

BOOK REVIEWS

The Catholic Roots of the Protestant Gospel: Encounter Between the Reformation. By Stephen Strehle. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996, 146 pp., \$67.50.

With this new work that analyzes the various formative influences of medieval Catholic theological and philosophical thinking upon the central elements of the Reformation gospel, Stephen Strehle establishes himself yet more firmly as one of the finest and most capable evangelical historical theologians today. He is also a scholar willing to buck the tide, the accepted views, in the pursuit of a clearer picture of our theological underpinnings, especially in relation to late medieval, reformational, and post-reformational scholastic developments. In *Catholic Roots of the Protestant Gospel*, Strehle exposes the glaring error of much of Protestantism's view of medieval Catholicism, a view often espousing pure antithesis and the creation of strawmen, and then clarifies the strong lineage all Protestants have in numerous developments in Roman Catholic thought. In this way he hopes too that healing and not further entrenchment result from the exposure of these connections. Through his process, Strehle is not intending to negate the "spirit of the Reformation" but to correct its more unfortunate tendencies—especially among the scholastic heirs.

After a helpful introduction Strehle wrestles with five of the many elements of the "Protestant gospel." In each case, we find that the "gospel" was not suddenly "recovered" by a pure, direct reading of Paul after centuries of "Romanist" or "papal" corruption, but arose directly and indirectly from several of the many streams of theological development which made up the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. Indeed, it seems that much of the Reformation was not so much anti-Catholic at its heart as it was a specific response (and often a reaction) to the dominant Thomistic orthodoxy. In the face of this edifice, the Reformers are found to teach faith and assurance, certitude against "doctrines of doubt." Particular emphasis was placed upon the full saving effectiveness of Christ's *past* work upon the cross, security, deductivistic salvation schemes, and "federal" conditions of redemption.

Throughout his discussion, Strehle's purposes are largely genealogical, critical, and corrective. In uncovering the Catholic lineage of these elements of the Protestant gospel, he is able also to show the problematic effects in each case, effects which have usually ended in the loss of much of the original insights of the two leading Reformers, Luther and Calvin. Various lines of Catholic theological thinking—especially from Duns Scotus and Ockham, elements of predestinarian thought from Augustine and Erasmus, coupled with that ultimate theological guideline (!), Aristotle's "law of contradiction"—are found to be the bases from which and by which Lutheranism and Calvinism, as distinct from Luther and Calvin, waged theological battle with the Thomistic orthodoxy of Roman Catholicism. But these Catholic theological elements, as coupled with the distinctive concerns of the Reformation, created seemingly insuperable tensions and destructive dichotomies/dualisms within the doctrines of God, Christ and redemption, tensions that Luther and Calvin were usually able to hold together.

By way of recommendation, *The Catholic Roots of the Protestant Gospel* is needed scholarship. Strehle has given us an excellent and penetrating work. It is a work which faces up to the all too common vitriol of so much of Reformed orthodoxy—a tradition

almost legendary in its inability to be self-critical. The scope of this work, contrary to the usual hagiography and divisive historico-theological apologetics, is to inject into Protestant theological tradition and future Protestant-Roman Catholic dialogue the fresh air of confession, self-criticism, and recognition of real theological relationship as well as difference. As such, with all of the excellent historico-theological scholarship contained in this succinct volume, Strehle admits the presence of much negative criticism, but as he states from the beginning, the purpose of this book is not to extol the virtues of the Reformation and its successors ("which are considerable") but to "confess its faults and admit its excesses." Strehle's contribution is found in his clearing of the ground as well as in some theological, christological, soteriological and ecclesiological synthesis of his own. *Catholic Roots* leaves us all uncomfortable at many points, but its blows are the blows of a friend and of one seeking reconciliation in the context of the real truth of God in the living Jesus Christ.

By way of criticism, a few concerns need to be expressed. First, Strehle's critical analysis seems, from time to time, to rise in negativity of portrayal beyond what is needed. Choice of terms, inclusions, images created in the process of argument do on occasion become somewhat "strawy" (to borrow a term from Luther). This tendency may have been engendered by the wrath of the "Reformed faithful" that Strehle has received from his previous in-depth, groundbreaking scholarship regarding Reformation theological developments (e.g. *Calvinism, Federalism and Scholasticism*). Also, Strehle acknowledges a "deconstructionist" methodology and thus, to some extent, the negation of authorial intent. To the extent that Strehle approaches the thought of these theologians in the post-modernist fashion of Derrida or Rorty (who is explicitly referred to), and thus with the negation of objectivity and all "Logocentrism," I must say *Nein!* But my sense is that Strehle is not strictly deconstructing the Lutheran and Reformed tradition but looking carefully not only at explicit expression, but to less obvious lines of thought as well, for clear but (for the author) unconscious influences that led to both insightful and problematic outcomes.

In any case, Stephen Strehle's work must be regarded as one of the most significant historical-theological works in some time. On the whole excellent. Must reading.

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Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach. By W. Randolph Tate. Revised ed. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997, xxvi + 276 pp., \$24.95.

One of the fun things about following hermeneutical theory in the 1990s is watching critics from diverse fields and backgrounds wade into the field of biblical interpretation and attempt to set the discipline straight. In this regard, W. R. Tate's *Biblical Interpretation* does not disappoint. It seems that he too has been watching the hermeneutical battle-lines shift with each new charge, and he has advanced into the fray in an attempt to rally the disparate contenders as allies rather than foes.

Tate's premise is that the meaning of texts "results from a conversation between the world of the text and the world of the reader" (p. xxiv). Whereas other interpretive models give primacy to the author, the text itself or the reader, Tate sets forth an egalitarian model in which these three components concert together to manufacture meaning. For him, meaning is not located in any one (or two) of these provinces. Rather, meaning is "found . . . in the interplay between all three worlds" (p. xxv).

Following a brief introduction in which Tate proffers his thesis, the book is divided into three units. Unit one is dedicated to the historical "world behind the text" (author),

unit two to the “world within the text” (text), and unit three to the “world in front of the text” (reader). Each unit alternates back and forth between descriptions of diverse theories and techniques and Tate’s own suggestions regarding the process of interpretation. The only new component in the revised edition of the book is the inclusion of a brief interpretation of the gospel of Mark.

What is unique about this textbook is the third unit, in which Tate offers a phenomenological explanation of precisely what happens when we read. It should be emphasized that Tate is not a reader-response aficionado. His discussion of the role of the reader in interpretation emphasizes the psychological process involved; it does not champion the right of a reader to assign meaning without regard for the semantic value of the signs represented. Tate is highly dependent upon W. Iser and U. Eco in this unit, neither of whom (despite persistent misconceptions) can be construed as a reader-response critic.

It is Tate’s carefully constricted definitions of each of these worlds that enable him to attempt an “integration.” Tate has limited the role of the author in interpretation just as carefully as he limited the role of the reader. By “world of the author,” Tate does not mean the (inaccessible) intentions of a historical author (*pace* Schleiermacher). The influence of the author, we are told, is manifested in the cultural coding of the text. For Tate, biblical texts are as much a product of an implied socio-cultural background as any other ancient literature. He exhorts interpreters to become fluent in the social and material culture of the historical authors in order properly to decode their semiotics. Having so delimited his categories, what Tate has offered us is little more than the grammatical-historical method tempered by some literary insights and an awareness of one’s subconscious activities during the reading process.

Tate’s book suffers from two weaknesses, one of design and one of method. By design, Tate intends not only to present his own hermeneutical model but also to triage the agglomeration of contemporary hermeneutical theory. The sheer mass of synthesized material represented here is impressive. However, one wonders what sort of ideal novice Tate has in mind to whom he is writing. The book reads like an annotated catalogue of issues, terms, and procedures. I strongly suspect that the majority of beginning students will be able to achieve little more than gleaning isolated insights and vocabulary during a first reading.

The methodological problem is more foundational. Tate assumes that the Bible is written like any other piece of literature, or rather, that it is written like *all* other types of literature. He fails to interrogate the biblical text to determine whether or not it is that kind of literature requiring historical background for comprehension (e.g. metafiction). Neither does he question whether or not the biblical text expects readers to assign meaning (e.g. metaphysical poetry). The remedy for this problem has two components. First, a consistent biblical hermeneutic must locate and account for those comments made by the text which point out its own hermeneutical self-awareness (e.g. Gen 12:6; Ruth 4:7; John 4:9). Second, if one takes seriously the evangelical claim that the biblical text is itself revelation (rather than merely a record of revelation), then we must adopt a hermeneutic that accounts for this unique quality. While Tate does briefly mention the vital impact of bibliology upon the construction of a biblical hermeneutic, I cannot detect any attempt to knit theological commitment together with his hermeneutical model. While Tate has managed a limited integration of certain hermeneutical models, he has failed to integrate contemporary hermeneutical theory with the demands of a revelatory text.

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Recent Reference Books in Religion: A Guide for Students, Scholars, Researchers, Buyers and Readers. By William M. Johnston. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996, 318 pp., n.p.

The principal aim of the *Guide* is to inform the researcher about the functions and goals of the wide variety of recent reference books in religion.

The *Guide* scrutinizes 318 major reference works published from 1970 through October 1995. The directory assesses reference books in the world's religions, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Asian religions, and alternative approaches to religion. The *Guide* devotes special attention to reference works in Christianity, including those treating ecumenism, Biblical studies (Bible dictionaries, commentaries and handbooks of interpretation), theology, spirituality, churches and denominations, and periods of church history. For example, the *Guide* acquaints readers with *A Dictionary Of Biblical Interpretation*, edited by R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, which is a handbook of interpretation. For those interested in researching theological subjects, the *Guide* introduces *Twentieth Century Religious Thought* by John Macquarrie as a good point of entry into the field. For those interested in spirituality, works of interest include *Christian Spirituality: The Essential Guide to the Most Influential Spiritual Writings of the Christian Tradition*, edited by Frank Magill and Ian McGreal. While English-language works are emphasized, significant books in French and German are also noted, especially those with multilingual bibliographies.

The beauty of the *Guide* is its function as a tool to facilitate informed choice. "It helps the scholar to decide which works to consult. It helps the student to initiate research" (p. 10). Each of the 318 entries is classified according to function. By providing a glossary of 22 types and functions of reference works, the *Guide* generates a phenomenology of reference works and their uses. Hence, the *Guide* becomes a very useful tool to alert the researcher to what a given reference work can and cannot accomplish.

Another user-friendly aspect of the *Guide* is its evaluation of reference works. Most of the 318 entries are evaluated in terms of "Scope," "Strengths," "Weaknesses," "Competitors" and "Summary." "The goal is to delineate coverage, highlight outstanding articles and contributors, specify omissions and situate a work in relation to its rivals" (p. 11). Thus, at a glance, the researcher can determine how a reference work will or will not aid research.

Yet another way in which the *Guide* functions as a tool is in differentiating between past-oriented works and future-oriented works. The former alerts the researcher that a reference work recapitulates what is already known: data, methods, research problems, general acquaintance with a field for a nonspecialist, and a synoptic view of the field. The latter alerts the researcher that a reference work is revisionist, that is, either innovative or advocating what remains to be achieved.

On balance, the *Guide* is an excellent tool for the researcher who has to venture into unfamiliar fields. Students writing theses and dissertations will find superb guidance through the overabundance of reference works. Teachers who are responsible for classes in research methods might wish to introduce their students to the *Guide*.

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New Testament Greek. 2nd ed. By Gerald L. Stevens. Lanham: University Press of America, 1997, xv + 496 pp., \$29.00; *New Testament Greek Workbook.* 2nd ed. By Gerald L. Stevens. Lanham: University Press of America, 1997, xii + 290 pp., \$19.95 paper.

It has been said that the ratio of Greek grammars to Greek professors is ten to nine. That may be true; I have more than a dozen Greek grammars on my own shelves.

With all of these grammars available, why did Stevens author another one? His goal is to contribute "an appealing text" with more tables, generous graphics, and greater point size (p. xvii). In keeping with Stevens's goal, the second edition of his grammar contains more than 380 tables and numerous graphics in its 34 lessons. The first 17 lessons introduce the verb (present and imperfect indicatives and contracts) and cover all other topics; the remaining lessons focus on the rest of the verb system. The lessons are supplemented by four appendixes ("On the Art of Translation," "Glossary," "Annotated Bibliography," and "Charts"), paradigms and tables, three different vocabularies (Greek-English, Greek by Lesson, English-Greek), and an index of subjects. The abundant supplementary material (173 pp.) even contains a discussion of deponent verbs, followed by a list of all the deponents in the NT.

Three characteristics of this grammar stand out in my mind. First, it is a beginning and intermediate grammar. As such it contains syntax discussions that go beyond beginning grammar, such as the treatment of indirect discourse (pp. 225–226), uses of the participle (pp. 289–300) and the uses of the definite article (pp. 188–190). The grammar also teaches accent rules, diagramming, noun contraction, as well as containing a chapter on numerals and providing 12 extra illustrations from textual criticism and Greek manuscripts, all of which are omitted in some first-year courses. Second, the approach of this grammar is traditional. Stevens is aware of the current debate concerning the grammaticalization of time in the Greek verb, and he notes that the "primary function of the Greek tense is to indicate kind of action" (p. 23), but his approach to this issue is traditional. He describes Greek verb tense as having two elements, time and aspect. Perhaps more importantly, the grammar is also traditional in its emphasis on learning paradigms and forms. It occasionally touches on the linguistic and morphological rules that are the basis of these forms (i.e. the thematic or connecting vowel [pp. 29–32]), but the discussion of these details in the grammar is not complete enough to enable the student to explain all the forms. One wonders if it might have been better to avoid these issues, if they were not going to be used throughout the grammar. Third, the syntax discussions in this grammar follow the categories and terminology in *Syntax of New Testament Greek* by Brooks and Winbery, and the morphological analysis in the grammar "in the main conforms to their material on morphology" (p. xix) in *Morphology of New Testament Greek: A Review and Reference Grammar*. These two proven works could be combined with Stevens's grammar to form the basis of a school's Greek program.

The workbook contains "programmed learning material supplementing the information presented in the text" (p. ix). Each chapter in the workbook includes objective questions based on the corresponding chapter in the grammar, and beginning in chap. 3 the workbook has translation exercises. There is also an answer key for all the questions and translation exercises, plus a basic English grammar at the back of the workbook. The objective questions are an excellent way to review the content of the chapters, but the simplicity of the translations and the almost complete lack of parsing exercises will be a disappointment to some. A teacher's manual containing overhead masters is available to use with the grammar, and a vocabulary subset for the *Mem-cards* software from Memorization Technology is being planned to aid in learning the assigned vocabulary.

