might help modern readers pressed for time.

In a randomly selected text from Romans, i.e. 1:27 dealing with homosexuality, it is noteworthy that Archer mentions neither this verse nor homosexuality, which is surely a huge issue in modern society and in the church today. In fact, Archer only deals with Rom 2:12 in the first five chapters of Romans while Geisler/Howe examine four texts and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* either mentions or cross-references eight. Although Geisler/Howe have a shorter discussion of Rom 1:27, their comments, at least on this verse, provide more helpful insights than Brauch’s comments. In other passages, however (cf. Rom 5:12 and related texts), the longer analysis of Brauch is of greater help.

All books that treat “problem passages” face the difficulty of which passages to include. A certain arbitrariness thus prevails in the selection of which “hard sayings” to discuss, as the authors of *Hard Sayings of the Bible* freely admit. But based on their experience as teachers and leaders, what they have chosen are truly difficult texts. Also, more often than not the discussions are helpful and Biblical. Scripture references abound. The authors do not serve up philosophical or theoretical discussions of these difficulties. All Biblically based students of God’s word will appreciate the use of and respect for the Scripture demonstrated by these excellent scholars.

One of the authors mentions the lack of precision in the title of this book. It is true that very little of what is included in this work, outside of the Gospels, is a “saying” of anyone. Since the title of the original series of “Hard Sayings” was so well known it is understandable how the “not-so-correct” title was attached to *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. A better title might have been “Hard Texts of the Bible” or “Hard Readings of the Bible.” Either way, this is a very helpful text, written in a clear, “de-jargoned” style and highly recommended for all who encounter puzzling and hard-to-fathom passages.

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Jesus’ Directions for the Future: A Source and Redaction-History Study of the Use of the Eschatological Traditions in Paul and in the Synoptic Accounts of Jesus’ Last Eschatological Discourse. By Allan J. McNicol. New Gospel Studies 9. Macon: Mercer University, 1996, xiii + 219 pp., \$35.00.

McNicol has written a detailed study of the processes by which the eschatological traditions attributed to Jesus were used both by Paul and the synoptic writers to give directions concerning the future to the earliest Christian communities. He assumes (but does not attempt to prove) the Neo-Griesbach hypothesis, i.e. Matthew’s account is earliest, followed by Luke, then Mark, who used both Matthew and Luke as sources. Thus the discussion begins with the Thessalonian correspondence and moves

through Matthew's, Luke's and Mark's versions of Jesus' last eschatological discourse (LED). Two other assumptions should be mentioned: McNicol rejects the form-critical model that attributes the origin of the eschatological sayings to early Christian preaching and catechesis. Rather, he holds that the LED is based on units of tradition that go back to Jesus himself. Finally, he views 2 Thessalonians as pseudepigraphic, perhaps written by Timothy in the late 60s.

Comparing the themes of the Thessalonian correspondence with the gospels, McNicol identifies several Jesus traditions used by Paul/Timothy and the gospel writers, especially Matthew, as well as other traditions unique to Matthew and Luke. But their vocabularies are distinct enough to suggest a "common Jesus tradition" rather than direct literary dependence.

This technical study certainly belongs in college and seminary libraries, in terms of the contributions it makes to the discussion of the LED and the synoptic problem, not to mention the refreshing challenge to the form-critical view of the origin of the gospel traditions. But it also raises a number of issues. Which is more likely, that Mark omitted the parousia parables in Matt 24:37–25:46, or that Matthew added them? That Mark simplified the disciples' question that introduces the LED (McNicol states that "is it difficult to determine what Mark had in mind" [p. 165]), or that Matthew edited Mark's version to make it more appropriate for the content that followed? That Mark obscured the reference to the abomination of desolation by removing Matthew's explanatory "holy place" and "as spoken by the prophet Daniel," or that Matthew clarified Mark's more vague (and authentic?) language?

Many more examples could be given, and admittedly all such studies are subjective. But in attempting to reconstruct how a person will use and edit an earlier source he holds in high regard, it is difficult to ignore the validity of the principles of textual criticism for evaluating internal evidence—namely, that the shorter and more difficult readings will generally be the earliest text. Yes, an approach that assumes the Neo-Griesbach hypothesis will bear fruit in the hands of a resourceful scholar. But so will a careful study that assumes the priority of Luke! The issue is: Which approach *best* accounts for the synoptic gospels as we now have them? That no approach answers all the difficulties, we already know; that the priority of Mark resolves more of them than other approaches still seems to have the strongest support. McNicol's study, though excellent, still will not change this consensus.

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Q and the History of Early Christianity: Studies on Q. By Christopher M. Tuckett. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, xv + 492 pp., \$29.95.

Like E. P. Sanders, Christopher Tuckett, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, argues for an eschatological Jesus, as opposed to those who insist that Jesus was a nonapocalyptic Cynic-sage or revolutionary (the Jesus Seminar people would be the best-known defenders of this position).

This book is the author's attempt to bring together some of his thoughts about Q, many of the chapters having appeared in earlier drafts as chapters in books and as journal articles. In the 13 chapters of the finished book Tuckett discusses the existence of Q, redaction criticism and Q, the nature of Q, John the Baptist in Q, eschatology in Q, Q's Christology, the Son of Man in Q, wisdom in Q, discipleship in Q, and

Q and Israel. In addition, there are chapters on wisdom, prophets and “this generation,” polemic and persecution, and the Gentile mission and the law.

Despite some recent attempts to discredit the Two-Source Hypothesis of synoptic gospel origins, Tuckett remains convinced (as do I) that Q actually existed at one time. He laments the fact that Q studies in the United Kingdom are in such decline that “the vast majority of those engaged in such work are based outside my own home country!” (p. x). His “sparring partner” throughout the book is his doctoral supervisor, mentor, friend and helper, David Catchpole, author of *The Quest for Q*, who over a period of 20 years has been perhaps the major influence on his thoughts about Q, but with whom he disagrees on a number of points.

The opening chapter is in many ways foundational to the rest of the book. Here Tuckett carves out a position between those who see a particular group of Christians responsible for the collection and editing of the Q material in various stages, on the one hand, and those who see it as the height of absurdity to try to determine what Earle Ellis has called “the hypothetical theology of the hypothetical community of the hypothetical document Q” (quoted on p. 2). On the fact that Q doesn’t exist as a separate document, an objection regularly raised by beginning students of the subject, Tuckett points out that our knowledge of all of primitive Christianity is at best somewhat fragmentary, and that with Q preserved to a large degree in more readable form in Matthew and Luke the conversation of the original document became of decreasing value. He carefully refutes the opposing views of M. D. Goulder and modern-day supporters of the Griesbach Hypothesis.

The chapter on redaction criticism and Q is an immensely valuable survey of Q studies from their beginnings in the eighteenth century, with a brilliant summary of international scholarship on Q in more recent times. I know of no more helpful introduction to Q studies than this examination of the tenets of such Q scholars as Lührmann, Hoffmann, Schulz, Polag, Jacobson, Robinson, Koester and Kloppenborg.

The chapter on the nature of Q completes the introductory section of the book. It discusses the language of the document, its extent, the idea of whether it existed in various versions and recensions, its date and place, and its genre.

The remaining chapters contain thorough exegesis of various *Q logia* and a careful evaluation of various alternative interpretations of those passages. For example, the chapter on wisdom in Q is a careful critique of the views of Robinson, Koester and Kloppenborg.

The gospels have been rather neglected in evangelical scholarship in recent decades. Despite the notoriety of the Jesus Seminar, I have yet to find a course on the sayings of Jesus in the catalog of an evangelical seminary or graduate school. It is difficult to imagine a better textbook for the graduate study of Q in such schools. Not only has Tuckett given us a magisterial analysis of all the major themes of Q’s thought, but the comprehensive bibliography (pp. 451–476) will immeasurably help anyone who wants to do further work on the sayings of Jesus. Not everyone will agree with every conclusion Tuckett reaches, of course. In particular, with the deep cleft between the two major schools of thought about the historical Jesus (eschatological? Cynic-sage?) and with the equally deep cleft over the question of synoptic gospel relationships (Two-Source? Two-Gospel?), Tuckett’s views will be thoroughly debated. But the author has done such a thorough job that no one in the field of Q studies can afford to neglect his contributions.

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Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist. By Warren Carter. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996, xii + 322 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Anyone familiar with the gospel of Matthew and the secondary literature pertaining to it is always looking for new approaches as well as new books that serve as helpful introductions to this intriguing though sometimes paradoxical work. Carter's book falls under the second category and provides readers with an up-to-date examination of some of the issues surrounding the first gospel. His book is aimed at a wide audience. He writes for college and seminary students, ministers and the laity. The main methodological approach of Carter is audience-oriented criticism, by which he attempts to show how the authorial audience (the audience imaged by the author) impacted the writing of the first gospel. To a lesser extent he employs redaction criticism throughout the work. The book includes a bibliography, an appendix and indexes.

This work is divided into three parts. Part 1, mainly a redactional study, addresses the formal issues surrounding the gospel of Matthew. Carter conjectures that Matthew is an unidentifiable Jewish author who composed this gospel from Antioch of Syria in the 80s. The evangelist uses Mark, M and Q to write his work to a community that finds itself a disenfranchised minority attempting to find its identity in the world. Part 2, consisting of about 140 pages, is devoted to Carter's understanding of how Matthew's authorial audience shapes and in turn is informed by the text. Carter utilizes the conventions of reader-response criticism to describe the plot, setting and characters of Matthew's narrative. Carter proposes that Matthew's community (i.e. the authorial audience) orders the gospel's plot by identifying six narrative blocks (1:1–4:16, 4:17–11:1, 11:2–16:20, 16:21–20:34, 21:1–27:61 and 28:1–20) and proceeds to utilize this scheme in his investigation of the plot as well as important settings and characters. In the third part the author briefly sets out Matthew's relevancy for contemporary times.