Stevens's knowledge of and love for Greek are evident in these two books. Although I might differ with him on a few points (the discussion of "determined" conditional sentences, pp. 146–148, 266; the treatment of the Granville Sharp rule, p. 385), I am indebted to him for providing a beginning/intermediate grammar of NT Greek that in many ways goes beyond anything else available. However, I am afraid that for some this strength may also be the grammar's greatest weakness. In spite of the many charts, graphs and tables, the grammar does not give the impression of clarity and conciseness, which are so important for beginning students. The chapters are packed

with information, which often goes beyond the needs of beginners. Even though some of the material is labeled advanced and can be skipped, one wonders if all of this information may frustrate some beginners. Also, some first-year grammar teachers will not be satisfied with the emphasis on syntax at the expense of morphology, parsing, and more intense translation. Others, including the many who are already satisfied with this grammar, and those who desire a beginning/intermediate grammar with a traditional approach to NT Greek, will benefit greatly from Stevens's work. Greek students and teachers have a wealth of tools at their disposal, and Stevens has enriched us further.

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Biblical Greek Exegesis: A Graded Approach to Learning Intermediate and Advanced Greek. By George H. Guthrie and J. Scott Duvall. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, 186 pp. \$24.99 paper.

This book is the most recent addition to Zondervan's series of textbooks on NT Greek. Designed to be used in part with W. Mounce's *A Graded Reader of Biblical Greek* (Zondervan, 1996), the book is, as the subtitle indicates, "A Graded Approach to Learning Intermediate and Advanced Greek." While appreciative of the traditional approach to teaching syntax (which begins in an upper-level grammar with exercises comprised largely of verses taken out of their Biblical context), the authors contend that its pedagogical problems warrant a new approach (p. 10). They thus propose "a graded, modified-inductive approach" to teaching Greek syntax (p. 11). Students begin with easier texts and syntactical concepts and move to more difficult ones (hence "graded"); they begin with the Biblical text, move to grammars, then go back to the text (hence "modified-inductive"). The emphasis on learning syntax by studying Biblical texts in their contexts has the pedagogical advantage of keeping the study of Greek syntax in the larger process of exegesis and thus integrating syntax, diagramming, and exegesis "right from the beginning of intermediate Greek" (p. 11).

The authors begin with brief but important prefaces for teachers and students, both of which should be read. They then present their approach in two main sections. Section one treats intermediate (or second-year) Greek, and is devoted to diagramming and syntax, in that order. The authors distinguish between grammatical diagramming (dealing with the syntactical relationships between words and word groups in sentences) and semantic diagramming (the relationships between sentences and paragraphs), and give considerable attention to each (pp. 27–37 and 39–53, respectively). Since diagramming is an important part of this overall approach to exegesis, teachers and students will want to read these explanations carefully and consult them often.

Syntax is introduced inductively in section one by means of syntax and diagramming exercises keyed to the first nine chapters/passages in Mounce's *Graded Reader*. In each exercise students are asked to translate a portion of a larger Biblical passage from Mounce (about four to seven verses at a time) and to parse and identify the syntactical function of selected "clued" words and phrases (about eight to ten at a time). Students learn syntax at this point by beginning with the Biblical text, consulting syntax summaries (either in Mounce's *Graded Reader* or D. Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* [Zondervan, 1996]), then moving back to the Biblical texts.

One concern some may have is that the somewhat random nature of this approach may result in important grammatical points being overlooked. When I raised this question at the Southeastern Regional ETS meeting in March 1998, Guthrie noted that a

very large number of categories are in fact covered in this approach (well over 100 main categories by that point in the semester). What is more, professors are always free to supplement or fill in the gaps by the more traditional approach as they proceed through the book.

Section two discusses exegetical method. The authors' purpose in this section, which deals with matters typically handled in advanced or third-year Greek, is to lead the student to incorporate knowledge of syntax and diagramming "into the larger world of New Testament exegesis" (p. 99). The authors offer a 12-step exegetical method. While there is little new here, the explanations are clear and the bibliographies current (as much as bibliographies can be) and broad (but alas, none of the standard Reformed systematic theologies are listed in chap. 9). The discussions of "Spiritual Preparation" (step one) and "Application" (step 11) are especially good.

This book is a helpful addition to an already valuable series of Greek texts. I am anxious to try the book in my own teaching; I would encourage other Greek teachers to consider it seriously.

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The Graeco-Roman Context of Early Christian Literature. By Roman Garrison. JSNTSup 137. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997, 123 pp., \$35.00.

The nine essays in this collection explore the apparent significance of specific parallels between the social and linguistic setting of early Christian literature and the literary and cultural milieu of the Greco-Roman world. Garrison seeks to show "how certain themes, stories, and concepts from the Hellenistic world *may well have* influenced the teachings and writings of the early Christians" (p. 23).

Garrison surveys the "strange and strained" relationship that has always existed between Christianity and culture in the introductory essay. In "Aphrodite and 1 Corinthians" (chap. 2) he argues that Paul's letter is shaped by a confrontation with the social and moral effects of the mythology associated with the goddess. Chapter 3 ("Friend of Tax Collectors") explores the symposium as a background for understanding Jesus' unorthodox table fellowship. Garrison suggests that the "Last Words" (chap. 4) of Jesus in Matthew and Luke were influenced by the stories of Heracles and Hippolytus respectively. He argues that 1 Clement belongs to a common rhetorical genre employed to restore concord to a community ravaged by sedition in "Plutarch and 1 Clement" (chap. 5). Chapter 6 ("Legions of Angels and the Will of God") supports a sort of "middle position" in the conflict between predestination and free will by examining Achilles, Socrates, Ignatius, and Jesus, all of whom preferred a "fate" which brought a "premature" death. In "The Love of Money in Polycarp's Letter to the Philippians" (chap. 7) Garrison argues that the Father adopts a Hellenistic attitude of redemptive almsgiving. The penultimate chapter ("Misconceptions of the Kingdom of God in Early Christianity") shows how Paul and Ignatius sought to modify misunderstandings of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God, a strategy similar to Aristotle's correction of Socrates. In the final essay, the only one previously published, Garrison argues that Paul's use of the athlete metaphor in 1 Cor 9:24–26 echoes the themes and values of the apostle's contemporary culture, especially the exercise of love demonstrated in self-control and the pursuit of the imperishable crown.

In this loosely linked collection Garrison makes good on promises to defend no particular thesis and to seek only to "have the reader consider possibilities" (p. 26). Readers unfamiliar with the literature of the Greco-Roman world will benefit from

many of the author's provocative suggestions. But the essays are so frustratingly short that one wonders whether the author—despite his disclaimer (p. 23)—has simply fallen into the trap of “parallelomania.” There is little sustained treatment of the significance of the “intriguing parallels” that Garrison identifies. Even if we can see the influence of themes, stories, and concepts of the Greco-Roman world on the writings of early Christianity—and who would argue otherwise?—what are we to make of the phenomenon? Recent studies have attempted to go beyond the mere identification of parallels and point out the distinctive ways early Christians “spun” the *topoi* to serve a distinctive worldview.

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The New Testament and Other Early Christian Writings: A Reader. By Bart D. Ehrman. New York: Oxford University, 1998, iv + 412 pp., \$23.50 paper.

Ehrman has collected into one volume *all* the extant writings generated by Christians during the first century of Christianity, approximately 30–130 CE. Included are canonical and noncanonical books, orthodox and heretical works, and complete and fragmentary texts. The book is comprised of five sections and arranged according to genre. Section one, “Early Christian Gospels,” contains the four canonical Gospels, the gospel of Thomas, the gospel of Peter, the infancy gospel of Thomas, the secret gospel of Mark, Papyrus Egerton 2: the Unknown Gospel, the gospel of the Ebionites, the gospel of the Nazareans, and the gospel according to the Hebrews. Section two, “Early Christian Acts,” is comprised of the canonical Acts of the Apostles as well as the Acts of Paul and Thecla. Section three, “Early Christian Letters Attributed to Paul,” includes the thirteen NT letters ascribed to Paul as well as the third letter to the Corinthians. A fourth section, “General Epistles and Other Early Christian Writings,” consists of the eight catholic epistles in the NT, 1 Clement, the Didache, the seven letters of Ignatius, the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, the letter of Barnabas, the Preaching of Peter, and the Fragments of Papias. In the final section, “Early Christian Apocalypses,” one finds the Revelation of John and excerpts from the Shepherd of Hermas and Apocalypse of Peter.

The complete text of each book or extant fragment has been provided, except for the Shepherd of Hermas and Apocalypse of Peter, which Ehrman deemed too long for inclusion. Each book is prefaced with an introduction that attends to questions regarding authorship, provenance, date, and audience. All NT writings are from the New Revised Standard Version. The volume also includes a general introduction in which Ehrman sketches how the 27 books of the NT attained their canonical status. Ehrman's work is a valuable resource because it assembles in one volume all the extant Christian documents produced during the first century of Christianity.

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New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity. Vol. 8. *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published 1984–1985.* Edited by S. R. Llewelyn. The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, 198 pp., \$35.00 paper.

The *New Documents* series ranks among the best of the resources available that illumine the NT and Christian origins, and the volume under review is a superb ad-

dition to the series. It is erudite, richly documented, and fully indexed. In addition to selections held over from the previous volume, the editor surveyed the inscriptions and papyri published in 1984–1985 and collected a number deemed particularly illustrative of social and cultural currents apposite to early Christianity. The texts appear with facing translations. The material is organized under five headings: “Slavery,” “Taxation,” “Public Courtesies and Conventions,” “Judaica,” and “Ecclesiastica.”

Part one is entitled “Slavery.” (1) “The Crucifixion of a Slave” discusses an epitaph that describes a crucifixion in second-century BC Caria under conditions that indicate Roman influence. (2) “A Curse Against a Fugitive Slave?” links a fifth- or sixth-century text to the circus factions of the fourth century and ties these curses to the role of the crowd during the trial of Jesus. (3) “The Government’s Pursuit of Runaway Slaves” presents the reader with a number of texts and a learned discussion concerning the reasons and conditions under which slaves fled and were pursued and captured. At several points connections are made to Philemon, Onesimus, and Paul.

Part two, “Taxation,” deftly handles the bewildering complexity of Roman provincial taxation and demonstrates familiarity with the rather arcane secondary literature. (4) “Tax Collection and the *τελῶναι* of the New Testament” contains a lengthy discussion of taxation in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, linking these conditions with taxation in Judea. (5) “Taxes on Donkeys: An Illustration of Indirect Taxation at Work in Roman Egypt” not only demonstrates the complex nature of Roman provincial taxation, but also points to the crushing economic conditions endured by Roman provincials. (6) “Flight from Personal Obligations to the State” chronicles attempts in Roman Egypt to escape the many forms of taxation imposed upon provincials. These selections serve as reminders that *anachoresis* was known long before Priscus of Panium and Salvian Presbyter.

Part three is titled “Public Courtesies and Conventions.” (7) “Benefaction Ideology and Christian Responsibility for Widows” offers a lengthy treatment of the phenomenon of benefaction in the ancient world tied to the injunction concerning care for family members in 1 Tim 5:8. This section argues that while Greco-Roman *πρόνοια* was expected of the elite, Paul employed the language of benefaction and reciprocity to promote the Christian ethic of mutual interdependence. (8) “The Epitaph of a Student Who Died Away from Home” leads to a discussion of the nature of early Christian rhetoric. (9) “Prescripts and Addresses in Ancient Letters” is richly footnoted and offers background on the use of literary devices to enhance interests in NT letters. (10) “A Rescript to the Victors of Sacred Games” serves as a backdrop to legal documents concerning Christianity within the empire.

Part four, “Judaica,” contains three short selections. (11) “A Hebrew Congregational Prayer from Egypt” is judged to be a lament concerning the plight of the Jews in Egypt after the revolt of 115–117 AD. (12) “An Association of Samaritans in Delos” concerns two honorary inscriptions which give evidence of third- to first-century BC Samaritan presence there. (13) “The Career of T. Mucius Clemens and its Jewish Connections” discusses a possible funerary inscription and the relevant secondary literature on the career of this imperial procurator of Judea.

Part five, “Ecclesiastica,” contains four selections. (14) “The Christian Symbol ΧΜΓ, an Acrostic or an Isopsephism?” discusses the identification of the symbol and the role of magical formulas and gematria in early Christian practice. (15) “Christian Letters of Recommendation” argues that there were two different classes of letter for “church travellers” in the fourth and fifth centuries: the one bearing episcopal approval, the other more pedestrian. (16) “A Confessional Inscription” follows Stendahl’s thesis that introspective conscience was introduced into the Christian tradition by Augustine. Finally, (17) “Baptism and Salvation” employs a funerary inscription from the third century AD to explain why many delayed baptism until late in life.

One intending to find fault will surely be successful, but the generally high quality of the work overwhelms such concerns. Some of the selections serve to buttress a growing

scholarly consensus, others remind us of how much we have yet to understand, and still others offer tantalizing clues for new lines of pursuit (one papyrus indicates the presence of a female tax collector in Roman Egypt!). This volume is a welcome addition to a valuable series.

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Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald. SBL Resources for Biblical Study 34. Atlanta: Scholars, 1997, 330 pp., \$44.95.

Today we are inundated with a plethora of commentaries, reviews of secondary scholarship, and rehashing of old arguments that confirm Koheleth's observation, "Of making of many books there is no end." By contrast, this work, like others in its genre, does not simply rehash what we already knew. Instead, it advances us further, investigating primary sources to provide context for the NT that the first audience would have known but which is unfamiliar to most modern readers, including most NT specialists.

The book's essays include contributions from scholars known for other work in Greco-Roman contexts for the NT, such as Fitzgerald himself (see his enlightening earlier work on hardship catalogues), David Balch (his work on household codes), Ronald Hock (his work on Paul's occupation and ancient novels), and others no less impressive.

To allow thoroughness in approaching the sources, each scholar works through one source or body of sources in detail, often sources the scholar knows particularly well. Apart from Aristotle, the chosen sources are samples but not always the necessary choices; the absence of a full essay on Dio Chrysostom (see his third discourse on kingship, 99–100), for example, is simply balanced by the inclusion of three other essays on rhetoricians and other voices contemporary with him. Similarly, might other historians like Polybius or Diodorus Siculus have supplied as much fruit as Dionysius of Halicarnassus? Did not Seneca comment extensively on friendship in some epistles (3 and 9)? But the volume focuses on careful in-depth treatment of each of the sources it covers rather than seeking to survey every ancient source, and most of the writers do show competence in other authors besides their focus. If one has no boundaries, it is difficult to know where to stop: K. Evans sampled 18,000 papyri and inscriptions (less available to the average NT scholar than most literary works are), suggesting that even her overview must have consumed an enormous amount of time.

Fitzgerald tackles the unenviable assignment of assessing friendship in Greek culture before Aristotle, requiring a broad range of early sources. Aristotle and his school of thought introduced serious discussions of the theme of friendship, and F. Schroeder's citation of both primary and secondary sources reflects detailed research. Nor do the other essays disappoint: B. Fiore on friendship in Cicero; J. Thom (known elsewhere for his work on Pythagorean *akousmata*) on friendship in the Neopythagorean writings; E. O'Neill on Plutarch; D. Balch on Dionysius of Halicarnassus; R. Hock on Chariton; R. Pervo on Lucian's *Toxaris*; K. Evans, as noted above; G. Sterling on Philo; and A. Mitchell, surveying NT evidence.

Because most readers of *JETS* will be particularly interested in the NT angle, I focus my specific comments on Mitchell's article. He notes a number of Pauline themes related to epistolary rhetoric from the friendship *topos*, rightly emphasizing Philipians. Even if he suggests more friendship motifs in some texts than may be evident, readers can decide for themselves on particular comparisons, so his thoroughness in identifying possible parallels is commendable. Further, the connections he draws are

valuable to place these passages in their broader context of general social conventions, whether or not all particular connections were deliberate. My one surprise was that he did not comment further on 2 Corinthians 8, where Paul's remarks on "equality" surely reflect the *topos* of friendship.

I was also a bit confounded by his limited treatment of friendship in John; although John more explicitly employs the term, he treats John's use in three pages, but the use in Luke-Acts in 20. His treatment of Luke-Acts is very helpful, and each scholar has particular strengths. But while he correctly notes the friendship theme of dying for a friend in John 15:13, other friendship themes are present in that passage as well, many of which he misses. The differing conceptions of patronal friendship (Martial, *Epigrams* 3.36.1-3; 3 Macc 5:26) on the one hand and friendship based on equality (e.g. Homer, *Iliad* 18.81-82; Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics* 7.9.1, 1241b; Ep. Arist. 228; *P. Oxy.* 32.5-6) on the other may inform the "friends-not-servants" language. The ancient friendship motifs of loyalty and sharing all things in common also gave way to the hellenistic Jewish conception of friendly intimacy, in which friends could share secrets safely (e.g. Jos., *Apion* 2.207; Sir 6:9; 22:22; 27:17); this probably has implications for Jesus sharing special insights with his disciples (John 15:15).

Most significant, given John's emphasis on Jesus' deity, would have been an exploration of how ancient Jewish writers developed the theme of friendship with *God*. After all, the Bible already called Abraham and Moses friends of God, and John addresses both Abraham and Moses in his gospel. Greeks spoke about friendship with God or gods, and Jewish writers like Philo even contrasted friendship with God with being his servant (*Migration of Abraham* 45). Philo claimed that Abraham was God's friend and not his servant (*Sober* 55; see further Sterling's essay in the same volume).

Such comments are not intended as a criticism of either Mitchell or the book as a whole, both of which provide excellent contributions and advance our understanding of ancient friendship substantially. (In Paul and Luke-Acts, for instance, Mitchell provided far more helpful insights than I could recount.) These closing comments are meant only to show that further work is possible, and that we may continue to build on the fine work these scholars have already provided.

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Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism. Compiled, edited, and introduced by Lawrence H. Schiffman. Hoboken: KTAV, 1998, 777 pp., \$29.50 paper.

Teachers who have the great pleasure of guiding students through the Jewish literature of the second-temple period face a practical problem: how to provide affordable access to up-to-date editions of the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus, Bar Kochba letters, and at least a digest of the immense corpus emanating from rabbinic Judaism. This is a formidable body of literature!

Schiffman has put all who teach in the area of second-temple Judaism (which, of course, includes the NT!) in his debt by compiling, editing, and annotating selections from this material within the compass of approximately 750 pages. Schiffman is just the person to undertake such a task, being one of the premier scholars of second-temple and rabbinic Judaism. This reader is a nice complement to his earlier work dealing with the history of the period (*From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* [KTAV, 1991]).

Schiffman organizes his reader chronologically, beginning with the Biblical period and continuing through the Amoraic era of the early Middle Ages. Within each era, he illustrates certain aspects and topics that are essential for grasping the essence of the various "Judaisms." Each section is introduced with succinct summaries.

Only two works are remotely comparable: a compilation by G. W. E. Nickelsburg and M. E. Stone (*Faith and Piety in Early Judaism: Texts and Documents* [Fortress, 1983]) and the classic standard on NT backgrounds by C. K. Barrett (*The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* [Harper & Row, 1989]). For second-temple and rabbinic Judaism, however, neither provides the depth and comprehensiveness of Schiffman's reader.

This is such a valuable tool one feels embarrassment at raising quibbles. My main criticism concerns the section devoted to the rise of the early Church. It is obvious that this is the one area in which Schiffman is not an expert. He limits his selections from the NT to the Gospel according to Mark. The result is a quite restricted perspective on what the earliest Jewish Christians believed. How can one possibly leave the apostle Paul out of consideration? Embedded in Paul's letters (all of which are probably earlier than Mark) are traditional pieces and formulations that go back to the earliest phases of the Jesus movement. Schiffman's reader does not do justice to the variety and richness of NT thought, which is deeply indebted to its Jewish roots at point after point.

On the whole, however, Schiffman's selections are judiciously chosen, especially those from rabbinic Judaism, rarely an area of competence for NT specialists. This reader will long be a standard text for courses in both NT backgrounds and second-temple Judaism.

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Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age. By John J. Collins, OTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997, xii + 275, pp., \$35.00.

In this volume Collins (University of Chicago Divinity School) deals primarily with Sirach (Ben Sira) and the Wisdom of Solomon. The discussion is enriched with reflection on the Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides and wisdom texts from Qumran, especially 4QSapiential Work A (preserved fragmentarily in 1Q26, 4Q415, 416, 417, and 423). Throughout the book the author compares and contrasts this material with Biblical wisdom texts. He is also concerned to explain the relationship of wisdom material to Torah, prophecy, and apocalyptic. The book is divided into two parts, under the headings "Hebrew Wisdom" and "Wisdom in the Hellenistic Diaspora." Part one deals primarily with Sirach and 4QSapiential Work A, part two with the Wisdom of Solomon and Pseudo-Phocylides. The book also includes an extensive bibliography (for which the title is inexplicably missing, p. 233) and indexes for citations of primary texts and modern authors.

Collins sets the scene with an introductory chapter on the question, "Where is wisdom to be found?" This discussion centers on Proverbs, Job, and Qoheleth. The six chapters of part one address the Hellenistic context and ethics of Ben Sira, the problem of the relationship of wisdom to the law and to the history and destiny of Israel, and wisdom in the Dead Sea Scrolls. An interesting issue here is the identification of wisdom with Torah, and its relationship to the Stoic notion of *λόγος* as *νόμος* (pp. 54–61). NT students will note this discussion as suggestive for the understanding of the Johannine *λόγος*.

Part two begins with a discussion on the diaspora setting of the Wisdom of Solomon, which Collins believes was composed in Alexandria in the early Roman period. Here there are discussions of such matters as Jewish citizenship and whether the Jews in Alexandria constituted a formal *πολίτευμα*. Jewish participation in the gymnasium, education, and propaganda directed toward God-fearers is also treated. The chapter on

Pseudo-Phocylides includes much interaction with P. Van der Horst and a helpful discussion of various theories about the purpose of this work. Additional chapters in this section deal with the relationship of wisdom to other issues in the Hellenistic world, including immortality, creation, and idolatry. In the concluding epilogue Collins describes wisdom as a macro-genre that encompasses various literary forms. He also argues that the Qumran wisdom material shows the basic compatibility of wisdom with apocalyptic. The final section rehearses the tenuous relationship of wisdom to Greek philosophy, due to the conflicting themes of natural theology and special revelation.

As would be expected from a scholar of Collins's stature, this book manifests wide knowledge of the Hebrew Bible, second-temple Jewish literature, the Hellenistic world, and related secondary literature. The way in which Collins augments the discussion of the better-known texts, Sirach and Wisdom of Solomon, with discussion of lesser known wisdom texts, Pseudo-Phocylides and 4Q Sapiential Work A, is especially helpful. This book will no doubt make an important contribution to ongoing studies of Jewish wisdom in the Hellenistic age.

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The Jewish Messiah. By Dan Cohn-Sherbok. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997, xx + 211 pp., \$24.95.

Many modern Christians tend to speak of "messianic expectations" in the same way in which they speak of "first-century Judaism," as if there were some sort of established set of beliefs or expectations. There were neither, and this work shows that the expectations about who the Messiah was to be and what he was to do were widely divergent. This book is an examination of these divergent expectations down through the ages. Rabbi Dan Cohn-Sherbok is Professor of Judaism at the University of Wales, Lampeter.

The work begins with a chronological chart that helps the student to place people and literature into their proper place in history. While there might be minor quibbles here and there, the chart will prove to be very helpful to a beginning student. After the introduction, the work is divided into ten chapters. These chapters look at the messianic hope from the time of the Hebrew Bible (chap. one) to the modern period (chap. ten).

The most interesting chapter for readers of *JETS* will be chap. four ("Jesus the Messiah"). Here Cohn-Sherbok argues that for the Jewish community Jesus did not fulfill the messianic role as outlined in Scripture (p. 61) and explains a number of Jewish objections to seeing Jesus as the Messiah (pp. 76–79). Cohn-Sherbok proceeds to lay out these objections, many of which, in my (admittedly Christian) view, simply miss the point of what the Gospel texts are saying about Jesus. A short example will have to suffice. The first objection rests in the fact that Jesus did not, contrary to popular messianic expectations, regather Israel, bring an end to the exile, and restore the kingdom to its former glory. A reading of N. T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*, however, will show that it is possible to understand Jesus' mission as fulfilling each of these points, albeit in a different manner than was popularly expected. So it may be correct to argue that Jesus did not fulfill popular messianic expectations, but the larger question is whether these expectations were truly Biblical or merely popular. The answer to that question depends a great deal upon how one reads the evidence. Other objections that are raised are not nearly so serious as they might first appear. This is, however, a good, popular-level setting-forth of Jewish objections to acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah.

Despite these differences of opinion, the book is a very good general introduction to Jewish messianic hopes. A great deal of material is dealt with, and this necessitates a fairly broad brush, but overall the painting seems to be fair and accurate. The work could

have been improved through the use of footnotes and a larger bibliography, but this work is not a technical monograph written for scholars; it is an entry-level work. Any student, either Jewish or Christian, who wants a good overview of messianic expectations would do well to start here.

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Hillel and Jesus: Comparative Studies of Two Major Religious Leaders. Edited by James H. Charlesworth and Loren L. Johns. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997, xxxi + 486 pp., \$50.00.

This volume represents a number of essays presented at an international symposium in Jerusalem, June 1992, called by J. H. Charlesworth to treat the questions "How can we learn more about Hillel by comparing him with Jesus, and how can we learn more about Jesus by comparing him with Hillel" (p. xiii). With the historical-critical methodology at hand, both Jesus and Hillel are asserted to be real people, teachers in Israel who lived prior to the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE. Obviously, differences did exist between the contributing scholars concerning the reliability of the traditions: written traditions concerning Jesus were present within 50 years after his death but written traditions concerning Hillel vary between 200 and 500 years.

Hillel and Jesus is divided into three parts where the first set of four essays is an introduction to the questions the writers faced with this project. J. H. Charlesworth begins by examining what is necessary for such a project and then offers some of his views of differences and similarities between Hillel and Jesus. Next, A. Goshen-Gottstein has difficulty relating Hillel and Jesus as an identity in type, but rather would see Hillel as a part of his collective culture while Jesus should be viewed in the cultures in which he lived. M. Weinfeld critiques the attempts by Christian scholars of 50 to 100 years ago as a gross reductionism of Judaism while seeing Jesus' teaching as superior. He hints at this problem of the past that did not assess correctly the contributions of Jewish religious and cultural understanding to the background of the NT. D. Flusser compares Hillel and Jesus in terms of their self-awareness, seeing them where they differ significantly, suggesting that Jesus understood himself to be the Messiah, "Son of Man," while Hillel is the representative of humanity.

Part 2 takes up the specific social and historical studies that clarify the contexts in which the two men functioned. Eight essays are in this group with titles such as "Archaeology and Religious Ethos of Pre-70 Palestine," "Apocalypticism in the Time of Hillel and Jesus," "Who Were the Pharisees?," "Jesus and Factionalism in Early Judaism," "Jesus and Cynics in First-Century Palestine," "Jesus and His Community: Between Essenes and Pharisees," and "Jesus' Socioeconomic Background."

Possibly the most valuable of this second group of essays is J. P. Arnold's "The Relationship of Paul and Jesus." After discussing the work of F. C. Baur and several of the Tübingen school who created a wedge between Pauline Christianity and the Jerusalem apostles, Arnold attempts to demonstrate the exact opposite. With W. D. Davies, Krister Stendahl, David Dungan, and J. D. G. Dunn, who describe Paul's positive relation to Jesus, Arnold himself agrees where he (1) demonstrates that "Paul taught more material that is contained in his preserved letters . . . he had 'delivered' important traditions which he had 'received' (1 Cor 11:23 and 15:3)" (p. 263); (2) he received traditions from other Christians who instructed him; and (3) some of these traditions about Jesus, which include information about the historical Jesus, are specified and discussed in Paul's letters. Obviously, Arnold has been challenged and, while this discontinuity

between Paul and Jesus held by Bauer and other more modern voices remains strong, Arnold holds for continuity.

Part 3 takes up directly the sayings of Hillel and Jesus and the ways in which these sayings have been used in scholarship. Strange's essay makes the plea for more of an understanding of archeology's importance in NT backgrounds in the social and historical contexts that enables one to understand Jesus and Galilean Judaism of his day. Two essays follow by C. Safrai and S. Safrai. The former takes up the Hillel traditional texts, discussing their nature and function. They are compared with Abot de Rabbi Nathan, the sayings by others about Hillel and "otherwise unknown or hidden sayings" taken from numerous stories and legends. Through form-critical analysis, he traces these distinctive dynamics. S. Safrai discusses some of the sayings of Hillel, noting how they were reinterpreted and adapted by others in various settings of the rabbinic tradition in both Talmuds and various Midrashim. These sayings refer to several topics: increasing one's learning of the Torah, viewed from many angles; "My humbling is my exaltation, my exaltation is my humbling," also seen in its various applications; and, the lesson of "to the place my heart loves, my feet lead me; if you come to my house, I will come to your house . . .," in its many versions by various sages.