On the positive side, Carter provides us with a clearly written and insightful book. In part 1 he examines gospel genre and then presents a perceptive interpretation of the pressures that the community is under, from both the Gentiles and Judaism. He follows with part 2, in which he discusses in adequate detail the terms and concepts necessary for understanding the tool of reader-response criticism. He then illustrates how the authorial audience influences the shaping of this gospel. Part 2 is a helpful section for those desiring to investigate the use of contemporary approaches to gospel studies.

There are, however, a few suggestions for improvement. My main concern is the conspicuous absence of a detailed examination of salient Matthean topics such as the kingdom of heaven, the law and the theological implications of the recent split between Israel and Matthew's community. Also, I fear Carter will not reach all of his intended audience, as non-technical readers as well as ministers searching for preaching and teaching material will probably find it difficult to glean Carter's insight from his technical discussion. Perhaps a subject index would help alleviate these concerns.

These criticisms notwithstanding, this book should prove useful as an introductory textbook to Matthew for college and seminary students as well as provide a review for those familiar with the formal issues surrounding Matthew.

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Church and Community in Crisis. By J. Andrew Overman. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996, x + 437 pp., \$28.00 paper.

This work by Overman builds on his conclusions presented in an earlier monograph (*Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism* [Fortress, 1990]), namely that the Judaism Matthew confronts is not a well-organized, unified front but rather a combination of variegated voices vying for the position as the true people of God. The present commentary is the third volume in The New Testament in Context series and proposes to overcome scholarship's misunderstanding and misconstruing of the context and setting of Matthew.

This book is divided into three parts. Part 1, the introduction, sets the tone for the entire commentary as it reveals the direction that Overman's thinking will take in his analysis of the text. Overman concludes that the first gospel was composed around 100 AD for a community in or around the Galilean cities of Sepphoris or Tiberias. This community is in crisis both from without and within. Externally, the Pharisees and the Roman government pressure the church of Matthew. The main opponents are the Pharisees as they engage these Christians over the issue of who is the true leadership of Israel. This contention is seen especially in the debate over the correct interpretation of the law. Also, the Matthean community is vulnerable to confrontation at the hands of the colonial powers. Internally, the church is plagued by the need for church order and discipline.

What Overman perceives is a "Matthean Judaism," an attempt by the first evangelist to promote a competing form of Judaism that is in "utter continuity with the history and eschatological drama of Israel" (p. 23). Matthew's goal is to shape his predominantly Jewish-Christian congregation into a people that uniquely represents the true Israel of God. His blueprint for daily communal living is detailed in the sermon on the mount. The sermon is the "constitution" for Matthew's community and embodies much of what Matthean Judaism is all about.

But the first evangelist also realizes that questions concerning the future of his church must be addressed, especially in light of the hardships the people endure. According to Overman, any persecution suffered by Matthew's church is in fact the beginning of the end. The persecution of Matthean Judaism—at least in Matthew's mind—commenced with John the Baptist, continued with Jesus and is a present reality in the lives of the Christians of Matthew's community. And such persecution is the beginning of the restoration of Israel and hence apocalyptic in nature.

Thus, Overman's assessment of the community of Matthew is one of urgent self-definition. The urgency stems from the lateness of the hour as seen in the Fall of Jerusalem (70 AD), the increase in Pharisaic influence and the increasing isolation of Matthew's community. The need for identity and self-definition comes from the controversies and debates with other voices in Judaism as Matthew's church wrestles with the issues that constitute faithful adherence to the will of God. For Overman the church is in crisis.

Part 2 of this book is devoted to an examination of the text of Matthew and consists of more than 380 pages. This section is divided into 15 chapters that cover the entire gospel. Each chapter discusses a particular passage and concludes with a bibliography. Overman does not provide his readers with a verse-by-verse analysis but instead separates each passage into particular themes and topics. For example, chap. 4 (3:1–4:25) includes discussions on John the Baptist, Satan, Capernaum, kingdom of heaven, followers of Jesus and synagogues. Within these subsections Overman will examine particular verses as fits his argument. He employs source and redaction criticisms quite consistently and utilizes Christian and Jewish literature of the first century AD (especially Josephus) as background material.

In part 3 Overman conjectures on the fate of Matthew's church. In that brief discussion our author describes how history took a turn not anticipated by the first evangelist. Formative Judaism of the second century appears to have little or no trace of Matthean Judaism. This can be attributed to Matthew's demand that people choose between Matthean Judaism and Pharisaic Judaism. Moreover, Matthew's Judaism would eventually be subsumed under a new religion altogether, namely Christianity. Overman concludes that the first evangelist never anticipated a new movement that would eventually separate completely from Judaism.

Overman provides his readers with a lucid and well-detailed presentation. He writes clearly and his analysis of the text is consistent with his main theses set forth in the introduction. Some of Overman's discussions are quite illuminating. For example, he conjectures that the birth and passion narratives are deliberate attempts on Matthew's part to show how Rome desired to extinguish what the first evangelist considered the correct interpretation of the truth. Overman's use of historical-critical tools of scholarship fleshes out a believable *Sitz im Leben* for this complex gospel. He provides his readers with an insightful rendering of what must have been going through Matthew's mind when he composed his gospel. Perhaps his strongest chapter is the one covering the sermon on the mount, for he not only examines in detail the many topics of this passage but alerts the reader to the need to consider these words of Jesus as the center of gravity for the everyday life of a Christian.

Despite the strengths of this work there are some points to be addressed in order to improve it. (1) The lack of indexes of Matthean Scriptures and important terms makes the book somewhat reader unfriendly. (2) There is an unfortunate omission of interaction with scholars who might dispute Overman's conclusions. He is good at citing those with whom he agrees but for reasons never stated avoids dialogue with those who might oppose him. (3) He has overstated his case regarding Matthew's embracing of the law. It appears to me that Matthew's position is that Jesus' teaching has replaced the law and not simply provided another interpretation of it. If the Pharisees are the main opponents of Matthew's church (and I agree here), it makes more sense for persecution to be aimed toward a community that appropriates a new authority that replaces the law rather than one that simply has a different interpretation of the law. To do otherwise weakens Matthew's Christological perspective.

These criticisms should not discourage anyone from reading this book. Overman provides his readers with a solid description of what Matthew was up against and enables them to avoid a simplistic understanding of the Judaism of his time. Anyone reading this book will come away with a thorough understanding of the first gospel. Overman's work could easily serve as a textbook for a college or seminary course on Matthew.

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The Sermon on the Mount. By Hans Dieter Betz. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995, xxvii + 692 pp.

The publication of this long-awaited commentary must surely be described as an important event in Matthean studies. Its sheer size is intimidating, not to mention the breadth and depth of its content. As Betz cautions at the beginning, this commentary "is meant only of the serious reader, not the superficial 'tourist'" (p. 4). In no way could the author himself be accused of being superficial. There can be no question but

that he is a most impressive master of the terrain. In particular, he brings his exceptional knowledge of Greco-Roman sources to bear on the interpretation of the sermon both in its Matthean and Lukan versions (the latter takes up, however, a mere 70 pages). Learned excursions enrich the volume and indicate the type of material one frequently encounters (e.g. "Principles for the Interpretation of the Law in Greek, Roman, and Jewish Legal Thought," "Socrates' Defiance of the Law," "Oaths: Their Use and Misuse in Ancient Thought" and "Ancient Greek Theories of Vision"). Material of this kind, which abounds throughout, will indicate that this is a very special commentary.

From the start, the Christian reader will be surprised, for Betz treats the sermon on the mount "as a piece of world literature, not as an exclusive text" (p. 1). Indeed he regards the sermon as an independent epitome of Jesus' teaching akin to philosophical texts that concern themselves with good human living in secular terms: "Enabling one to live life fully, meaningfully, and responsibly is the goal of the Sermons" (p. 4). The sermon, in short, is not about Christian living, but about human living. The discipleship of the sermon is "a call to be human beings in an uncompromising way" (p. 61). What this means for the specifically religious dimensions of the sermon, which are impossible to ignore, remains rather unclear in Betz's exposition.

Betz thus isolates the sermon on the mount from the rest of the gospel of Matthew. This tactic is related to his conclusion, familiar to us from his earlier essays, that the sermon was a preexisting text (from ca. 50) that the authors of Matthew (for Jewish readers) and Luke (for Gentile readers) took up whole and without alteration or redaction from their respective versions of Q. This is an assumption that Betz attempts to prove in the commentary. For Betz, the sermon is thus strictly speaking not a Christian text, but a product of the early Jewish adherents to the Jesus movement. This turns out to be a fateful conclusion, for it naturally affects Betz's exegesis throughout. To my mind, it is a fundamental mistake to attempt to understand the sermon apart from the context of the total gospel. Indeed, without that context, the sermon remains enigmatic at numerous points.

An 88-page introduction provides the reader with a comprehensive and very useful review of "The Major Problems of Research in Historical Perspective." Here Betz examines the study of the sermon from the early church and Augustine down to (mainly) German and British scholarship of this century. This leads to a discussion of the sermons as literary compositions, including a highly detailed analysis of their structure, then to consideration of "the literary genre" and finally to "the literary function."