Schwartz's essay analyzes Hillel's use of Scripture, which marks him as a sage of oral tradition and not one who interpreted texts. Ethical and legal teachings come out of his own authority and his teachers, not that of Scripture. When asked to summarize the Torah in one rule, his response was, "Don't do to others what is hateful to you" and not the Scriptural statement of Lev 19:18. While this may have been good for him and subsequent rabbis who claimed they heard from Heaven, after 70 CE the rabbis took it upon themselves to be the only ones who could interpret God's will to insure stability. Four useful contributions complete this section: P. S. Alexander's focus on the Golden Rule; H. Lichtenberger's examination of Delitzsch's comparison of Jesus and Hillel, only to show how much greater Jesus is; C. A. Evans's excellent emphasis on Jesus' teaching in the first-century Jewish context while B. T. Viviano compares Hillel and Jesus on the subject of prayer in Biblical and Jewish contexts.

This volume is a "must" for any student of the NT interested in comparing Hillel and Jesus and also, as far as possible, in seeing them against their backgrounds. Many of the essays provide invaluable help to see how Jesus fits into his religious and cultural background, and how much of a following he had among the Pharisees. Obviously, not all will agree with conclusions reached by some of these scholars, but certainly we do have an invaluable contribution to a slice of history for both Jew and Christian to ponder.

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Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History. By Joachim Gnilka. Translated by S. S. Schatzmann. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997, xiii + 346 pp., \$24.95.

Gnilka, of the University of Munich, is best known to Biblical scholars for his massive German commentaries on Matthew and Mark. Now English speakers can read many of his perspectives in this translation of a special volume for the Herder commentary series, first published in 1993. One may think of this volume as an apt summary of the best of the second quest of the historical Jesus. Accordingly, Gnilka sees the Gospels as a complex mixture of the words of the exalted Christ and of the earthly Jesus. The standard criteria of authenticity can help us distinguish the two. The results are scarcely evangelical but are an even further cry from Bultmannian skepticism.

The center of Jesus' proclamation was the kingdom of God. The parables disclose "paradigms of an incredible goodness," which in theological terms is called the forgiveness of sins (pp. 101–102). This forgiveness is best illustrated in Jesus' table fellowship with sinners in anticipation of the eschatological banquet to come. Miracles, too, portend the arrival of God's reign. On the one hand, Gnilka appreciates a "renaissance of belief in the miraculous" in our day (p. 114); on the other hand, he explains demons as "objectivized projections of terrible experiences" (p. 120). Faith is one of the most unique features of the Gospels' miracle stories; indeed, faith alone gives access to the salvation Jesus offers. This is an interesting emphasis for a Catholic scholar, given that many Protestants would argue that this summary applies more to Paul than to Jesus.

In light of recent denials, it is refreshing to see Gnilka assert a strong apocalyptic element in the authentic tradition. Judgment cannot be excluded from Jesus' message, but salvation remains primary. Jesus' use of "Son of Man" harks back to Daniel 7, but explicit parousia passages reflect early Christian adaptation of the traditional belief in God's coming day of judgment. Implicit Christology consistently furnishes the background for the church's later explicit formulations; "Messiah" is the title that best captures Jesus' missional claims, as long as it is interpreted in light of the cross and his unique sonship with God.

Contra Loisy and others, Jesus clearly intended to found a community of disciples that would live in certain ethical ways—i.e. the Church. Gnilka's estimation of how organized and impoverished this early community was is probably exaggerated on both counts, however. But he properly stresses the centrality of love, especially for one's enemies, nonviolence and reconciliation in Jesus' ethic. Luke 8:1–3 reflects Jesus "seeking to alleviate the position of women suppressed by society and to promote the restoration of their human dignity" (pp. 179–180). Regarding Torah, Jesus combatted legalism; Gnilka betrays no awareness of "the new look on Judaism" here.

Jesus' critique of his coreligionists' piety and praxis together with his own professed self-understanding led to his arrest and crucifixion. He surely had become conscious of the likelihood of his tragic death in his final trip to Jerusalem. The temple entry did not carry intentional messianic overtones but the temple protest and the last supper did enact foreshadowings of the new age Christ was inaugurating. The resurrection "does not belong to the earthly history of Jesus" (p. 319), so Gnilka declines to discuss it in detail. Yet the concluding paragraph of the book contains an evangelistic touch as he hopes that readers will not just come to know about the historical Jesus but will become followers, by faith, of the living Christ (p. 329).

The biggest weakness of the book is its almost wholesale lack of interaction with the third quest of the historical Jesus, underway since at least 1979. While older English-language works do appear sporadically in the notes and bibliography, one looks in vain for anything from B. Meyer, A. E. Harvey, J. Charlesworth, E. P. Sanders or any other of the champions in the 1980s of repositioning Jesus squarely within an improved understanding of early first-century Judaism. Nevertheless, there is very little of what Gnilka affirms about the Jesus of history with which one should disagree, only a richer, fuller portrait that could have been sketched had one included what he brackets or denies.

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Mary Magdalene Beyond the Myth. By Esther de Boer. Translated by John Bowden. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997, 147 pp., \$15.00 paper.

In readable and colloquial prose, de Boer has written an overview of information on Mary Magdalene. She presents general traditions on Mary (chap. 1), NT and ancient Jew-

ish and Roman references (chap. 2), second- through fourth-century Christian references (chap. 3), her own translation of and commentary on the fifth-century Coptic text of the gospel of Mary (chap. 4), a summary (chap. 5), and bibliography. In effect, she has a good overview of material on Mary from NT times through the fifth century. The information on Magdala or Tarichea, a prosperous intercultural trading town, is interesting. She reminds us that Mary was a key witness to the resurrection, an apostle, a disciple who was liberated, courageous, and persistent. In the early Church she was also the model for deacons and a new Eve (pp. 60, 64, 121). De Boer posits various theories on Mary. One theory that is quite intriguing is that Mary may have had seven spirits because she "had not armed herself sufficiently after a first liberation" (p. 50; Luke 11:21–26).

Unlike other more higher-critical theologians, she concludes that "Mary" in Luke 7, Luke 8, and John 12 are three different women. Also, she treats the gospel of Mary as coherent (p. 93) and not reflecting full-blown Gnosticism. Rather, she proposes that the gospel of Mary contains early (AD 90–150) traditions of material that Jesus told only Mary because of her Hellenistic background (p. 117). Thus, all reliable oral and written traditions about Jesus are not limited to the four Gospels. While that conclusion might appear initially shocking to evangelical readers, some evangelicals do treat passages such as John 8:1–11, Luke 22:43–44, 23:34 as reliable even though the earliest more reliable manuscripts do not contain them.

Unfortunately, because she does not appear to dig deeply into the Greek text and assumes some aspects of higher-critical thought, she *contrasts* the views toward women of the different Gospels (p. 78), dates 1 Timothy late (p. 78; AD 100), as well as the formation of the canon (p. 59; AD 367).

Could the teachings in the gospel of Mary be teachings from Jesus? De Boer challenges us to restudy the NT. While the writer of Mary's gospel may not have intended to be heretical, did Jesus really teach "where the mind is, there is the treasure" (p. 83) and the soul needs to free itself on its way to heaven from powers and forms (p. 84)? In Luke's Gospel, Jesus says instead, "where the treasure is, there is the heart" (12:34). The gospel of Mary focuses on understanding, whereas in Luke's Gospel, the focus is on action, placing priority in one's life on God's reign (Luke 12:31). The words sound similar, but the concepts are very different.

In summary, *Mary Magdalene* is an interesting, insightful, and intriguing historical study. However, the reader who is not capable of analyzing theories and who may be susceptible to the idea of an open canon may confuse a pleasant, respectable style with a potentially misleading theory.

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The Immerser: John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism. By Joan E. Taylor. Studying the Historical Jesus 2. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, xvi + 360 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Taylor (University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand) is concerned that John the Baptist has been (mis)appropriated by the Church and transformed into a sort of proto-Christian. In her view, the historical John's milieu was second-temple Judaism, not formative Christianity. John was an independent preacher, not an Essene, and his baptism was concerned with ritual purity, not symbolism or initiation. John's ethical teaching and expectation of the eschatological agent of God were firmly based in the prophetic tradition. He was supported by the Pharisees, although he made no attempt to found a religious movement. The Church transformed the historical John into the

forerunner of Jesus by distancing his teaching from the Torah, reinterpreting his baptism as an initiatory rite, and reorienting his message to focus on Jesus.

Limited space precludes substantive interaction with this thesis, but three matters can be briefly mentioned. First, Taylor's discussion of the relation of John to the Essenes should be carefully considered. She points out several differences between NT descriptions of John and the descriptions of the Essenes, as far as this sect is known in second-temple literature. Second, Taylor's book illustrates a methodological conundrum. She is convinced that the Gospels are primarily theological documents, composed with apologetic aims, and she frequently has recourse to Josephus for a more historically accurate understanding of John. Most evangelicals will differ with Taylor at this point, arguing that a theological purpose does not preclude historical accuracy. And many scholars, evangelicals and nonevangelicals alike, will argue that Josephus also had his own apologetic agenda. Thus the problem of the respective historical value of the sources is handled rather tendentiously by Taylor. Third, one must applaud Taylor's stress on the Jewish milieu of John. It will not do to view John anachronistically from the standpoint of later Christian theology. But Taylor seems to make too sharp a division between Judaism and Christianity in their respective formative stages. Her analysis of the Gospels may itself be an anachronistic retrojection of later issues into the Jesus traditions.

The editors' (B. Chilton and C. Evans) preface for this series sets out an agenda that weds historical investigation and theological reflection. It is their belief that the historical Jesus cannot be equated with what the Gospels say about him, since the Gospels reflect the faith of early Christians who reflected on historical tradition and interpreted it. All in all it appears that Taylor is more successful with historical investigation than with theological reflection, and she admits in her conclusion that she was only able to begin this second task. The editors also affirm that discussion of Jesus should be accessible, rigorous, and interesting. Taylor has certainly accomplished these three goals. She is well versed in both primary sources and contemporary discussion. While many evangelicals will not fully agree with her controversial thesis, all will profit from her careful research and clear presentation.

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Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period. By Richard N. Longenecker. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids/Vancouver: Eerdmans/Regent College, 1999, xli + 238 pp., \$20.00.

First issued in 1975, Longenecker's classic treatment on the NT writers' use of Scripture in its ancient context has served a generation of scholars and students supremely well. With the original work long out of print, this second edition is particularly welcome. The extensive new preface covers topics such as "Quotations or Allusions"; "The Distribution of Biblical Quotations"; "The Fulfillment Theme in the New Testament"; "Is There a *Sensus Plenior* in the New Testament's Use of the Old?" "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?" and "The Relation of the Testaments." Also, the bibliography has been updated and some references added to alert readers to significant recent developments.

Much has happened since the initial publication of Longenecker's seminal work. Richard Hays contributed his *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (1989), drawing from M. Fishbane not only the term "echoes" but also the method of "inner-biblical exegesis" and the primacy given to "intertextuality." Responding to Hays, Longenecker

expresses skepticism owing to the lack of necessary controls and constraints, preferring to focus on explicit quotations and verifiable allusions. In an important reiteration of a principle undergirding the first publication of this work, Longenecker contrasts inner-Biblical with extrabiblical exegesis and reaffirms his commitment to compare the NT's use of Scripture with that of other contemporary Jewish groups (including the sect at Qumran).

Under the heading "Can We Reproduce the Exegesis of the New Testament?" Longenecker returns to his interaction with Hays. While Hays speaks of a "bold hermeneutical privilege" that calls us to "create new figurations out of the texts that Paul read . . . perhaps discerning correspondences that did not occur to Paul himself," and "to perform imaginative acts of interpretation" (xxxvii, citing Hays, *Echoes* 187–190), Longenecker believes that our task is (1) to understand via historical-critical exegesis the essential convictions, central proclamation, and living ethos of the earliest Christians; (2) to try to discern how these convictions were variously contextualized; and (3) to attempt to recontextualize those matters in the contemporary circumstances encountered by the Church.

To name but one more issue that has been the subject of extended debate in recent decades, that is, the question of whether or not there is a *sensus plenior* in the NT, Longenecker concurs with D. Moo's assessment in the affirmative.

I am certain that the second edition of this nurturing, well-synthesized work will be to a new generation of Biblical scholars and students what the first edition was to the previous one. A guild characterized increasingly by fragmentation, atomistic exegesis, and trendiness can ill afford to be without the sure and guiding hand of one who epitomizes a holistic, broad-based, and judicious approach to a field of inquiry that owing to its complexity places great demands on the one who seeks to understand Biblical revelation in its original cultural framework.

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A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew. Vol. III: *Matthew XIX–XXVIII.* By W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997, xviii + 789 pages, \$69.95.

Students of the Gospel of Matthew have been anxiously awaiting the last volume of Davies and Allison's three-volume commentary. This set, produced over a ten-year period, takes the place in the ICC of W. C. Allen's work. Those who have waited will not be disappointed. This volume is as good as, if not better than, the previous two.

The work begins with a preface in which the contribution of each of the authors is put forward. The plan was for Allison to produce a draft of each chapter and for Davies to then comment on these drafts in detail. While apparently this plan worked for vol. I, in vols. II and III, "W. D. D. was not able to contribute as much as he had hoped" (p. ix). This does not seem to have adversely affected the quality of the work.

The commentary begins with an excursus on the arrangement of Matt 19:1–23:39 and then moves straight into the comments upon the text of Matthew 19. The comments consist of five sections per pericope: (1) *structure*, in which the passage is set forth visually to represent the structure of the pericope; (2) *sources*, which is concerned with source and redaction criticism (Markan priority is assumed, but there is allowance for other theories, p. 31); (3) *exegesis*, in which the text proper is dealt with on a

phrase-by-phrase basis; (4) *concluding observations*, in which many insights are drawn together from the preceding work; and (5) *bibliography*, which will be mentioned later in the review.

There are many fine points in this work, but only five will be noted here. (1) There is an incredible attention to detail. Even the smallest points are the subject of very substantive comments. For an example, see the comments on 19:24 (camel through the eye of the needle), where the attention to detail and scope of literature surveyed is excellent. In any passage where there are a myriad of options, Davies and Allison lay out the options clearly and argue for a particular one. (2) Davies and Allison's interaction with the literature is a model of scholarship. Not only do they interact with modern scholars of all stripes (from Bultmann to Blomberg), but with ancient writers as well. (3) The bibliographies that occur at the end of each section are very good. While the proliferation of the American Theological Library Associations databases has made searches for journal articles easier, these bibliographies include many pieces that would not be found by such a search and are a wonderful entry point for further research on a particular topic. (4) The commentary ends with a chapter called "Matthew: A Retrospect," in which many of the big issues of Matthean scholarship are revisited and put into perspective. This chapter is a fine overview of many of the current debates. (5) There are two indexes, covering all three volumes.

Despite the above praises, evangelicals will nevertheless have some concerns with the work. Most of these concerns will center upon the fact that the authors simply hold a different view of Scripture from many of the readers of this *Journal*. One example will suffice. On Matt 27:51 (the resurrection of the saints at the time of Jesus' death), Davies and Allison point out that while a literal interpretation has been generally held in Christian history, they "discern in vv. 51–3 not history but a poetic or mythological expression of the profound meaning of Jesus' death" (p. 633). One might ask what textual indications exist in this passage to indicate the poetic or mythological nature of this pericope. It seems that the narrator of Matthew's Gospel is presenting this as a historical incident, which may explain why this passage was seen as historical for most of Christian history.

Davies and Allison do not simply reject out of hand all historically difficult passages, however. In commenting on the release of Barabbas as prisoner at the time of the passover, they concede that there is no historical data outside the NT for a release of prisoners at that time of year. Yet they still see Barabbas's release as having a historical core that "Christian imagination subsequently dramatized" (p. 583). While one might rightly be concerned about the extent of the "dramatization," the incident is considered historical. On Matt 24:1–2 (a passage that many have questioned as a result of the prophecy) Davies and Allison have no problem stating that readers "need not doubt that Jesus like Micah (Mic. 3.12), Jeremiah (Jer. 7.8–15; 9.10–11; 26.6, 18) and Jesus bar Ananias (Josephus, *Bell* 6.300ff), foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and her temple" (p. 335). This position is taken despite the fact that the authors argue strongly for a post-70 AD date for Matthew's Gospel (p. 700, cf. I.127–138).

Any set of books this large would offer many opportunities for disagreement and nit-picking. However, the depth of detail and breadth of scholarship in these volumes offer fewer of these opportunities than most other works of this size. Despite the concerns mentioned above, anyone making a serious study of the Gospel of Matthew cannot afford to be without this set. As a student writing a dissertation on the Gospel, I would like to offer a heartfelt "thank-you" to Davies and Allison for a commentary that will be a landmark for years to come and a treasure to students of this Gospel.

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Jesus and the Sabbath in Matthew's Gospel. By Yong-Eui Yang. JSNTSup 139. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997, 352 pp., \$70.00.

This is a dissertation written under the supervision of R. T. France and G. N. Stanton, and examined externally by I. H. Marshall and D. Wenham. Yang also acknowledges insights from M. M. B. Turner who himself has contributed substantially to the Sabbath debate through his contributions in what is undoubtedly the finest treatment of the Sabbath issue available today, *From Sabbath to Sunday* (ed. D. A. Carson). Yang's judgments place him squarely in the "non-sabbatarian" camp very much akin to Carson. Yang arrives at the conclusion that "For Matthew, the sabbath is perpetual only until its fulfillment, like the temple (chs. 24; cf. 12:6) and accordingly the priesthood and sacrifices. After Jesus' fulfillment of the sabbath, the function of the sabbath as the sign/type is replaced by Jesus' redemption, the antitype of the sabbath, and thus is no longer required."

The author begins with a brief historical overview of the Sabbath/Lord's Day controversy throughout Church history and a short review of the current literature and the major sabbath views they represent. Yang rightly notes that while each position seeks to justify its views on Biblical grounds, they do not always treat the Biblical data in sufficient depth. His work seeks to make a contribution to the Sabbath/Lord's Day debate by attempting a thorough and comprehensive examination of three very important Sabbath controversy pericopes found in Matthew's Gospel (Matt 12:1-8, 9-14, and 24:20).

His work can be divided into three parts. Chapters one and two, "The Sabbath in the Old Testament" and "The Sabbath in Judaism to the first century C.E.," form the background for the main exegetical work found in chaps. three through six. Chapters seven and eight form the final section and examine how the apostolic fathers "adopted, adapted, or overlooked" Matthew's treatment of the Sabbath.

Yang achieves his objective well. And while his volume makes a meaningful contribution to the Sabbath/Lord's Day debate in general, the real value of the work is in understanding Matthew's particular treatment of the Sabbath controversy in light of his community and especially his understanding of what Jesus meant when he declared Himself "Lord of the Sabbath." Secondly it confirms many of the conclusions reached earlier by D. A. Carson and his collaborators, in whose steps Yang largely follows.

To the serious student of the Sabbath controversy Yang's treatment of Matthew's texts makes an appreciated and genuine contribution. It is well-researched, well-written, and contains adequate indexes. Its costs and the difficulty of the subject matter will, I fear, prove prohibitive for all but the most serious inquirers.

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The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel. By Susan R. Garrett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, x + 212 pp., \$20.00 paper.

According to Garrett, the Gospel of Mark presents Jesus as tested or tempted throughout his ministry—by Satan, by his earthly adversaries and even by his own disciples. These agents of temptation and testing seek to divert Jesus from the straight and narrow path that leads to his most severe test, the cross, where he will hang alone, forsaken by God. Because of Jesus' perfect obedience, God regards his death as an acceptable sacrifice, a ransom that saves many from their sin. Jesus' faithful obedience in testing empowers his followers to persevere during their own times of trial, without being led astray.

Garrett's method is primarily to view Mark's Gospel in the context of certain "interpretive conventions" or "cultural models." Garrett examines ancient Jewish and

Christian writings to discover patterns of thought that were part of the cultural heritage or worldview of the interpretive community which produced and originally read the Gospel of Mark. According to Garrett, three interpretive conventions are particularly important guides for understanding the subject of testing in the Gospel of Mark. (1) The sufferings of righteous individuals were viewed as satanic testing. God permits Satan to put his righteous servants to the test. (2) The testing of the righteous may take place through the persecutions of the wicked, who are blinded by Satan and by their own iniquity. (3) It was believed that if a righteous sufferer endured testing unto death, God would accept that death as a sacrifice, as a substitutionary atonement for others. According to Garrett, Mark's Gospel fits this pattern of thought, since it presents Jesus as tested by Satan and sinners and regards Jesus' death as a ransom for sin.

Just as Jesus faced temptations and trials, so his followers must expect to undergo testing. So Garrett examines Mark's vision of discipleship, which Mark expressed through his negative presentation of the disciples. The disciples repeatedly failed because they did not comprehend the necessity of Jesus' suffering. According to Garrett, Mark expected his readers to know that after the death and resurrection of Jesus the disciples were restored and became revered leaders in the church. Therefore, Mark's portrayal of the disciples had an encouraging purpose, to show that the death and resurrection of Jesus heals disciples of blindness and empowers them to faithful obedience. The time after Jesus' resurrection is fundamentally different than the time before. Believers can no longer be deceived into regarding life and personal comfort as necessities to be preserved at all costs.

I would agree that Mark's presentation of the disciples was intended to be encouraging—Jesus can restore and use those who have failed. Nevertheless, Mark's narrative was probably also meant to be a warning. Mark emphasized the failures of the disciples and only hinted at their restoration. When the disciples misunderstood, Jesus corrected them with instructions concerning the importance of sacrifice and service, instructions that were addressed not only to the disciples but to "anyone" and "whoever" (Mark 8:34–35, 38; 9:35, 37; 10:43–44). Jesus' corrections of the disciples before the resurrection do not seem irrelevant for those who live after the resurrection.

In light of her comments at the end of the book, Garrett apparently recognizes that readers will be resistant to some of her interpretations. I must admit that at times I thought Garrett was unnecessarily forcing an outside interpretive model on Mark's Gospel as the key for unlocking all of its teaching. Yet even those who disagree will recognize that Garrett presents her viewpoints clearly and argues for them with skill. Her work serves to highlight an important but neglected theme in Mark's Gospel.

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The Gospel of Luke. By Joel B. Green. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, xcii + 928 pp., \$50.00.

This massive study replaces the 1951 commentary by N. Geldenhuys, the inaugural volume in the NICNT series. Green is currently Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary. He has attempted to break new ground for the NICNT series. He deals only sparingly (usually in footnotes) with historical and language issues, concentrating instead on literary, cultural and social matters. The objective is to show how Luke constructed his narrative of Jesus' words and deeds so as to convince his readers of the significance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection universally for all social classes, and to show those who would be Jesus' disciples what kind of response God requires in faith and faithfulness. Cross-references to Matthew

and Mark are few; less than one percent of the 37-page Scriptural index is devoted to the other gospels.

The author's focus is narrative historiography or *narratology* (discourse analysis), the study of Luke's literary art and narrative theology. The third Gospel, he says, belongs to the Greco-Roman literary tradition of ancient historiography, not biography. Luke identifies his own work as a long narrative account of many events (1:1–4), focusing primarily on the fulfillment of God's ancient purpose in Jesus Christ. Since Luke-Acts is a two-volume set with the narrative unity of a continuous story, the Gospel should not be interpreted separately from Acts. Luke has interpreted the events he presents, and "ordered" them carefully to portray his own worldview.

Narrative analysis identifies three types of relationships between texts. A *co-text* is the string of linguistic data within which a given text is set, such as a paragraph or pericope. The most important co-text is the immediately preceding material. *Intertext* refers to how a text relates to a larger "linguistic frame of reference" from which it draws meaning (especially OT texts, images, persons or parallels). Finally, its *context* is the socio-historical reality of the world Luke describes and in which he wrote. Luke's primary challenge, says Green, was not to verify that certain events took place, but to present these events in a "meaningful sequence" within a "coherent narrative." For example, Luke assumes that Jesus was a healer, but his task is to provide this activity with "interpretive significance" by wrapping it in OT promises and allusions and then narrating it within the Spirit-anointed ministry of Jesus.

The commentary treats the text itself, rather than the world *of* the text or the world *behind* the text, as the major object of historical interest. The purpose of Luke's Gospel is primarily ecclesiological—to strengthen the people of God by reassuring them of the redemptive purpose of God through Christ and calling them to continue their faithful witness to God's salvific program in spite of opposition. It shows that Jesus' kingdom proposes to turn society upside down, to reverse mankind's assumptions concerning status, class, and gender so that the first become last and the poor are elevated above the rich.

Readers may find it difficult to discover Green's comments on specific phrases or exegetical problems. The commentary often reads like a series of literary essays, with the spotlight landing only sporadically on specific details. Nevertheless, Green's exegetical insights are usually creative and helpful.

For example, Luke names Gabriel as God's messenger to Zechariah in order to reinforce the fact that, as God's personal servant who reveals divine mysteries (Daniel 8–9), the angel speaks with God's own voice and authority (1:19). John's prediction that the Messiah would baptize "with the Holy Spirit and fire" probably refers to two baptisms, the second relating to the final judgment (3:16). Jesus' statement that "no one is greater than John," but that "the least in the kingdom is greater than he," shows simply that John's status was greater than any other human being, but Jesus' kingdom inverts normal ways of measuring status, so that now even the "little ones" (blind, lame, deaf) have been "raised up" (7:28). The sinful woman who wiped Jesus' feet with her tears (7:36–50) had already been forgiven during a prior encounter with Jesus, so that Jesus' statement, "her sins have been forgiven, for she loved much" (7:47) signifies only that her love, due to Jesus' prior forgiveness, moved her to serve him. To "hate" one's father and mother (14:26) speaks not of "affective abhorrence," but a "disavowal of primary allegiance to one's kin." The story of Lazarus and the rich man (16:19–31) is a "story parable," with elaborate culturally based parallels between the two main characters. Green's detailed interpretation of this story, while ignoring most theological implications, is highly suggestive for applicational sermons. He shows in a footnote that Jesus' statement, "The kingdom of God is within you" (17:21), is better translated "among you" or "within your purview," and cannot refer to an inward, spiritual kingdom.

The author's devotion to the "story behind the story" and to Luke's overall narrative context sometimes leads him to downplay historical and theological issues. For example, he calls Augustus' census and Quirinius (2:1-2) "problematic" and merely lists several publications in a footnote for readers to consult. He ventures no guess as to how Luke's genealogy parallels that of Matthew. Nor does he suggest any connection between Luke's "sermon on the plain" (6:17-49) and Matthew's "sermon on the mount." He calls the rich ruler's reference to Jesus as "good teacher" (18:18) a word game rooted in a concern with status, and ignores any Christological implications in Jesus' response ("No one is good but God alone"). He labels the passage of a camel through the eye of a needle (18:25) an impossibility, but fails to analyze or explain the background of the saying.

Preachers will find this work especially helpful in showing how passages in Luke can be understood and communicated in context. Most readers will want to utilize the more exegetical commentaries by Bock, Fitzmyer, Marshall, Nolland, and Stein as necessary companion volumes. Perhaps the publisher should consider commissioning a dual track (literary and historical-grammatical) for subsequent replacement volumes, so as not to lose the original focus of the series.

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The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel. By Andreas J. Köstenberger. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, xvi + 271 pp., \$30.00.

The present work is a modification of the author's doctoral dissertation. Köstenberger gives a detailed analysis of the concept of mission in the fourth Gospel with a view to taking the results of his study and, in combination with other studies, forming a Biblical theology of mission applicable to the modern Church.

I found the chapter dealing with methodology to be the most informative. Köstenberger clearly lays out a method of study in sympathy with modern linguistic theory. He seeks to study all of the significant words and concepts that bear on his topic. The semantic field rather than a few obvious words is the focus of attention. Another major emphasis is how to relate the ministries of Jesus and the disciples. Are they to be seen as being in continuity or discontinuity with each other?