The commentary proper provides us with an incredible amount of background detail, detailed comparison and analysis. The approach is not exactly user-friendly, however. One must struggle to keep from drowning in the sheer welter of information and opinion. Discussions are often lengthy and complicated, occasionally digressive and the conclusions drawn can be very finely balanced. One will be repeatedly reminded of Betz's understated cautionary words in the introduction: "I have avoided simplifying things unduly. . . . The Sermons are 'easy' only to the superficial, whether pious or secular. Life is not an easy matter either, and the Sermons are concerned with life. . . . Therefore, if things look difficult, it is because in fact they are so. Serious readers will not be deterred but attracted by such difficulties" (p. 4).

The effects of Betz's approach soon become apparent. Because he believes that the sermon in Matthew stands in irreconcilable tension with the rest of the gospel, it is regarded as a kind of foreign body in the larger work. By effectively cutting the sermon from its context in the gospel and restricting himself to the interpretation of the document as a free-standing entity—in accord with his hypothesis—Betz often comes

to surprising and unusual conclusions. But why in the first place would the evangelist, who is not averse to redacting Q, take up the sermon as it is, without any redaction, as Betz claims? The question looms larger if there really are glaring differences between the sermon and the rest of the gospel, again as Betz maintains.

A few of the unfortunate results of Betz's understanding of the sermon may be noted. The beatitudes, cut off from the preceding words of the gospel, are discussed with insufficient consideration of their ground in Jesus' announcement of the dawning of the kingdom. The reason for present joy finds no obvious basis and the focus shifts clearly to eschatological rewards. (But what would the latter mean in a secular ethic?) The high—indeed, impossible—idealism of the ethics of the sermon finds no satisfactory explanation if one denies that these are "kingdom ethics," that is, ethics that characterize those who have responded positively to the proclamation of Jesus and who are thus the people of the kingdom.

Far more significant than this, however, is Betz's repeated claim that the sermon contains no Christology at all. The reference in 5:11 to persecution "on my account" thus has no Christological aspect: "The phrase 'because of me' says no more than that the reason for the persecution is Jesus' teaching" (p. 147). Yet that is not what the text actually says. No Christology, furthermore, is implied in the emphatic and unparalleled "But I say unto you" of the antitheses. For Betz this reflects only the higher consciousness of an authoritative teacher. Even the passage in 7:21–23, where the words "Lord, Lord" are addressed twice to Jesus and he says, "Then I will declare to them 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evil-doers,'" points to nothing more than a loyalty to Jesus expressed in "gestures of devotion and use of excessive titles" (p. 546). In Betz's view, "Jesus does not speak a verdict" here, but "merely refuses to be their advocate" (p. 552). Again, this is not quite what the text actually says. We may also note in 7:21 Jesus' reference to "*my* Father," which marks out his relationship to God as a unique one. Finally, in 7:24, 26 what is determinative is "these words of mine," not the words of the Torah, as one might expect. Betz does not comment on the concluding words of the evangelist concerning the crowds' astonishment at Jesus' teaching and that "he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Who is this one, whose interpretation of the Torah is definitive? The evangelist, it would seem, had none of the difficulties that Betz has in seeing the Jesus of the sermon as the same as the Jesus of his gospel. Indeed, this is the "one teacher," and "the one instructor, the Messiah" of whom the evangelist speaks in 23:8, 10.

Betz's commentary raises an interesting methodological question. According to him, since the sermon does not refer to distinctive aspects of the gospel such as Christology or the atoning death of Jesus, these matters were of no significance to the original community that gave us the sermon on the mount. This species of argument is of course notoriously unreliable. While not without occasional usefulness, the argument from silence has often led Biblical scholars down erroneous paths. Here, in my opinion, Betz too is led into misunderstanding.

On the other hand, there is much in this commentary that can be admired and appreciated. Betz the scholar wants to be of help to his readers pastorally: "This commentary must also help bring about this living" (p. 4). That he holds the ethics of the sermon in high regard is eminently clear throughout. One will of course not agree with his exegesis at every point (of what commentary could this be said?), yet one will frequently profit from Betz's discussion. In particular, this commentary is valuable for the questions asked, the problems posed, the thoroughness of the examination and the rich contextual background from the Greco-Roman literature that the author provides. In this regard there is no comparable commentary on the sermon. The contribution to most readers, however, will above all be in the stimulation to think deeply

and probingly about the texts, rather than in providing definitive exegesis. But this is no small service in itself, and for it we cannot but express both gratitude and admiration.

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Discipleship according to the Sermon on the Mount. By Daniel Patte. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996, xiii + 416 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Those familiar with the previous publications of Patte (Vanderbilt University) on structuralism and Biblical studies are aware that his works tend to be methodologically oriented. This book is no exception. Patte's goals are bound up in the subtitle: "Four Legitimate Readings, Four Plausible Views of Discipleship, and Their Relative Values." He wishes to provide an interpretation of four male European-American approaches, an interpretation he styles as androcritical and multidimensional. Patte seems to believe that any reading of the Biblical text is as legitimate or plausible as another. His own views are *read with* the others, not *read to* them, in order to assess the relative value of the interpretations, not to demonstrate which interpretation is correct, or even most likely to be correct. For Patte, all Biblical scholarship is advocacy scholarship and is *pro me/nobis*. Each interpreter's reading is authentic for that interpreter in his or her culture. Patte does not want his readers to adopt his reading of the sermon on the mount but to assume responsibility for their own interpretations and be accountable to them. Needless to say, this is not a tome that exemplifies the literary theory of E. D. Hirsch!

The process of *reading with* African-American, feminist and "two-thirds world" scholars has enabled Patte to do his own androcritical study. He does not wish to deny the legitimacy of his own androcentric, Eurocentric reading of the sermon on the mount but neither does he wish to put it forth as the correct interpretation. In his view there is simply no such thing as a Biblical exegesis that results in universal, objective interpretation. There are only specific, subjective interpretations that can be assessed in their relative appropriateness for their adherents. Patte's study is multidimensional in that it involves a threefold agenda. First come legitimacy conclusions about what a text says (abbreviated by Patte as CAWs), then epistemology judgments leading to conclusions about the teaching of a text (abbreviated by Patte as CATs), and finally value judgments leading to conclusions about the relative value of the interpretations (abbreviated by Patte as CARVs). Patte wishes to "decenter" representative androcentric European-American approaches, which he views as plausible though unidimensional, by means of his own androcritical multidimensional approach. In this endeavor the present volume serves as an example of the agenda Patte laid out in his previous book, *The Ethics of Biblical Interpretation: A Reevaluation* (Westminster/John Knox, 1995). Here Patte concluded that it is ethically problematic to put forth one's own interpretation competitively as the single meaning of a text because such action requires other readers to dismiss their own interpretations as illegitimate.

The four approaches *with* which Patte reads are (1) redaction critical, focusing on the historical dimensions of the sermon on the mount, (2) narrative critical, focusing on the plot dimensions of the sermon on the mount, (3) history of traditions, focusing on figurative dimensions and (4) structural critical, focusing on thematic dimensions. Patte defines discipleship as ethical practice that can be construed as the implemen-

tation of previously held Christian beliefs (cognitive) or as intuitive behavior that is only later conceptualized. The former is construed in a deontological ethical system and the latter in a consequentialist or utilitarian scheme. Here Patte depends on the work of Thomas Ogletree. Either approach is plausible and legitimate. Patte's own approach is structural critical and involves discerning the thematic dimensions of the sermon on the mount, which are found especially in its beginning and end. Inverted parallelisms express the theme in terms of the semantic opposition of actions which are either appropriate or inappropriate for the disciple. Lack of space precludes further discussion of how this method impacts the exegesis of the sermon on the mount. Suffice it to say that the argument is dense and somewhat repetitive. Throughout the issue is the plausibility, not the correctness, of the conclusions. There is no room in the approach for a transcendent revelator who speaks throughout Holy Scripture as creator, redeemer, and supreme arbiter of ethical action.

Many evangelicals will be tempted to dismiss Patte's CARVs, CAWs and CATs as illegitimate. To be sure, his hermeneutic is not concerned with the intention of the human author of the Bible, let alone the evangelical doctrine of the divine intent in Biblical inspiration and revelation. It appears that in his system there is no possibility of hearing a universally authoritative Word from the Lord in Holy Scripture. One can only pool one's own inevitably subjective, culturally bound *readings with* the subjective, culturally bound *readings with* of others, resulting in a dialogue about the relative value of the various *readings with* but no clue as to "Thus saith the LORD."

But such a dismissal of Patte would be premature and unfortunate, despite the basic incompatibility of his approach with that of evangelicals. There are at least four ways in which this book can be valuable for evangelical readers. (1) Most obviously, the book can aid scholars in assessing recent interpretations of the sermon on the mount. Patte interacts in detail with the views of D. Allison, W. D. Davies, R. Edwards, J. Kingsbury, U. Luz and G. Strecker, and, to a lesser extent, with the views of G. Barth, J. Lambrecht, J. Zumstein and O. Betz. This interaction is helpful in that it shows how the respective methodologies, in this case historical/redaction critical and literary/narrative critical, tend to work themselves out in the exegesis of a text. (2) Patte is correct that academicians are too often content with conclusions about what a text says (CAWs) and too seldom come to conclusions about the teaching of the text (CATs). His notion of the importance of *reading with* as opposed to an imperialistic *reading to* ought to remind evangelicals that the best modern interpretation of the Bible is, like the earliest Biblical interpretation, done in and for the faith community. Better exegesis and a closer connection between exegesis and application could be achieved if exegetes spent more time *reading with* homileticians, if males spent more time *reading with* females, and if Caucasians spent more time *reading with* Africans and Asians. The goal would not be to pool plausible perspectives in an immanentistic puddle but to gain insights from fellow believers into the meaning revealed by the transcendent author of the text through the human intermediaries.