The main body of the work is a detailed study of the various words and word groups that John uses in presenting his concept of mission. Köstenberger first analyzes John's conception of Jesus' mission and then his view of the mission of the disciples. Often his conclusions seem fairly obvious. Yet, the analysis is necessary because of the variety of views with which he must interact in his own exposition. He concludes that John presents Jesus' mission as threefold. First, Jesus was sent from the Father to do his Father's will. Jesus is seen as a model of the dependent servant who has an intimate relationship with the Father through obedience to his will. Second, Jesus is the one who has come from the Father and is returning to him. That return to the Father is through the supreme act of obedience via his death on the cross. Finally, Jesus' mission is seen in his eschatological role of shepherd/teacher who calls his followers to the same kind of fruit-bearing that he has demonstrated. These three roles of Jesus combine together to form his mission as the Messiah.

After detailing the mission of Jesus, Köstenberger turns his attention to the mission of the disciples. While observing certain aspects of continuity, he correctly notes that John distinguishes the mission of Jesus from the disciples even in the terminology that he uses. John restricts certain mission-related vocabulary to Jesus (e.g. "descend," "ascend," "signs"), while other terms are used only of the disciples (e.g. "follow"). The disciples are seen as representative of other believers and their mission is the mission

of the Church today. The mission of the disciples is framed in language parallel to the mission of Jesus, but with a different focus. As Jesus was sent to do the will of the Father who sent him, so the disciple is sent to do the will of the one (Jesus) who sends him. In essence, the disciples' mission is to follow Jesus by first coming to him, and then bearing fruit in their lives and witness for him. Fruitbearing is accomplished primarily by developing the two characteristics of love and unity.

Köstenberger's analysis of the text is illuminating. However, I was disappointed in the application section, which dealt primarily in generalities. Disciples today are to have the same kind of dependent relationship with their sender that Jesus did with his. In this way, they "re-present" Jesus to the world. This is helpful, but it is hard to see how Köstenberger fulfills the intention expressed at the very beginning that his study and others like it form the "basis for the mission practice of the contemporary church" (p. 2), except in a most general way.

One final criticism of the book is that the author claims that he wants his book to benefit not only the scholarly community, but also the Church at large (p. xvi). His decision not to provide a translation for his German quotations and NT Greek citations would appear to get in the way of that stated goal.

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Johannine Ecclesiology. By John Ferreira. JSNTSup 160. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998, 246 pp., \$70.00.

This work is a revision of a doctoral dissertation written at the University of Queensland. In his introduction, Ferreira endeavors to show that although Christology has rightly enjoyed the place of privilege, ecclesiology also lies at the center of Johannine thought. Previous studies on Johannine ecclesiology have been inadequate, according to Ferreira, because they have labored under the influence of the categories of Pauline or "orthodox" ecclesiology with its emphasis on liturgy, government or sacraments. He contends that John is, on the other hand, more concerned about the origin, nature, and function of the believing community.

As to methodology, Ferreira intentionally ignores the recent developments in narrative or reader-response criticism, choosing rather to employ the more traditional methods of historical and literary criticism. He limits his study to two principal areas: (1) "an ecclesiological exegesis" (p. 16) of the prayer in John 17 and (2) two major terms contained in the prayer: glory and sending. The focus on John 17 is due to the concentration of major terms and concepts found therein; thus, the study is not exhaustive, as Ferreira recognizes.

Chapter 2 discusses the history of research on several subjects surrounding the study of the fourth Gospel (FG). While (rightly) conceding the salutary shift from viewing the FG against a Hellenistic trajectory to a Jewish one, Ferreira contends, however, that the situation is much more nuanced. Thus, his working hypothesis is that there is not merely a primary Jewish setting but further (including Gnostic) influences. The chapter ends with helpful working definitions of the study's pertinent terms.

Chapters 3 and 4 are exegetically oriented and deal specifically with Jesus' prayer in John 17. Chapter 3 concerns itself with the context and structure of the prayer. Ferreira argues that the prayer in John 17 reflects closely the "law-court" genre of Jewish prayers of the first century. As such, John 17 "is not a true historical prayer" (p. 68): the "*Sitz im Leben* of the prayer is the struggle of the Johannine community with the synagogue" (p. 58). The chapter's best contribution is a well-articulated discussion of the structure of the prayer and a conceptual summary of John 17. Chapter 4 is the actual exegesis of John 17, including several thematic studies (e.g. knowledge, life, κόσμος).

In chap. 5 Ferreira analyzes the concept of glory in the FG, and along with most scholars he understands the concept in terms of a Jewish background. Ferreira argues that glory in John has a very concrete meaning, namely, “the saving ministry of Jesus and not . . . a future event” (p. 161), thus rejecting as inadequate many alternate interpretations. In chap. 6 he discusses the Johannine concept of sending. Ferreira restricts the discussion to two terms (verbs): ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω. Engaging the long debate on whether the two are synonymous (or not), he argues that they are indeed to be distinguished (conceding that the meaning is often blurred), and innovatively suggests that they derive from different milieu—ἀποστέλλω from an OT prophetic tradition and πέμπω from a gnostic redeemer myth tradition.

In observing the work as a whole, using the tools and methods of historical and literary criticism, Ferreira has certainly extended the discussion on John (in a few cases quite uniquely), especially as it surrounds the Johannine community. At the same time, there are two principal areas of weakness, both concerning methodology. Although at the outset Ferreira distinguishes “gnostic” from (second-century) “gnosticism,” this distinction is not always observed, and it appears that he has too frequently found gnostic influence (especially the ascent-descent redeemer motif) where other more satisfactory solutions exist. Second, the Johannine community and its putative struggle with the synagogue is a well-known, hotly debated issue. Ferreira assumes this connection and repeatedly relates ecclesiology to “the community,” and it seems unavoidable that a certain circularity occurs in his argumentation. Increasingly, scholars across the spectrum are calling into question the connection, and recently one well-known author (R. Bauckham, *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*) urges that the term “community” be dropped altogether from scholarly discussion. Ferreira’s study has nevertheless provided some significant observations.

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Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John. By Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998, x + 326 pp., \$19.00.

The sequel to the authors’ *Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, the present work applies recent sociological insights to the study of John’s gospel. This is done in form of a selective commentary on various features of background. Taking their cue from Halliday (1978), the writers characterize John’s language as “anti-language,” that is, “the language of an ‘antisociety’ . . . set up within another society as a conscious alternative to it” (p. 7). John’s community, according to Malina and Rohrbaugh, was viewed by its opponents as “either on the margins of prevailing norms or laws or transgressed these” (p. 9), with John’s antilanguage constituting “a form of resistance to this range of competing groups” (p. 10). Decrying common “[e]thnocentric and anachronistic readings” (p. 16), the authors set out to “provide the reader with fresh insight into the social system shared by the unknown author of the Gospel of John and his original, first-century Mediterranean audience” (p. 19).

Throughout the commentary, scenarios or conceptual schemes are suggested that a first-century reader would allegedly have conjured up, be they related to honor and shame, social class or conflict, or various ceremonies, ritual or major institutions of the time. The authors justify their social-scientific approach, first, by maintaining that “meanings derive from social systems” (p. 20). Second, they claim that “models operate at a level of abstraction somewhat above that of historical inquiry” (p. 20). Thus they offer “not a complete literary and historical commentary” on John’s Gospel but rather a “simplified social-scientific commentary” (p. 21). To aid the reader, the authors supply

“reading scenarios” drawn from anthropological studies of the Mediterranean social system. Short “notes” comment on specific passages of the Gospel. Finally, there are maps, illustrations and diagrams as well as a (highly idiosyncratic) appendix breaking down the Gospel into smaller units.

I have spelled out the underlying assumptions of this work in some detail in order to show that the present volume is anything but mainstream. Rather, the authors’ highly doubtful presuppositions and their commitment to the primacy of a social-scientific method dominate the actual commentary to an extent that it turns out to be of fairly limited value to the general (largely uninitiated) readership. This is not the place to register in detail the concerns against the rigorous application of a social-scientific approach to Biblical studies. The reader is invited to peruse for himself this somewhat strange, often imbalanced presentation of the background to John’s gospel. Suffice it to say that the theological apprehension of this Gospel’s message seems more often than not to be, not enhanced, but submerged under sociological data provided by the authors. Helpful features such as matters of archaeology, OT or Greco-Roman literary parallels are blended with more esoteric “study aids.”

For example, John 1:35–51 is “illuminated” by a full-page chart contrasting “Liminality,” “Society” and “Antisociety.” Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus is set in the context of “fictive kinship” and “ascribed honor.” Chapter 5 is discussed in terms of patronage, brokerage, honor/shame or challenge/riposte. What in the title of the book might lead a prospective buyer and user to expect a helpful treatment of background features relevant for the study of John’s Gospel turns out at a closer look to be an attempt at validating the authors’ social-scientific methodology, models, and theories. It should also be noted that the book thins out considerably when dealing with the second half of John’s Gospel: while 187 pages are devoted to chaps. 1–12, only 76 pages are given to chaps. 13–21. Overall, I would caution readers not to buy the present volume but to wait instead for the four-volume *Illustrated Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, forthcoming from Zondervan in late 2001, which will feature a more balanced, relevant treatment of background issues.

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Acts. By F. Scott Spencer. Readings: A New Biblical Commentary. Sheffield: Academic, 1997, 266 pp., \$19.50 paper.

Spencer is a well-established Luke-Acts scholar. His doctoral dissertation under J. D. G. Dunn at Durham was published in the JSNT Supplement Series under the title *The Portrait of Philip in Acts: A Study of Roles and Relations* (1992) and is the best available treatment of the ministry of Philip. Spencer also contributed the article on “Acts and Modern Literary Approaches” in *The Book of Acts in its Ancient Literary Setting* (1993).

The present volume belongs to a new commentary series entitled “Readings,” oriented toward literary methodologies. Spencer’s *Acts* combines narrative criticism with sociological approaches. The narrative-critical emphasis is reflected in Spencer’s extensive use of characterization and his analysis of plot development. He also devotes considerable attention to geography and matters of time. He draws attention to extensive parallels between passages within Acts itself, and parallels in the Gospel of Luke and in the OT. Sometimes the parallels seem forced, however, such as his likening the lame man’s deliverance from his 40-year malady (Acts 4:22) to Israel’s salvation from its 40-year wilderness sojourn.

Spencer's sociological treatment is less extensive than his consistent narratological approach. It is nonetheless apparent in many passages where he notes elements of ancient Mediterranean society with its emphasis on the group, on honor and shame, on limited goods, and on purity matters such as meals and acceptance of outcasts. For example, Spencer provides a helpful analysis of the conflict between the apostles and the Jewish authorities in Acts 3–5 in terms of honor and shame.

In his introduction, Spencer notes two groups to which he intends to give particular attention: the Jews and women. He sees the author of Acts as being open to the witness to Jews throughout Acts. Spencer's approach to women is somewhat confusing, however. He portrays the author as consistently downplaying their role. Even Lydia is portrayed as lower class and powerless, which seems counter to her portrait in Acts 16 as patron of a house church.

Spencer's frequent spatial and geographical divisions seem forced at times. Probably few will be convinced by his rearranging the traditional three missionary tours of Paul into two, a Mediterranean expedition (Acts 13:1–16:5), and an Aegean expedition (Acts 16:6–21:36). Also questionable is Spencer's suggestion that the author of Acts saw the island of Cyprus as a liminal zone for Paul, where he passed from mission participant to mission leader.

Spencer's Acts is just what it purports to be: a careful reading of the text. It is not a traditional commentary that covers all the problem passages and deals with the historical issues. In fact, Spencer generally avoids historical questions and majors on interpretation. He rejects traditional Lukan authorship, designating the author as "an anonymous 'I.'" The "I" passages become an undefined "'we' party." Neither does Spencer major on the theology of Acts. The major vehicle for the theology of the book, the speeches, are given an uneven treatment. For instance, Peter's Pentecost discourse is covered in two pages while Spencer's excellent exposition of Stephen's speech takes up 12.

This commentary incurs some of the problems endemic to a primarily narrative-critical approach. Many of the supposed parallels in incidents, themes, and vocabulary are questionable, sometimes bordering on allegory. Times and events are sometimes given a special meaning, when all they may indicate is that it simply happened that way. On the other hand, the approach often provides significant new insights. Among these is Spencer's treatment of Peter's ambivalent situation on the rooftop of an unclean tanner's house while at the same time protesting the consumption of unclean food offered him. Equally provocative is the suggestion that Apollos was a forerunner to the disciples of John at Ephesus, with Paul as their culminator. Many such insights can be gleaned through Spencer's commentary, making it well worth the reading. It is indeed a good "reading" commentary. It is short enough to read through in a brief span, providing a good grasp of the story line and main themes of Acts, which Spencer presents in a clear and engaging manner.

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To Every Nation Under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles. By Howard Clark Kee. The New Testament in Context Commentaries. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997, 361 pp., \$24.00 paper.

Among the spate of commentaries on Acts to appear in this last decade of the 20th century, Kee's *To Every Nation Under Heaven* fills a distinctive role. The writer interprets the content of Acts not only in terms of the immediate historical and socio-cultural background context of the events reported. He also interprets the text according to

Luke's "literary, conceptual, and sociocultural strategies" for addressing his audience in their historical, socio-cultural, and literary background context as he calls it "to understand the message and the strategies by which it can reach out effectively 'to every nation under heaven'" (p. 1).

Kee's 30-page introduction prepares the way for such a context-sensitive approach. After laying out the traditional theories of origin, to which he responds with a studied agnosticism, the author traces a very selective history of interpretation of the past two centuries. Kee then lays out the basic paradigms for his own interpretation. He will do a historical study, conducted from a sociology of knowledge perspective. He will focus not on the accuracy of the report or the authenticity of the events reported, but on "What meaning is the report seeking to convey? . . . What are the assumptions about reality shared by the author and his initial intended readers?" (p. 13). He will do literary analysis employing subgenre: speech, biography, romance and dramatic narrative, and letters, and comparison with LXX style. After a fairly comprehensive overview of the main theological themes in Acts, Kee illustrates his interpretive approach through a case study: Luke's portrayal of Paul. Then he discusses Acts' textual tradition and sets forth the translation principles by which he will produce his own "dynamic equivalence" rendering of the Greek text of Acts.

The commentary proceeds according to an outline that divides Acts into five major sections with subsections according to standard pericope divisions. Each commentary unit contains a translation, an exposition, and excursus breaking into the exposition (37 in all). There are extensive endnotes; a topically organized bibliography; and Scripture reference, ancient and modern author, and subject indexes.

Kee is to be commended for setting out clearly his interpretive approach in his introduction and consistently following through with it in his commentary. His translation is solid, but unremarkable. He is very strong in employing historical background to the events reported both in exposition (e.g. Damascus, Acts 9:10–19a, p. 120) and excursus (divination, Acts 16:16–24, pp. 195–196). His use of Greco-Roman background and the archaeological findings is consistently adroit (e.g. Roman judicial procedure, p. 198; Ephesus, p. 331; Caesarea Maritima, p. 131). His constant linking of the text to Luke's original audience's interests via reference to its socio-cultural background serves anyone seeking to relate Acts' content to its author's purpose and audience (e.g. pp. 161, 233).

The use of socio-scientific terminology to explain the social dynamics portrayed in the text often sharpens the analysis and presents the text's meaning in a fresh way. For example, the dispute over circumcision in Antioch is termed "the issue of ritual criteria for participation in the people of God" (p. 178). There are quite a few insightful theological comments (e.g. Stephen's vision as a "trinitarian vision," Acts 7:55–56, p. 103; the distinction between magic and miracle, Acts 19:11–20, p. 230).

The commentary is weak in its documentation. Kee declines to use any evidence from the Mishnah for Jewish background. In secondary documentation, he cites the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* almost exclusively as a reference source. He manifests very little interaction with commentaries and shows only a limited use of periodical articles and essays.

Kee's work is often weak when it comes to the establishment of the text's historical accuracy and proper interpretation according to the immediate historical context of the reported events. Although he can defend the text's reliability (the snakes, Acts 28:3, p. 337, n. 62), the author can also appeal to the original author's situation and literary purpose and practice to explain what he takes to be an inaccuracy (Acts 15 does not represent accurately what is reported for the Jerusalem Council in Galatians 2, p. 182) or an inauthentic detail (alleged saying of Jesus, Acts 20:35, p. 243). Sometimes Kee's understanding of the author's purpose and his original audience displaces the historical background proper to the reported events (e.g. Stephen's speech in Acts 7, p. 96). Sometimes Greco-Roman background displaces more appropriate OT or Jewish background (Paul's speech at Lystra, Acts 14:15–17).

As commentaries go, then, *To Every Nation under Heaven* occupies a fairly specialized niche. There is value in the way it expounds the author's rhetorical moves for his original audience. And many of the excursuses give concise yet comprehensive treatments of historical background. Its role in any Bible student's library, however, must be supplementary to standard commentaries.

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Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years. By Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer. Translated by John Bowden. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997, 530 pp., n.p.

This co-authored work is the sequel to Hengel's earlier work, *The Pre-Christian Paul* (1991). Like its predecessor the book is heavily documented with copious references to the primary and secondary materials in 1,584 endnotes (pp. 321–501). It covers the "unknown years" of Paul's life from the time of his conversion near Damascus to the beginning of the first missionary journey to Cyprus and Southern Galatia, a period of approximately fourteen years between 33 and 47 CE. Hengel reconstructs a chronology of the apostle's life using both Acts and the Pauline letters, setting Luke's record of events within the context of secular recorded history (pp. xi–xiv). Hengel is critical of all attempts to reconstruct Paul's life based on the letters alone (pp. 119, 210, 216).

The massive reference to historical data at times produces a heavy, arduous style, but for the persevering reader valuable data is assembled to illumine these "unknown years" of Paul. Valuable historical background sections include the Jewish community in Damascus and its attraction of Gentile "godfearers" (pp. 50–80); Biblical-theological rationale for Paul's excursion to Arabia (Gal 1:17) and the religious situation in Arabia and Syria (pp. 109–126); the Jewish community in Tarsus and the Jewish-pagan syncretism attested in Cilicia and adjacent territories (pp. 158–167); the crisis sparked by Caligula's attempt to erect his statue in the Jerusalem temple (37–41 CE) and the anti-Jewish unrest in Antioch during those years (pp. 180–191); the background to the designation "Christians" first used in Antioch (pp. 225–230); the political context of Agrippa I's persecution of the Jerusalem church (pp. 246–257); the syncretistic religious situation in Antioch at the time of Paul's arrival and ministry there (pp. 268–275). Unfortunately, the book lacks an index of ancient sources (other than the index of Biblical references), such as Greek, Roman and Jewish, especially Josephus, which are constantly cited.

Hengel and Schwemer have a high regard for Luke's historical reliability. Luke is viewed as a sympathetic and accurate chronicler of Paul. That circle of NT scholars that disparages Luke's reliability in favor of speculative reconstructions of early Church history is branded with "historical incompetence" (p. ix). Hengel and Schwemer's ongoing apologetic for taking Luke the historian seriously is a refreshing departure from the consensus critical view forged by such leading detractors as G. Schille, E. Haenchen, A. F. Loisy and W. Schmithals.

Nevertheless, the authors' confidence in Luke is only to a point. Running as a thread throughout the book are references to Luke's historical record as less than fully reliable: he harmonizes and tones down conflicts and passes over that which is unattractive (p. 10); refers to a census during the time of Herod I by the Roman governor of Syria (Luke 2:1–2) that is "simply impossible" (p. 326, n. 49); produces an "ideal, stained-glass depiction" of events in Acts 2–5 (p. 29); the extradition letter of Saul

from the high priest of Jerusalem for Jewish Christians in Damascus “has overstepped the bounds of historical probability” (p. 50); the record of Paul’s first visit to Peter in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26–30; cf. Gal 1:18–20) is full of blatant contradictions, carelessness, exaggerations, and unhistorical scenes (pp. 137–142). Many other examples could be cited where Luke is charged with harmonizing tendencies, idealizing images, legendary descriptions, historical inaccuracies, and plerophoric modes of expression (see pp. 83, 84, 103, 128–129, 134, 136, 154, 155, 181, 186, 196, 203–204, 222, 239, 245–246, 251, 262). It is not always clear what criteria are the basis for the authors’ judgment of what is and is not reliable in Luke-Acts. The overall tenor of the book, however, is one of appreciation for Luke the historian whose record should be viewed as innocent of error until proven guilty (pp. 211–213).

The authors direct perhaps their most intense criticism towards the proponents of the history of religions thesis that Christianity was born out of syncretistic Judaism with seminal influence from gnosticism and oriental mystery religions (e.g. H. Gunkel, W. Bousset, R. Bultmann). This thesis credits Paul with transforming a simple Palestinian prophet, Jesus, into the cultic Lord of the Greeks he evangelized in Antioch (see pp. 78–80, 101–105, 167–169, 199, 208, 214, 220–221, 260–261, 275–300). But Hengel and Schwemer emphasize the transformational effect of the Damascus Christophany on Paul’s theological construct, arguing that his basic Christological and soteriological convictions were born out of his conversion-commission (pp. 91–105). Developmental theories, such as the recent proposal of J. Becker, underestimate the degree to which this early period between Damascus and Antioch shaped the fundamental contours of Paul’s thought that remained intact throughout his life (pp. 305–309). Luther and Paul are alike in this regard, for their essential insights came very early and were preserved, albeit deepened, in the decades that unfolded (pp. 311–313).

Finally, Hengel and Schwemer contend that the difficulty of modern scholarship in coming to terms with Paul may well lie in his distance from today’s fashionable pluralism: “One could not accuse Paul of theological inconsistency and a readiness to compromise on the question of truth. It may be modern, but it is not Pauline” (pp. 149–150; see also pp. 291, 302, 307).

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First Corinthians. By Richard B. Hays. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 1997, xiv + 299 pp., \$24.00; *II Corinthians.* By Simon J. Kistemaker. New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997, x + 495 pp., \$34.99.

With Hays’s volume the Interpretation series on the NT books stands complete. The series aims to enrich those who are engaged in communicating the message of the Biblical books. The series’ objectives prevent technical discussions of issues and problems of the text. But for unpacking the meaning of the text, Hays’s contribution serves its purpose and readers well. It achieves that difficult balance of addressing the essential issues and problems without bogging down those whose interests or expertise will not allow them to work through highly technical debates. The book has no footnotes and only occasional references in the text to other resources, though Hays’s comments show his interaction with the research and literature—both ancient and modern—on the letter.

In his 14-page introduction, Hays sets out the essential issues concisely with no surprises. He guesses that the number of Christians residing in Corinth at the time of Paul’s writing is probably less than 150 and represented a spectrum of differing social

and economic classes. Hays sets out a helpful list of what he believes to be the major theological themes of the letter, as well as major focal points in the commentary, so readers can anticipate his conclusions about Paul's overarching goals and accomplishments. Hays interacts mostly with the NIV and NRSV versions, preferring one over the other as his judgments lead him. He embraces the gender-inclusive language approach of the NRSV, but also shows that at times this inflexible ideology can obscure the meaning of the text (e.g. p. 95).

The commentary itself proceeds according to the paragraphs or short sections in the letter—first with Hays's interpretation followed usually by "Reflections for Teachers and Preachers." This format works very well for most readers of commentaries, I suspect, for the structure forces writer and reader to the hermeneutical payoff. So, for example, after analyzing Paul's treatment of the scandal of the factions in 1:10–17, Hays observes: "There can be no doubt that our denominational divisions perpetuate the sort of fragmentation of Christ that Paul deplored. Each one of us says, 'I belong to Luther,' or 'I belong to Calvin,' or 'I belong to Wesley,' or 'I belong to the Church of Christ'" (p. 25). In places Hays provides a virtual "lesson plan" for teachers by setting out numerically implications of the text (e.g. on 1:18–2:5; pp. 36–39). For those who employ the church lectionary, Hays often provides comments on its virtues or deficiencies as readings impinge on 1 Corinthian texts.

I found the commentary to be instructive, thought-provoking, and relevant to actually *using* the book of 1 Corinthians, both personally and for teaching. Hays's comments are a model of how application should proceed from sound interpretation. The applications are not mere tack-ons; readers will see that he has put considerable effort and given ample space to living authentically in response to the implications of the Biblical text. Here is a NT scholar who clearly takes the Bible seriously for life and ministry.

One questionable idea occurs on p. 133 where, commenting on 7:12 (" . . . I say that [I not the Lord] . . ."), Hays suggests that the rest of chap. 7 reflects Paul's opinion on the subjects rather than revealed knowledge. But we must ask, is all of 1 Corinthians inspired Scripture or does revelation not extend to sections where Paul gives his "opinions"? I suspect for Paul the issue in this chapter concerns whether or not he can cite *ipsissima verba Jesu*, not whether the "opinions" are authoritative or not.

Perhaps to the dismay of some egalitarians or feminists, Hays asserts that though *kephalē* (head) might possibly mean "source," "the patriarchal implications of v. [11:3] are undeniable" and "this still serves as the warrant for a claim about his ontological preeminence over her" (p. 184). According to Hays's analysis, though Paul supports a hierarchical ordering between male and female (p. 187), he also supports a *functional* equality of men and women in the church (p. 189). In the end, when Hays comes to applying 11:2–16 he says, "the teacher or preacher should be prepared to acknowledge that we can neither understand it entirely nor accept it entirely" (p. 190). Hays apparently sees no need to see the text as normative for our thinking. Paul may have believed in hierarchy based on gender, but his argument for it "begins to break down, as shown by his problematic exegesis of Genesis" (p. 191). So Paul's arguments lose their validity, according to Hays. To his credit, Hays calls for teachers to engage seriously the implications of Paul's world view or Paul's exegesis of Genesis in the context of his own trinitarian understanding of God, and not try to explain away his words by appeals to translating *kephalē* as "source" rather than "head." But I suspect many evangelicals will squirm at his readiness to replace Paul's views with those of our more enlightened era.

Like G. Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT), Hays considers 14:34–35 ("women should be silent in the churches") as a non-Pauline interpolation. Rejecting various attempts to make sense of their inclusion, Hays counsels teachers to help

students wrestle with the problem of such interpolations and the internal tensions within the Bible itself ("The Bible is not a homogeneous or systematic body of teachings"; p. 248). Hays believes we ought to embrace the NT's fundamental themes and make decisions about contested texts in their light. In this instance, Hays seeks to place emphasis where it ought to be: "we should be guided by Paul's vision of Christian worship in which the gifts of the Spirit are given to *all members of the church, men and women alike*, for the building up of the community" (p. 249; emphasis Hays).

Kistemaker's commentary on 2 Corinthians, the latest in his contribution to the two-man series begun by W. Hendriksen, continues the Reformed viewpoint readers have come to expect. Reformed authors are featured in the footnotes, though Kistemaker cites and interacts with the full spectrum of scholarship on 2 Corinthians. The 29-page introduction covers the usual ground with no major surprises. Conservative and traditional conclusions are ably defended. Kistemaker cogently argues for the unity and integrity of our 2 Corinthians, opining "that the writing of this letter took place with interruptions that impeded continuity" (p. 15). He lists the major difficult texts to be found in the letter: 2:14; 3:18; 5:4; 8:18; 12:2, 7, and 21, and provides a brief summary of the six major theological themes he finds. As to the question of "Who are Paul's opponents?" he discusses the major options of gnostics, divine men, and the Judaizers, deciding for the latter. These self-appointed messengers to Corinth, whom Paul called "superapostles," are also false apostles (11:5, 13).

The commentary is written in the standard verse-by-verse format. It proceeds by sections and includes the following elements: Kistemaker's own translation of the section, verse-by-verse comments, practical considerations (for most sections), occasional doctrinal considerations (e.g. p. 156), and explication of Greek words, phrases, and constructions. This latter component includes a variety of issues: lexicographic, text-critical and grammatical analyses. Footnotes distinguish this volume from Hays's on 1 Corinthians and show it is written at a somewhat higher level. While Hays aims to help teachers and preachers make the text relevant and useful to others, Kistemaker suggests theological observations and personal applications for the readers themselves (e.g. "One is truly a spiritual giant when one relies totally on God" [p. 51]). A summary concludes his discussion of each chapter. While Hays's projects for application tend to be concrete and pointed, Kistemaker's practical considerations tend more toward abstract theological affirmations. I found Hays more useful and relevant on this score.

Kistemaker is an able, if predictable, guide through this complex letter of Paul. For any typical interpretive problem he explains the problem, lays out the interpretive options (footnoting proponents of each), assesses the evidence itself, and comes to his reasoned conclusion. Readers can see how exegesis ought to be conducted. This volume is not as thorough as the volumes by V. P. Furnish (Anchor Bible) or R. P. Martin (Word Biblical Commentary), but it ably fills a need for those who want more exegetical discussion than is found in commentaries employing only the English text.