Patte's rigorous adherence to his methodology ought to remind evangelicals of two additional matters. (1) He is no doubt correct in affirming that our individual interpretations of the Bible cannot be speciously identified with the Bible. Evangelicals need to be reminded that their exegetical conclusions about revelation are not revelation. Yet recognizing the individuality that is inevitably inherent in hermeneutics need not lead to Patte's relativistic approach. The meaning of the Biblical message can be genuinely and sufficiently understood, even though it may not be fully understood. Also, evangelicals can profit greatly from Patte's insistence that interpreters be self-conscious about their previous understandings of the text and about the inevitable influence of their individual backgrounds and goals in the study of the Biblical

text. Introspection leading to awareness of one's predispositions need not lead to a relativism of plausible readings but can help one identify the blind spots that hinder a more accurate grasp of the text's intended meaning.

Patte's book could be used with profit by graduate classes that focus on Matthew or contemporary hermeneutical approaches.

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Jesus Framed. By George Aichele. New York: Routledge, 1996, 200 pp., \$17.95.

This work is part of a series called "Biblical Limits," which endeavors to bring a postmodern perspective to the reading of familiar Biblical texts. George Aichele is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Adrian College and is the co-author of *The Postmodern Bible*.

Postmodern literary criticism is making headway in many areas, not the least of which is biblical criticism. One only needs stroll down the book aisles at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature to see volume after volume devoted to a postmodern view of the text. I make no claim to be an expert in such literary criticism, and so my discussion of this work should be taken as a review by one who is much more familiar with the gospel of Mark than with postmodern literary criticism. This book states at the outset that it uses "literary theory, most notably the writings of Roland Barthes" (back cover). Among Barthes' most notable literary ideas is his view that the text has an infinite number of possible meanings, and that these meanings are by no means reduced or controlled by the author's intentions. The author takes a back seat to the text, as a person who is not necessary in the interpretive task (see Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text," in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, pp. 73–81). In the introduction, Aichele (following Barthes), states that this "reading is a discourse about the 'possibility' of meaning, rather than about meaning itself" (p. 3). He seeks to "produce readings from a text which is itself, finally, unreadable" (p. ix). Thus at the outset I find myself at odds with the aim of the book.

The book consists of an introduction, seven essays and a postscript, all of which deal with some specific aspect of the gospel of Mark. The title comes from the first essay, which uses the word "frame" to refer both to the "literary frames" around the passion narratives, as well as to the fact that Jesus was "framed" by his enemies. These essays are mixed in character, some dealing with specific texts or pericopes in the gospels, others dealing with larger issues (e.g. chap. 2, "Desire for an End," deals with the textual problem inherent in the ending of Mark).

I found much of this work unsettling. Perhaps that is the emotion that Aichele intended to convey in his book. Statements like the following occur all too frequently: "It [the text of Mark] continually demands to be rewritten, and yet it refuses its own rewriting. The postmodern paradox of the gospel of Mark is that it fails to begin and it fails to end, and thus it could be said that the gospel of Mark has not yet been written" (p. 54). Exactly what Aichele intends to convey with this sentence is simply beyond me. It seems inherently irrational to write a book commenting on a work that has "not yet been written."

I am also troubled by the fact that when Aichele does venture into actual theology, he tends to make blanket statements with very little nuance or qualification. He states,

for instance, that the “early” gospels of Q and Thomas “had no resurrection narrative and only at best vague hints concerning the death of Jesus. These books were either suppressed (Thomas) or rewritten into a more acceptable form (Q, by absorption into Matthew and Luke)” (pp. 56–57). While there are those who argue that Thomas is early, and that Q has been rewritten, it is not the only opinion, even among nonevangelicals. A small tip of the hat to opposing ideas would have been appreciated here. There are other examples of such lack of nuance. For instance, in the text chapter, Aichele goes on to ask, since the phrase “Talitha koum” points out that the words of Jesus in the text of Mark are a translation, “how then can it be called ‘holy scripture?’” (p. 73). Perhaps Aichele would have been well served by surveying some of the work that has been done on the passages that he writes about. The bibliography, however, makes no mention of the commentaries on Mark by Lane, Cranfield, Mann or Guelich.

Those who are committed to a postmodern reading of the gospel of Mark may find much of value here. I did not find such value. Those evangelicals working in the gospel of Mark may find some useful work here, but after reading the book they might be tempted to say “we have toiled all night and have caught nothing.”

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The Spirituality of Mark: Responding to God. By Mitzi Minor. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996, xi + 141 pp., n.p.

The author is associate professor of NT at Memphis Theological Seminary. This work is the fruit of her study in the academy, personal faith and “living with” the gospel of Mark since 1986. This personal journey culminated in her doctoral dissertation, which she describes as “the embryonic form of this book, which I hope is a more mature perspective on Mark’s spirituality” (p. x).

Minor’s methodology is a combination of “redaction, narrative, and sociological criticisms” (p. 8). With these tools she exegetes representative passages (3:1–6; 4:1–34; 4:35–41; 7:1–23; 7:24–30; 8:31–9:1; 9:14–29; 9:30–37; 10:32–45; 11:12–25; 13:1–37) with a view toward ascertaining authentic spirituality according to Mark. Her conclusions are three.

(1) Mark’s understanding of God is that of a transcendent God who has “purposefully drawn near human beings in Jesus of Nazareth” (p. 96), who revealed the *basileia* of God to those with “eyes to see,” and who is powerful to achieve God’s purpose (p. 97). Minor chooses simply to transliterate the Greek word *basileia*, allowing Mark’s text to “evoke its whole range of meanings” (p. 16), since traditional English translations, especially “kingdom,” fall short of Mark’s intent. She also avoids the use of masculine pronouns to refer to God.

(2) Authentic spirituality according to Mark is evidenced by the capacity to “see” and “hear” that God’s *basileia* “has drawn near and become experientially available through Jesus” (p. 98) and the creation of an inclusive community that practices the discipleship of equals.

(3) Inauthentic spirituality does not “see” or “hear” the *basileia* of God, and this is evidenced chiefly in a propensity to focus on one’s own or one’s group’s interests (p. 101). The two groups of people who evidence these characteristics are the religious leaders who never hear Jesus’ word but choose evil from the outset and followers of

Jesus, most frequently and importantly the twelve disciples, who evidence the same inauthentic responses. "It may be significant for Mark that both groups, even those who choose evil from the outset, appear to be very religious" (p. 101).

Minor's exegesis of Mark and her conclusions are sound but not very original. Originality is not necessarily a virtue, especially in Biblical exegesis, but we find pretty standard fare in the heart of the book, squarely in the mainstream of Markan scholarship and sounding still "dissertationese."

The place where Minor could have been most helpful and potentially original she correctly identifies as her main point, namely, the application of Mark's spirituality to today. That discussion, however, comes last (perhaps appropriately) and is brief (not as appropriately). To her credit, she admits that her conclusions are inescapably shaped (both as to possibilities and limitations) "by the fact that I am a white, middle-class, North American woman who is an academic, an ordained Cumberland Presbyterian minister, and a feminist" (p. 133, n. 7). Unfortunately, the gap between Mark's authentic spirituality and her appropriation is too wide.

Why Latin American liberation theologians, black theologians and feminist theologians are presented uncritically and almost exclusively as "prophetic voices which are more clearly than ever calling the church to renew its community practices according to the teachings of Jesus, including his teachings in Mark" (p. 107), demands more explanation. She may be right, but she fails to make her case.

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A Lion with Wings: A Narrative-Critical Approach to Mark's Gospel. By Stephen H. Smith. The Biblical Seminar 38. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996, 258 pp., \$24.95 paper.

The gospel of Mark is a narrative, the narration of a story or series of events. It is a historical narrative but a narrative nonetheless. In recent years, the narrative features of Mark have received greater attention by NT scholars, and Smith's *A Lion with Wings* serves as a useful guide to such narrative-critical studies. As a detailed introduction, Smith's book does a good job of filling the gap between popular works on the subject and more technical studies concerning a particular aspect of Mark's narrative.

The first chapter of the book deals with the historical developments that led to the use of literary methods like narrative criticism and reader-response criticism. Smith explains the basic principles and terms of these approaches, paying close attention to the concepts of implied author and implied reader. According to Smith, narrative criticism addresses the "what" and "how" of Mark's story. The content ("what") of the story has to do with characters, plot and settings, issues addressed by Smith in the next three chapters. Narrative criticism also examines how the story is told, that is, the rhetorical strategies of the narrator and their effect upon the implied reader. Smith deals with topics related to narrative techniques in the last two chapters of the book.

The chapter on characterization covers all the significant individuals and character groups in Mark's gospel, analyzing them sometimes according to their traits and sometimes according to their role within the plot. Smith views Mark's plot primarily in terms of conflict and shows how Jesus' divine mission results in struggles with the

religious leaders, the disciples and the demons. In addition, Smith attempts to demonstrate that Mark's narrative conforms to a tragic plot structure. He notes the difficulty that the resurrection causes for viewing Mark as tragedy and seeks to avoid the problem by arguing that, while the resurrection is part of the story, it should be excluded from the plot. Smith examines the settings of Mark's gospel in terms of both time and place. He includes a helpful discussion of the OT background to settings in Mark.

In the final chapters, Smith highlights two narrative techniques: point of view and irony. The emphasis in these chapters is on identifying certain narrative features and showing how they work, with less attention given to the purpose for which Mark used them. What message was Mark trying to convey and what response was he hoping to produce in the reader? Smith has little to say about the intended effect on the reader. He states little about the message of the narrative beyond Mark's identification of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Yet certainly the narrative techniques most crucial to Mark's gospel are those that are meant to do something, to drive home a message or to move the reader toward an appropriate response to Jesus. My own conclusion is that narrative-critical approaches to Mark's gospel are most effective when they uncover the rhetorical impact of the story and its narrative features. The potential power of Mark's story is a subject worthy of investigation.

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Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem: In the Context of Lukan Theology and the Politics of His Day. By Brent Kinman. New York: Brill, 1995, 223 pp., \$75.00.

Kinman's slightly revised dissertation from the University of Cambridge (1993, supervised by M. Hooker) attempts to analyze both the context and content of Jesus' entry in Jerusalem in Luke's gospel (Luke 19:28–48). His contention is that Luke de-politicizes the event so that Jesus' entry has little if no specific political implications for the ruling Roman empire.

Kinman unfolds his thesis as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the purpose of this study, which is to demonstrate that "Luke has moulded both the context and content of his triumphal entry/Temple cleansing accounts so as to highlight those features by which his audience would come to see Jesus' entry as a parousia gone awry and to distance Jesus from Jewish nationalists" (p. 4). Chapter 2 ("Charismatic Jewish Leaders and the Lukan Dilemma") argues that although charismatic Jewish leaders were generally perceived as anti-Roman, Luke intentionally presents Jesus so as not to arouse political concerns. Chapter 3 ("Triumphal Entries' in the Graeco-Roman World") is perhaps the most original part of Kinman's study, where he delves into primary literature to reveal the characteristics of the three types of triumphal entries: (1) the arrival (or parousia) of the emperor or king, (2) the arrival of the governor and (3) the arrival of the Roman Triumph. Chapter 4 continues this delving into primary literature by exploring the "Jewish precedents" of the triumphal entry with the royal welcomes of Solomon (1 Kings 1), Zion's King (Zech 9:9–10), Jonathan Maccabeus (1 Macc 10:86–89; 11:60–61; 12:43) and Ps 118:26 (since every gospel writer applies this psalm to Jesus' entry).

Chapter 5 reviews the context of the entry, probing the pericope of the healing of the blind beggar (18:35–43), the call of Zaccheus (19:1–10) and the parable of the

nobleman (19:11–27). Kinman concludes that Luke reworks the Markan tradition to minimize the possibility of misunderstanding Jesus' entry as a political event. Chapter 6 explores Jesus' entry in Luke 19:28–34 and concludes that Luke's depiction is not a rival to Caesar. It is a misrepresentation, Kinman asserts, to call this entry "triumphal" (thus he labels it "a-triumphal"), since it bears few characteristics of a royal entry (see above chap. 3). Chapter 7 briefly outlines Lukan eschatology by examining what is not included in Luke's portrayal of Jesus' entry: the cursing of the fig tree (see Mark 11:12–14). Why Luke seemingly omitted this account is the question Kinman attempts to answer. After surveying the different options, Kinman proposes that Luke's omission is later replaced by Jesus' lament over Jerusalem (19:41–44), since Luke's eschatology is not as bleak as Mark's. Chapter 8 follows the findings of Chap. 7 and analyzes Jesus' lament of Jerusalem. Chapter 9 relates Luke's temple cleansing narrative to Luke's political apologetic and his version of the entry. Chapter 10 investigates the background of Pilate's arrival in Jerusalem and compares it with Jesus' entry to highlight its "a-triumphal" nature. Chapter 11 offers salient conclusions of the study. There is one appendix: "Is Luke Anti-Solomonic?," a ten-page bibliography and indexes of modern authors, subjects and passages cited.

Kinman's work is erudite and demonstrates judicious interaction with both primary and secondary sources. A major criticism, however, is his apparent lack of interaction with the works of Richard J. Cassidy, especially his paramount work, *Jesus, Politics, and Society* (Orbis, 1978; also see *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles* [Orbis, 1987], and *Political Issues in Luke-Acts*, edited with P. Scharper [Orbis, 1983]). Space prohibits a full discussion of Cassidy's works, but his fundamental premise is that "Jesus constituted, at least potentially, a serious threat to the Roman empire because he refused to defer to or cooperate with the various political officials who were responsible for maintaining those patterns" (*Jesus, Politics, and Society*, p. 78). Jesus created new social patterns based on service and humility that threatened the stability of the Roman Empire. Cassidy, in his chapter "Was Jesus Dangerous to the Roman Empire?" puts it this way: "If large numbers of people ever came to support the new social patterns [i.e. based on service and humility] that Luke portrays Jesus advocating, and if large numbers came to adopt his stance toward the ruling political authorities, the Roman empire . . . could not have continued" (*Jesus, Politics, and Society*, p. 79).

Moreover, parts of Kinman's work are frustrating, because he attempts to "have it both ways" exegetically: He acknowledges the inescapable political implications with Jesus' entry, but then avoids the political realities. "In Luke, the context of the triumphal entry serves to emphasize that Jesus is king and, *at the same time*, to play down any possible connection between him and Jewish nationalists" (p. 91, my emphasis).

A nagging question remains for this work: Would first-century readers of the gospel be able to depoliticize the message and actions of the Lukan Jesus vis-à-vis his entry as easily as Kinman would suppose? I doubt it.

In sum, aside from the aforementioned criticism, Kinman's work is a notable contribution to Lukan studies, especially to a neglected area of study, Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. It is an exemplary model of gospel scholarship. One hopes that the publisher will issue a paperback edition, so as to make Kinman's work affordable to seminary and graduate students.

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The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting. By Irina Levinskaya. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, xii + 284 pp., \$38.00.

This work is the fifth volume in the acclaimed *Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting* series edited by Bruce Winter, warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge. Levinskaya is a senior researcher in ancient history at the Russian Academy of Sciences and a lecturer in early Christian history at St. Petersburg University.

The first half of the book concerns Jewish identity in the first-century diaspora and evidence related to proselytes and God-fearers. The second half discusses what is known concerning the nature of first-century Jewish communities in Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia, and Rome.

In chap. 1 Levinskaya argues against the recent proposal of M. Goodman that until the end of the first century, Jews were unconcerned about whether sympathetic Gentiles were considered to be Jews or outsiders. She seeks to show distinct Jewish identity both on religious and ethnic grounds. The former is demonstrated by Domitian's imposition of the temple tax—a requirement only of full Jews—on high government officials suspected of converting to Judaism. The latter is confirmed through Luke's account of the circumcision of Timothy, which suggests that the matrilineal principle of Jewish ethnic identity emerged in the diaspora by the mid-first century.

Chapters 2 and 3 concern the question of whether Judaism was a missionary religion. Levinskaya shows that while Gentiles were often attracted to Judaism, there is little evidence of aggressive proselytizing by the Jews. She agrees with Goodman that the "proselytes" of Matt 23:15 are Jewish converts to Pharisaism, rather than Gentile converts to Judaism.

Chapters 4–7 concern the issue of God-fearers. While the paucity of epigraphic evidence has in the past raised doubts about the historicity of the prominent role they play in Acts, the evidence from the Aphrodisias inscription, which appears to list Gentile God-fearers (*theosebeis*) as patrons of the synagogue separate from Jews and proselytes, has provided strong support for Luke's account (chap. 4). In chap. 5 Levinskaya argues that the epithet *hupsistos*, "Most High," which appears in numerous inscriptions throughout the Mediterranean, was not a title for a wide range of deities. Nor is it evidence of syncretism of Jewish and pagan beliefs. Rather, adherents to the cult of the Most High God were Judaizing Gentiles (God-fearers). Some of these remained close to the synagogue while others developed institutions of their own. In a case study (chap. 6), Levinskaya seeks to show that in some parts of the Bosporan kingdom, Jewish influence and the general tendency toward monotheism made the cult of the Most High extraordinarily popular. In chap. 7 the literary evidence for God-fearers is examined. Luke's portrait reveals that God-fearers were among the first Gentiles to accept Christianity, that this created a serious problem for the Jews who depended on the patronage of these God-fearers, and that, as a result, the Jews intensified their relations with Gentile sympathizers. Luke therefore shows great insight in portraying God-fearers as either the backbone of the Christian communities, or—when they remain in support of the Jewish community—a serious impediment to the spread of the Christian mission.

The remainder of the book, chaps. 8–11, discusses all known evidence related to the Jews of the first century in Antioch, Asia Minor, Macedonia and Achaia, and Rome. Three appendixes follow, concerning the nature of religious syncretism in the first century, the meaning of the term *proseuche* and inscriptions from the Bosporan kingdom.

Levinskaya is a meticulous scholar, weighing and evaluating evidence judiciously and carefully. Throughout the book she defends the veracity of Luke's portrait of the

diaspora communities, showing his deep historical understanding of the dynamics between the Jews and their Gentile supporters. While the book makes an important contribution on the question of God-fearers and proselytes, the greatest disappointment for me was the second half of the book. By limiting herself to inscriptional and direct literary evidence, Levinskaya does little to paint a living portrait of diaspora life. Communities like Pisidian Antioch, where only one Jewish inscription has been found, are covered in a single paragraph, with little said of the social, cultural, religious or political life of the Jews there. While painting such a portrait of course entails a degree of conjecture, speculation and synthesis from a variety of sources, one would expect such a synthesis in a work with so sweeping a title as *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting*. As a teacher always in search of good textbook material, I was hoping to find here a work that would provide students with a lively and informative description of diaspora Jewish life. Levinskaya's work does not fulfill this role. It is, however, an important contribution to the continuing investigation of Luke's value as a historian, as well as to the nature and role of God-fearers and proselytes in the Jewish diaspora.

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Portraits of Paul: An Archaeology of Ancient Personality. By Bruce J. Malina and Jerome H. Neyrey. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996, xv + 271 pp., n.p.

Another book on Paul? Why should one spend more time (and money) on yet an additional book on the apostle? The reason is this: The book is a successful blending of two recent critical approaches (social-scientific criticism and rhetorical criticism) that produces a new approach to understanding Paul—a “social psychology” (p. 16).

Malina and Neyrey have distinguished themselves as interpreters who utilize the findings of the social sciences in order to understand Biblical texts more fully (cf. their “Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World” in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Biblical Interpretation* [1991], edited by Neyrey). *Portraits of Paul* “aims to explain how ancient Mediterraneans perceived and described each other” (p. 4). Paul is chosen as a test case by which one can learn to configure and analyze appropriate data. The authors hypothesize and conclude that a social-psychological study of Paul demonstrates that “first-century Mediterranean persons were strongly group-embedded, collectivist persons” (p. 16), and that Paul, as a typical Mediterranean person, is group-oriented and collectivist in personality (pp. 98–99, 151–152). “For all the ‘independence’ claimed for Paul by modern Western readers, he presents himself as utterly dependent on group expectations and the controlling hand of forces greater than he: ancestors, groups, God. . . . In fact, ‘independence’ of any group authorization would have been a major liability to him” (p. 217). Rather than the rugged individualist that Paul seems to be, he is one who defends his honor and his actions as honorable before the tribunal of collectivist opinion. Paul's group orientation is evident in three mediums of ancient discourse: the encomium, the public defense speech and physiognomics.

In a brilliantly succinct and lucid overview of Hellenistic rhetorical education and practice (pp. 21–23), the encomium (a speech of praise) is extensively described. This particular kind of rhetorical composition praises the subject's origin and birth, nurture and training, accomplishments, and gives a comparison with others that is

favorable to the subject (pp. 23–33). Paul's self-descriptions in Galatians, Philippians and 2 Corinthians evince characteristics of a group-oriented person who stresses his honorable behavior. His is not a pursuit of individualistic success that is not in correspondence with prevailing social expectations for his group. Rather, Paul's piously loyal conduct toward God benefits the group.

Greco-Roman forensic rhetoric gives us a window on how the ancients perceived and described persons. Public defense speeches concern the same aspects of human designation as encomia. The discussion of such speeches by Malina and Neyrey is an excellent introduction to standard rhetorical composition. Their treatment of the speeches in Acts 22:1–30 and 26:1–32 explains the function of the basic parts of rhetorical arrangement: exordium, statement of facts, proof, refutation and peroration. The discourses of Acts serve as lenses through which to examine "how Paul is perceived and described according to the ancient native categories set forth in the forensic defense speech" (p. 77). Once again, Paul describes himself as a collectivist (not individualist) personality who has acted honorably. Standard categories furnish guidelines for Paul's defense, not personal and unique characteristics.

A final source of information about ancient persons is the genre of writing known as physiognomics, physical descriptions of individuals. Since physical constitution was regarded to determine a person's behavior and personality to a great extent, such descriptions were important. Certain anatomical features denote certain character qualities. Resemblances of a person to animals even provide a key to understanding that person's temperament. The ancient belief that a person's ethnic derivation determines her or his behavior influences physiognomics. Of course, ancient authors who espouse ethnic stereotypes are geocentric and ethnocentric: Their places of origin are the center of the world and their own ethnic groups represent normative human nature (p. 121)!

The apocryphal *Acts of Paul* (AD 160–190?) physiognomically depicts Paul: ". . . a man small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked, full of friendliness; for now he appeared like a man, and now he had the face of an angel" (*The Acts of Paul* 3:2). According to this description, Paul is "masculine, fearless, pious, virtuous, truthful, benevolent, but above all, fit for public life" (p. 148). This description may not actually describe Paul, but may have been created according to conceptions about him. The physical description has been made to fit what was known of Paul.

Malina and Neyrey certainly open up new vistas on the Pauline landscape. Their approach, to understand Paul in first-century terms through rhetorical and cultural standards, is certainly necessary. The problem of understanding Paul's boasting is solved with their treatment of group-embedded cultures and their emphasis on honor. Furthermore, anyone interested in understanding collectivist societies (which incorporate 70 percent of the world's inhabitants today, p. xv) would benefit from reading this book. It is clearly written with technical words helpfully explained.

The three objections that I raise about the book are minor compared to its great value. (1) The claim by the authors that Paul serves as a test case in constructing social psychology (pp. 6–7) led me to believe that suggestions would be given on extending their method to other Biblical persons, but nothing of the sort is provided in the book. One is left to do this on one's own, asking whether we have appropriate and sufficient data in the Scripture to develop a social psychology of Jesus or Peter, for instance.

(2) Perhaps the most personal and individualistic passage about Paul in the NT, Romans 7, is completely bypassed in *Portraits of Paul*. If ancient Mediterranean society was collectivist, what does one do with such personal expressions? Even in their

treatment of rhetoric, I believe Malina and Neyrey downplay the choices and behaviors that an individual could select.

(3) The analysis of Paul's character from his physical description in *The Acts of Paul* seems to stretch the evidence too far. Does Paul's hooked nose really indicate handsomeness and virtuousness? Does baldness indicate many vows and therefore piety?

I recommend this book for a better comprehension of Paul, his writing and his cultural world.

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Paul and the Nations: The Old Testament and Jewish Background of Paul's Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians. By James M. Scott. WUNT 84. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995, xvi + 272 pp., n.p.

A classic problem in NT studies concerns the addresses of Paul's letter to the Galatians and the closely related question of the date of the letter. It is exciting to discover in the present book not the unusual rehashing of old arguments, but a fresh, forward step that is dependent upon original research.

As he tells us in his preface, Scott began by looking at the question of Galatia from the standpoint of Greco-Roman geography, but was soon led to believe that the key lay in Paul's dependence upon Jewish geography as contained in the tradition of the "table of the nations" of Genesis 10. His first chapter is therefore devoted to an examination of the significance of the table in the other writings of the OT and in the literature of early Judaism. Scott shows how important the orientation provided by the table of nations is in providing these writers not only historical information about the past, but also in their thinking about the present and even the eschatological future. Paul's thorough Jewishness suggests the initial probability that he too conceived of the world in this way. Several maps and charts, including a large fold-out one, provide useful synopses.

Scott turns in chap. 2 to an examination of Paul's use of the word *ethnos*. As a preliminary he surveys in detail the use of the word in the LXX and Hellenistic Jewish writings. This is a theologically rich survey because Scott examines the word in its various contexts such as the Abrahamic covenant, the covenant with Israel, the settlement of Canaan, the sin of Israel, the exile of Israel and the restoration of Israel. The conclusion is that the plural *ethnē* is used to refer to the nations of the world, sometimes including, sometimes in distinction to, Israel, and that it is also used to refer to individual Gentiles. The examination of Paul's use of the word shows how thoroughly Jewish his perspective is.

In chap. 3 Scott pursues more specifically the role of the table of nations in Paul, focusing specifically on Rom 15:19. Paul is not only the "apostle to the nations," but his gospel is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant with its promise of blessing upon "all the nations of the earth." The reference "from Jerusalem" and "as far around as Illyricum" in Rom 15:19 points both to the centrality of Jerusalem and to the realm of the Japhethites as the sphere of Paul's missionary activity. Paul's whole missionary activity is based on the table of nations. Examination of Acts 17:26 leads Scott to the further conclusion that Luke was also influenced by the table of nations tradition. Indeed, the structure of Acts can be understood against this background: 2:1-8:25,

the mission to Shem; 8:26–40, the mission to Ham; and 9:1 to the end of the book, the mission to Japheth.

Finally, Scott turns to the meaning of all of this for the identity of the Galatians. When Paul thought of the Galatians, he was governed by the Jewish tradition of the table of nations. Josephus, using the same geographical paradigm, identified the Galatians with Gomer, the first son of Japheth. For him the territory of Gomer was equivalent to the Roman province of Galatia. Paul would have been of the same persuasion, according to Scott. This leads him to the conclusion that Paul probably sent his letter to the churches of south Galatia, or in the Jewish terminology, to Ashkenaz, the firstborn of the three sons of Gomer, who was assigned the southern portion of the territory.

It is important to be clear on what Scott has accomplished in this book. He has not proven the south Galatian hypothesis. But by removing what is perhaps the most significant obstacle to that hypothesis, he has made a most important contribution to the discussion of the question. For, if Paul is operating with the Jewish geography of the table of nations in his mind—and Scott provides a convincing argument that he is—then he cannot be bound by the common Greco-Roman usage of *Galatai* to refer not to the Roman province, but ethnically to the people of north Galatia. For him, Galatia would have been naturally thought of as the territory of Gomer, son of Japheth. It still remains possible on this hypothesis that the letter is addressed to churches in north Galatia. But with the terminological problem dissolved, the south Galatia hypothesis looks more appealing than ever especially, as Scott points out, when Acts provides information only concerning the evangelization of the churches in the south.

It remains only to say that Scott's book is a model of what a scholarly monograph should be. It is based on extensive research in both primary and secondary literatures and it is a model of clarity, both in argument and prose. This is scholarship at its best.

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The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. By James D. G. Dunn. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, xvii + 388 pp., \$32.00.

James D. G. Dunn has followed his commentaries on Romans and Galatians with a very readable commentary on Colossians and Philemon. The commentary is, of course, on the Greek text, and that will put some potential readers off, while being welcomed by others. The format is that of the NIGTC, which means that citations of both ancient and modern authors are in parentheses in the text rather than in footnotes. This is less expensive to typeset, but also harder to read. Dunn could control neither the use of Greek text nor the NIGTC format, but he has triumphed over them in producing a commentary that is a good read as well as good scholarship.

The book itself is divided into two parts approximating the relative sizes of the two works (290 pages for Colossians and 60 for Philemon). A bibliography and an introduction precede the commentary on each of the two books. The introduction flows naturally. For instance, in the case of Colossians it begins with what Dunn feels are the easier questions to answer and ends with the hardest (place of authorship). The commentary is divided into sections of a few verses, each beginning with an English translation of the passage. Verse-by-verse commentary on the section follows, each

comment beginning with the Greek text of the verse. The English translation makes the commentary useful by people who may have forgotten most of their Greek (or perhaps never learned any).

Dunn takes a creative position on several matters of introduction. He positions Colossians between the genuine Pauline letters and the post-Pauline letters (Ephesians and the pastorals) by arguing that it was written by someone other than Paul, perhaps a trusted co-worker, while Paul was still alive. Thus Paul approved it, yet it shows someone else's development of Paul's thought. This, Dunn believes, accounts for both the differences from earlier Pauline works and the personal greetings, which would be meaningless or worse if Paul was long dead. Turning to Philemon he suggests that Onesimus had not run away, since Paul does not raise issues pertinent to such a situation, but rather had gone to Paul as a respected third party who could mediate a dispute he had with Philemon. This is not a work of expected positions of either the left or right, but the work of a creative thinker.

It is this freshness that leads to the main criticism of the work, namely that there is not more of it. For instance, when Dunn argues concerning Col 1:15 that wisdom Christology does not imply pre-existence for either Torah (the main Jewish expression of wisdom) or Christ, one recognizes that this is a theme of Dunn's (i.e. that Paul never indicates belief in the pre-existence of Christ, although later works like Hebrews and John do), but one would like more evidence. Some Jews did believe in the pre-existence of Torah; were they only late 1st-century Jews? Does not such a major conclusion take more than two or three pages to argue? It is not that one necessarily disagrees, nor that it affects a major doctrine (in that other authors do teach pre-existence), but that one wants to stop the stream of thought and ask for more data.

Besides brevity, there is at least one topic that is missing, i.e. rhetorical analysis. While some rhetorical analysis is implicit in the structure presented for the letters, one wishes it were more explicit. Given that this letter was written in a Greco-Roman context, and that rhetorical analysis has proved so fruitful for works as diverse as Galatians and Hebrews, it is somewhat glaring in its absence here.

I conclude, then, that this is a fine commentary and a worthy addition to the NIGTC series. Its readability will make pastors who can handle the Greek text happily reach for it and professors select it as a textbook. Its appropriate use of cultural background and its current scholarship reinforce this impression. Yet there will be times when the reader is frustrated by its brevity. It is, as Marshall and Hagner say in the foreword, "something less technical than a full-scale critical commentary." If the prospective reader bears this purpose in mind, he or she will be delighted with this work, finding Dunn readable and stimulating whether or not one agrees with this or that particular position he takes.

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1 Peter. By Paul J. Achtemeier. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996, xxxvi + 423 pp., \$50.00.

This Paul J. Achtemeier's long-awaited *magnum opus* does not disappoint. It may soon prove to be the definitive work on that letter. The author fulfills the purpose of the Hermeneia series (to provide a grammatical-historical commentary for the serious student of the Bible) as well as his own purpose: To furnish the materials for informed exegetical decisions that respect the work of other interpreters as well as to

provide "an encounter" with the letter (p. xv). Achtemeier's commentary is a model of fair and balanced treatment of the primary and secondary literature.

The audience of the commentary is scholars, graduate students and pastors (who have kept up on their Greek!). Little is to be found in the way of devotional or homiletical suggestions, but the exegesis builds a solid foundation for their development by the user. The format consists of an introduction to 1 Peter, a commentary that follows the outline of the ancient letter-form and bibliography (22 pp., double-columned), along with indexes.

According to Achtemeier, 1 Peter is a pseudonymous letter, written between 80 and 100 CE from Rome. The missive embodies traditions historically associated with Peter. Its recipients are mixed Jewish-Gentile congregations in Asia Minor whose members represent a broad spectrum of social and economic characteristics. Suffering is a prominent theme in the letter, and the purpose of the communication is to strengthen its recipients during their present suffering. The glorious future that awaits them has already begun to transform their oppressed state into one of victory (cf. 1 Pet 4:13). The nature of suffering in 1 Peter is not of an official and universal imperial persecution. Slandorous harassment that is local and unofficial is the kind of suffering that the readers undergo (although they may encounter occasional legal intervention). The readiness to present a defense (*ἀπολογία*) in 1 Pet 3:15 is likely a preparation to give account to informal demands of inquirers during daily social intercourse.

The major strengths of the commentary are its interaction with all points of scholarly discussion of 1 Peter and the author's own exegetical conclusions. I find particularly informative Achtemeier's discussion of the social background of the audience for 1 Peter. His insights on slavery and the place of women in the ancient world make 1 Pet 2:18–25 and 3:1–6 more understandable respectively. Since John H. Elliott's monumental *A Home for the Homeless* (1981), the meanings of *παροικος* ("resident alien," 2:11) and *παρεπίδημος* ("visiting stranger," 1:1, 2:11) have been debated. Contra Elliott, Achtemeier believes that these terms refer not to socio-political dispossession and estrangement of believers before and after conversion. Rather, the terms express the believers' relationship with their own cultural environment which is hostile to their Christian stance. Neither should one understand "alien" and "stranger" to indicate a metaphorical exile of Christians from their heavenly home.

Among Achtemeier's helpful exegetical insights is his suggestion of the meaning of *ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπος* ("meddler," NIV) in 1 Pet 4:15. To this word Achtemeier devotes an excursus as well as commentary proper. He translates the term "one who defrauds others," that is, one who embezzles. His decision is based on careful analysis of comparable terms elsewhere (Aristides, Pliny the Younger, Tertullian, the NT itself).

The comment and translation of 5:5–7 are also enlightening. The verb *ταπεινώθητε* in v. 6 means "accept your humble status," and is accompanied by the phrase "casting all your cares upon him," whose participle (*ἐπιρίψαντες*), may well have instrumental force: "casting one's cares on God is the means by which one accepts one's humble status" (p. 339). The casting is like that of casting cloaks upon a donkey (Luke 19:35), so that the cares may be borne away. Because God's care is sure, the hope in vindication after present suffering is also sure.

Weaknesses of this commentary are few and practically negligible in light of its solid discussion on all critical matters, but the shortcomings may be mentioned briefly. Although Achtemeier is commendably correct to advise caution in identifying Petrine participles as imperatival, he seems to err in another matter of Greek verbs. In my opinion, he ascribes too much temporal significance to aorist and present imperatives (see his commentary on 1 Pet 1:13–16). Recent discussion of verbal aspect

suggests that tense of imperatives indicates either undefined (aorist) or continuous (present) action, without regard to its temporal significance (cf. Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 1994).

The introduction of the commentary identifies rhetorical elements in 1 Peter, but Achtemeier bypasses further rhetorical investigation in the commentary itself for the most part. That omission frustrates the reader since he is led to believe that 1 Peter is amenable to such analysis. Lauri Thuren's *The Rhetorical Strategy of 1 Peter* (1990) appears in the bibliography, but I did not find a citation of it by Achtemeier (Thuren's name does not appear in the index).

On the whole, however, Achtemeier's *1 Peter* is presently *the* necessary commentary on that letter for the serious student. It is a bargain even for its price.

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The NIV Application Commentary: The Letters of John. By Gary M. Burge. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, 264 pp., \$19.99. *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John.* by Georg Strecker. Translated by Linda M. Malony. Edited by Harold Attridge. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996, pp. xlv + 319, \$46.00.

Once relatively neglected, the Johannine epistles have been the subject of an astonishing array of substantial studies since the early 1980s. Commentaries or commentary-like monographs have flowed from the pens of Raymond Brown, Flemming Jensen, Gerd Schunack, Pierre Bonnard, Kenneth Grayston, Stephen Smalley, John Stott, Edmond Hiebert, Judith Lieu, Rudolf Schnackenburg, Marianne Meye Thompson and Dietrich Rusam—and the list is not exhaustive. Furthermore, there was no dearth of older commentaries in the first place. Is there really any need for more?

In theory the answer would seem to be no. But in fact, both Burge and Strecker have provided studies that interpret John's letters in more effective ways than their predecessors, at least in certain respects.

Burge's study may be regarded as a North American equivalent of Stott's Tynedale Commentary (revised 1988) on these letters. That is, he shares Stott's general theological outlook and concern for practical application by believers. Also like Stott, Burge is not trying to replace I. H. Marshall's longer, more academic commentary, which is still the standard evangelical work. Both Burge and Stott seek to combine the fruits of scholarship with pastoral wisdom to produce books that will help pastors and serious lay readers grasp the text's meaning in its own milieu as well as its significance for life today.

Burge falls short of Stott's standard at times in the areas of literary grace and pastoral wisdom. But this is a weak criticism. How many anywhere can match Stott's expository gifts informed by years of pastoral dedication? Burge excels Stott in cognitive of more recent Johannine studies and immediate applicability to the North American scene. He has written an excellent text for individual study, for adult education in churches and for English Bible classes in colleges or seminary.

Burge regards all three epistles as written by John, who also wrote the gospel traditionally associated with his name. Burge thinks however that the final version of the gospel is the result of editing of an earlier draft by John's followers after his death. The epistles were written ca. AD 70–90 in the general vicinity of Ephesus. "First John is the author's full broadside against his opponents, while 2 and 3 John are personal notes that either accompanied 1 John or were sent separately to another destination" (p. 41). There is little in Burge's introductory sections that is far removed

from traditional treatment of the relevant data, though at certain points lack of demarcation of his own views from far more critical ones may not always be sufficient for the needs of some readers.

From this foundation Burge treats each literary division of the letters in sequence. The format is: NIV translation of a passage (e.g. 1 John 1:8–2:2); “Original Meaning” (exegesis and exposition); “Bridging Contexts” (finding points of contact between the ancient setting and today); and “Contemporary Significance” (applying John’s message to modern issues or concerns). For the record, of these pages 48% are devoted to exegesis, 14% to erecting bridges and 38% to application. This truly is an “application” commentary compared to most, as its title promises. As a result it is quite interesting to read. Assuming the application is sound, this means that Burge communicates John’s message effectively—far more effectively than if he dwelt at greater length on exposition, which can easily become boring to non-specialists. The main liability lies in how quickly these applications will come to sound out of date.

While Burge has authored a well-informed but semi-popular manual of John’s meaning and message, Strecker (1929–1994), a student of Rudolf Bultmann and former NT professor at the University of Göttingen, contributes a critical commentary in the strict sense. By rough estimate there are more words in the footnotes than in the exegesis-exposition itself. No scholarly stone or even pebble appears to be left unturned. Here is a wealth of discussion of both primary and secondary sources. As is usual for volumes in the *Hermeneia* series, knowledge of Greek is required to make sense of the discussion.

Strecker seeks “critical readers who are open-minded enough to question traditional positions” (p. xiii). This warning is salutary, as “traditional positions” are not merely questioned but consistently put to flight with no mercy and few exceptions. The apostle John wrote none of the canonical documents bearing his name. Instead, a Johannine school produced them: “The authority of John the son of Zebedee . . . [was] transferred in the second century to the founder of the Johannine school” (p. 75). Within this loosely defined school, different authors (among them possibly Papias’ *presbyteros*; see Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 3.39) are responsible for 1 John, 2–3 John and the gospel of John, respectively. That is, there were at least three Johns, or non-Johns. Moreover, 2–3 John were written first, around 100 and possibly as late as ca. 130, with 1 John coming later and the gospel later still. What about *p*⁵² (containing portions of John 18 and dating to 125) and p. Eger. 2 (containing Johannine-sounding gospel fragments and dating to the mid-2nd century)? These early dates “should be relegated to the realm of the creation of pious legends” (p. xli, n. 78). This directly contradicts the conclusions of Kurt and Barbara Aland (among many others), and it may be the first time they have ever been accused of creating pious legends about early Christianity. Strecker cites research suggesting that both of these renowned papyri ought to be dated “around the year 200 or in the third century” (*ibid.*).

In other words, by Strecker’s reckoning we are not all that far from returning to the same date for John’s gospel prescribed by F. C. Baur of Tübingen fame. Whether Strecker achieves his stated goal of moving beyond “scholarly discussion” to aid “the church’s preaching” (p. xiii) depends on how compatible his deconstruction of early Christian history is with the historical understanding and theology of those who seek guidance for gospel proclamation from his commentary.

The value of Strecker’s exegetical discussion and 19 detailed excurses should not be underestimated, however questionable his position on introductory questions. His exploration of the many disputed passages in the Johannine epistles is invariably informative and stimulating. His redaction-critical approach is less difficult to follow than e.g. Raymond Brown’s complicated and shifting theory of a burgeoning, often warring Johannine community. (It should be pointed out, however, that Strecker,

again reflecting old Tübingen School *Tendenzen*, sees polemics, not faith or love or ethics or even Christology, to be at the center of “John’s” epistles.) The lengthy footnotes are a cornucopia of learning. This is a “must have” commentary for any teacher or preacher whose learning and ministry calls for familiarity with the most rigorous (though not always the most accurate) scholarship on the Johannine epistles.

What should be pointed out in summing up such a formidably learned commentary, one no doubt destined for prominence in coming decades, is the very traditional nature of its findings. It is right in line with its historical-critical predecessors and distinguishes itself more by the comprehensiveness of its discussion and up-to-dateness of its bibliography than by any fundamentally new findings. This is understandable: After two hundred years of skepticism applied to all evidences of Christian origins, the stock of new theories that promise to enlighten or even offer any stock value is pretty much exhausted (and the Jesus Seminar is rapidly discovering and exploiting even these). Few could do a better job than Strecker of breathing life into the old bones of his school of thought applied to John’s epistles. But he is fighting a very steep uphill battle.

This is not only because the modernist positivism of his historiography is being rapidly jettisoned by academics more enamored of postmodernism than of his classic Continental historical criticism, or by those more committed to sociologically informed hermeneutics. It is because ministers and scholars of various persuasions (Burge, above, is an example) are realizing, not just on credal but also on documentary grounds, that there is no compelling reason to share Strecker’s apparent optimism that his conjectural reconstruction of a second-century milieu producing the Johannine corpus is valid. More first-century and patristic data are accounted for on the theory that the apostle John was with Jesus and later wrote a gospel and three extant epistles. Strecker still arrives at observations and reflections of importance. But treatments like those of Burge and Stott, Marshall and Bruce, Westcott and Law, and even Luther and Calvin and Matthew Henry and Henry Alford, retain equal importance precisely for Strecker’s stated goal of uniting truth with the ministry of proclamation.

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In Praise of Virtue: An Exploration of the Biblical Virtues in a Christian Context. By Benjamin W. Farley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, x + 181 pp., \$13.00 paper.

This book is designed to offer the reader an introduction to virtue ethics found in the Bible. Farley presents his survey of the Biblical data against the backdrop of discussions, both ancient and modern, about virtues in philosophical ethics and the concerns of feminism.

The author’s thesis is that an investigation of Bible reveals that, from a Christian standpoint, these virtues are ultimately grounded in the redemptive initiatives of God, which is manifest from the very beginning by the creation of human beings in the divine image; they are the dispositions and activities of a life lived in accordance with the love of God and the love of the neighbor. He opens with a chapter that presents summaries of the contributions of several important thinkers of the Western tradition, in whose reflections the virtues play a significant role (Aristotle, Aquinas, Nietzsche and Hauerwas). What follows are four chapters (two on the OT and two on the NT) on what he considers to be the relevant Biblical materials. The closing chap-

ter summarizes the content and relevancy of the theological virtues and suggests that a commitment to common human virtues would allow for interreligious cooperation within our pluralistic world.

For those unacquainted with contemporary virtue ethics theory and its long historical trajectory, Farley's book can serve as a helpful primer. His handling of both testaments can also alert the reader to read the text for insights into the kind of character and life that reflects belief in God. I must confess, however, that I was disappointed in the book, because I had hoped that it would deliver more. I will limit my observations to two.

First, in regards to the Biblical discussion, Farley appears to write as a philosopher or professor of religion who has awareness of Biblical studies of only a certain sort. His lack of familiarity with recent work in the relevant fields makes his book less than satisfying. For example, in the OT chapters he obviously holds to classical critical theories and utilizes its terminology (e.g. "saga" and "epic" for Genesis narratives) and assumes its findings (such as J, P, Second Isaiah). But the sources that he quotes are all dated (such as Eichrodt, Weiser and Mowinckel), and he does not appear to know of more recent work that would call into question some of those theories. In addition, he mentions them only in passing, but without pointing out how such critical approaches actually aid his reading of the text for virtues. What does it matter that the Priestly account says that male and female are created in the image of God, or that it is the Yahwist who declares that humans are interdependent beings? In contrast, studies written by competent Biblical scholars who are also versed in ethics are claiming that in virtue ethics one should focus on canon and narrative: For the ordinary Christian it is the received Scripture in its final form that will be the orientation for the virtues. These authors, because of their careful readings of the text, offer more nuanced and informative insights into the Bible and the virtues embodied and encouraged there.

If my first criticism underscores Biblical shortcomings, my second senses theological inadequacies. While an attentiveness to feminist concerns is timely and necessary, it is frustrating to see how far Farley will go to avoid any reference to God that might be gender related (i.e. "he"). Thus what the reader encounters is "God," "Creator-God" and "the Eternal." The last name mentioned sounds more like philosophical than Biblical nomenclature, even though the claim is that the book highlights the Bible. The last section of the final chapter (pp. 173–177), which postulates that virtue ethics can facilitate interreligious appreciation, also touches on a crucial contemporary concern, but once more the reader is left wondering if the author has adequately dealt with issues of uniqueness and difference.

In sum, *In Praise of Virtue* might serve the uninitiated as an initial foray into Biblical virtue ethics. Other authors, however, must guide those who might be more well-versed into a more serious study of the Scriptures and their interface with this school of ethics.

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