One criticism is in order. I could wish at times that Kistemaker worded his grammatical observations more precisely. For example, sometimes he describes grammatical functions as follows: "The aorist tense is constative" (p. 110), "the ingressive aorist points to the beginning of the act," and "the aorist tense conveys single action" (p. 131)—as if these were straightforward features of the Greek text. Those who have studied Greek recently will understand such claims (and might well agree with Kistemaker's assessments), but unwary readers might not realize Kistemaker is making his own judgments of these *specific uses* of the aorist tenses. On the other hand, since he assumes readers have studied Greek and so know what a category such as "ingressive aorist" means, the unwary might not be led astray! They will ignore the Greek sections. This is a minor quibble, however, that is not intended to detract from my appreciation of this

solid and welcome volume. Commentaries on 2 Corinthians are lacking; this helps fill the void.

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First Corinthians. By Richard B. Hays. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 1997, 299 pp., n.p.

Although this is a commentary designed for the preacher-pastor rather than the scholar, Hays backs up his homiletical appropriation with solid exegesis of the text of 1 Corinthians. In the brief introductory chapter the author likens the difficulty of interpreting Paul to reading someone else's mail—we are eavesdropping on communication intended for an ancient audience yet with a supra-occasional and authoritative character that must be applied to the contemporary Church. His approach throughout is to look for normative principles that emerge from Paul's theological approach to practical issues in the Church: "The brilliance of Paul's letter lies in his ability to diagnose the situation in theological terms and to raise the inchoate theological issues into the light of conscious reflection in light of the gospel" (p. 8).

In line with the parameters of the Interpretation series the author provides a running commentary on sections of the epistle while identifying theological themes or motifs, rather than a verse-by-verse exposition of the text. Greek terms are transliterated. The argument is carefully traced with clear structural outlines. Unfortunately there are no indexes; an index of ancient sources would be particularly helpful because the author illumines his commentary with frequent references to such ancient and diverse authors as Seneca, Plato, Strabo, Philo, Epictetus, Cicero, Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Aristotle, Pliny the Younger, Josephus, and Justin Martyr. The author-work citations are incorporated into the text and keyed to the "Cited Bibliography" at the end.

Hays has a gift for employing fresh language in his descriptions of the apostle's aims in the letter: Paul seeks the "conversion of the imagination" (pp. 11, 281); he wants the believing community to live as a "prophetic counterculture" in its witness to the world (pp. 87, 89); Paul stimulates the church to an "open-textured ethical reflection" that seeks a middle way between "strident dogmatism on one side and shrugging relativism on the other" (p. 130); rather than seeking power, status, and privilege Paul both models and challenges the church to choose "downward mobility" as servants of the gospel (p. 157).

At the end of each section of the commentary proper is a section entitled "Reflections for Teachers and Preachers." Here the author views Paul as a model of pastoral ministry whose teaching must be applied first to the preacher and then to his audience if it is to reach its intended effect. Hays can be incisive and hard-hitting as he applies the ancient text to a number of issues that the contemporary church faces: right and wrong forms of judgment (p. 63), authentic leadership (p. 76), church discipline (pp. 89–90), abortion (p. 109), divorce and remarriage (pp. 131–132), the mission of world evangelization (pp. 133, 294–295), membership in clubs and fraternal orders (143–144), idolatry and the reality of demons (p. 172), gender distinctions and the role of women in ministry (pp. 191–192, 249), God's temporal discipline of the church (pp. 205–206), the church as a charismatic community (pp. 219–220, 251–252), truth in evangelism (pp. 251–252), resurrection faith (pp. 277–278, 281). There is a deep concern in these pages to bring the ancient text to bear with exhortation, challenge, and warning on the life of the contemporary community believers.

There are a few places, however, in which I felt uneasy with Hays's approach to the text, which seemed to call in question its authoritative character. Hays believes that Paul argues throughout chap. 7 for an imminent parousia, which accounts for his urging Christian slaves to remain contentedly in their slave status (pp. 124–125, 133). Such mistaken apocalyptic notions should be rethought and adjusted in light of the different historical perspective of the modern reader. One wonders if the text itself, as the author claims (pp. 133–134), argues for such a reformulation or if Hays has unduly limited Paul's understanding of imminence from including a possible, if not probable, delay of the parousia. In seeking to apply the notoriously difficult paragraph on head coverings (11:2–16) Hays believes Paul's hierarchical view of gender relationships is full of patriarchal implications and strained logic (pp. 190–192). Such ideas should be subjected to a theological appraisal by the community of faith as it explores healthy gender relationships. Further, Hays leaves the possibility open that certain Pauline texts such as those on slavery or on the silence of women in Church may be either provisional adaptations to a particular cultural setting (which is eminently possible) or are contradictory with other passages and should be rejected by the church's "theologically informed judgments" (pp. 248–249). I would prefer to seek deeper interpretive solutions to the tensions in the NT data rather than shift authority away from the text to the uncertainty of community consensus.

In general, I applaud Hays's careful and sensitive treatment of 1 Corinthians. One is reminded once again how relevant this ancient letter is for the life of the contemporary Church because of the way Paul addressed occasional concerns in a theological framework.

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The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. By Paul Barnett. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, xxx + 662 pp., \$45.00.

This volume is part of an endeavor by Eerdmans to rework volumes in the New International Commentary series in light of the advances made in NT scholarship over the last 20–30 years. The commentary on 2 Corinthians, originally done by P. E. Hughes, has the distinction of being a completely new work by a different author, rather than a revisionary effort by the original author.

Like its predecessor, the volume includes a table of contents, an introduction (including historical background, critical issues, and a theological overview), an author index, and a Scripture index. To these have been added a table of abbreviations, a select bibliography, an outline of the letter, a brief subject index, and an index of early extra-Biblical literature. Welcome changes include the fact that each pericope is introduced by the NIV (instead of the stiff cadences of the American Revised Version). Copious footnotes add 154 pages to the overall length (although about 50% are a mere referencing of the underlying Greek text).

The reader without a good knowledge of Greek will find the commentary tough going. Some of the Greek is transliterated and kept in the text. But most of the Greek is found in the footnotes in untransliterated form. Additionally, there is not always good coordination between the English translation in the text and the corresponding Greek in the footnotes. On p. 43, for example, seven English words are italicized but only two corresponding Greek terms are underlined (nn. 161–162). Also, English and Greek word order does not always correspond, and the matching of terms

is not always correct (e.g. p. 42 “convinced . . . persuades . . . [being],” while n. 160 has πείθομεν . . . συνέχει . . . κρίναντες).

At points the volume is not terribly user-friendly. Cross-references are too few, and it is not always easy to find where something is treated. For example, text-critical matters are dealt with in the footnotes at the beginning of each pericope rather than under the specific verse in question. This would be tolerable if they were cross-referenced, but they are not. One also wishes that the critical issues surrounding the unity of the letter were given more attention. The author argues for the unity of the letter but only a scant paragraph is given to 2:14–7:4, 6:14–7:2, and chaps. 8–9 and the introduction (with no cross-references to the commentary). A bit more attention is given to chaps. 10–13, but not enough to explain the shift to biting sarcasm at 10:1 and the blunt warning “I will not spare those who sinned earlier” at 13:2—hardly what one would call anticipation of a “joyful reunion” (p. 386).

The current series editor, G. Fee, identifies a single goal for the commentary, namely, “to bring the busy pastor and student up to date on the interpretation and theology of” 2 Corinthians (p. ix). The strength of this commentary is the latter; its weakness is the former. The volume is more of a Biblical theology than it is a systematic exegesis of the text. In one respect the book fills a much-needed vacuum today. Very little has been done in commentary format with the theology of Paul’s letters. And the author takes great pains to tie together the theological threads of 2 Corinthians. His handling of 4:6–18 (which avoids Greek dualistic pitfalls) and 6:3–10 are particularly good. His identification of Paul’s major challenge as that of Corinthian triumphalism is on target and the major theme as “power-in-weakness” based on the motif of the resurrection of the crucified one is certainly correct. Another strength is the author’s firsthand acquaintance with a wide range of primary sources that helps in setting forth the first-century religious and theological milieu. Also, the theologically focused introductions to each pericope are themselves worth the price of the volume.

However, if one is looking for the exegetical fine points of the text, this volume will surely disappoint. For one, there is little exegesis in the body of the commentary, and quite often no rationale is given for the exegetical decisions reached. For instance, textual variants are preferred at times without careful weighing the evidence (e.g. p. 159, n. 1: “our hearts”; p. 255, n. 2: “put on” [without mention of transcriptional probabilities]). Scholarly alternatives are rejected without a specified reason (e.g. p. 258, n. 15: “Views to be rejected are . . .”). Conclusions are reached without adequate justification (e.g. 1:3: “Blessed be the God *even* the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” lacks a grammatical rationale and skirts the theological issue; 3:14 the subject of καταργείται = “the veil” but “the glory” in vv. 7, 11 and 13; ὁ δὲ at 5:5 is actually transitional [“*Now* he who” following grammars and translations], not contrastive [“*But* he who”). Decisions quite often are theologically, not exegetically, driven (e.g. “freedom” in 3:14–17 is freedom from spiritual ignorance, not from an inability to keep the law; 6:14 “at the present time” = the mundane “now,” not “the day of salvation”).

If one is looking for interaction with the range of scholarly interpretation, this is also not the commentary to choose. There is little engagement with interpretive issues in the commentary proper. Even in the footnotes interaction with scholarly opinion is often bypassed or summarily rejected with “contrary to so and so” (e.g. p. 262, n. 39; 265, n. 56). Sometimes scholarly advances are dismissed outright. For example, the author translates ἀπόκριμα in 1:9 as “a death sentence”—even though C. Hemer has shown that the term is not used in this way in first-century Greek usage (*TB* 23:103–107). Καπηλεύοντες is translated “those who *adulterate* the word” in 2:17, despite S. Hafemann’s demonstration that there is no extra-Biblical evidence for this meaning (*Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit* [Eerdmans]). Ὁ δὲ κύριος in 3:17 is equated with “the Lord” Jesus (p. 189), although Fee and others have established that the article + δὲ + noun is a standard Jewish formula for interpreting words from a text that has

just been cited (*God's Empowering Presence* [Hendrickson]). Emerging scholarly consensus are eschewed with little discussion. According to the author, Paul's opponents are Palestinian Jewish legalists (not charismatic Hellenistic Jews). The primary challenge at Corinth is continuing immorality and idolatry (not spiritual arrogance and anti-authoritarianism). Paul was opposed during his last visit by the leader of a libertine faction (not by someone challenging in principle Paul's apostolic authority).

One disappointment is the lack of practical application. Only 3½ pages of a 50-page introduction deal with the letter's application to pastoral ministry (and even here the author argues against application). One also wishes for some practical explication of the promise of divine encouragement in times of trouble (1:3–11), the need to reaffirm love for an erring member who has repented (2:5–10), the importance of not being outwitted by Satan (2:11), death as a going home to be with Jesus (5:6–8), new creation in Christ (5:17), being ambassadors for Christ (5:17), and the guidelines and models for whole-life stewardship in chaps. 8–9, to name just a few. There are also some knotty problems that need clarification. Is Paul's reverse psychology in chaps. 8–9 a model that we should adopt today? What in practical terms does Paul mean by being unequally yoked with unbelievers (6:14–7:1)? Is Paul arguing for an equality of finances or of necessities in chap. 8? And if "to receive God's grace" can be "to be saved" (as Barnett believes; see on 6:1–2), is Paul then saying that believers can lose their salvation?

Finally, the author's reading of 2 Corinthians is hardly an unbiased one. The first person plural "we" of chaps. 1–13 is read as Paul's self-conscious identity with the Isaianic suffering servant of Isaiah 40–55 and the second person plural "you" (Corinthians) is identified with "captive Israel" (p. 140). So much is this the case that Paul's citation of Isa 49:8 in 2 Cor 6:2 becomes the key verse of the entire letter. To reject God's grace is to reject God's suffering servant (Paul) and so to miss out on salvation. The point is a crucial one. By limiting the "we-you" of the letter to Paul-Corinth, any and all models for ministry evaporate and practical theology disappears. (So, for example, the godly grief that produces repentance and salvation in 7:9 applies uniquely to the Paul-Corinth relationship [pp. 374–376]). There are a few places where the author widens the "we" to include what is referred to as "the new covenant people" (1:18–19; 3:12–18; 4:14, 16–5:10, 18a, 21). But why this should be so is far from clear. They just *are*.

Yet, Paul did not write theology for theology's sake. While it is important not to trivialize Paul or his teaching, it is also important to recognize that he addressed local congregations at their point of need. Paul as "a revelator of the glory of God in a way" that cannot be duplicated or imitated is at odds with the numerous calls that Paul makes to colleagues and churches alike to imitate his life and his teaching (1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Gal 4:12; Phil 3:17; 4:9; 1 Thess 1:6–7; 2 Thess 3:7–9; 2 Tim 3:10–11, 14).

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Galatians. By J. Louis Martyn. AB 33A. New York: Doubleday, 1998, xxiv + 614 pp., \$39.95.

Martyn opens his introduction to Galatians by inviting the reader to become engaged in the drama unfolding in the life of the apostle and the churches to which he wrote. Following this metaphor, the epistle represents the "third or fourth act" (p. 13); therefore Martyn seeks to provide sufficient information to allow the new spectator to comprehend the action on the stage. The content of this volume follows the format of translation, discussion of "literary structure and synopsis," verse-by-verse commentary

(called “notes”), and, where appropriate, excursuses (called “comments”; Martyn includes 52 such excursuses).

Authorship of Galatians is the subject of very little dispute, so attention turns quickly to the identity of the recipients. Based on the “ethnic term” (p. 15) *Galatai* (Gal 3:1) and on the absence of any mention of a mission to Galatia in Gal 1:21 (p. 184), Martyn argues for a north Galatian destination for the epistle. Giving priority to the chronological data in the epistles, Paul’s location at the time of the writing of Galatians is assumed to be “Macedonia or Achaia, having recently come there from Galatia” (p. 19). Employing references to the collection for the believers in Jerusalem as a chronological marker, Martyn concludes that 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, and Philippians were written prior to the conception of the plan for the collection and that the Corinthian correspondence and Romans were written after the initiation of the collection.

Martyn admits that “the dating of the birth of the Galatian churches after the [Jerusalem] conference . . . would become very questionable, however, if we could show that the churches were founded while Paul and Barnabas were working as a team” (p. 185). To Martyn, the absence of any reference to Barnabas as Paul’s partner at the founding of the Galatian churches is strong evidence for the Galatian mission occurring after the break between the two missionaries. Barnabas’s appearance in the narrative at Gal 2:1, 9, 13 is explained by the fact that “Barnabas was in fact there playing his [Paul’s] part” (p. 185).

Other potential weaknesses in Martyn’s reconstruction of Pauline chronology go almost unmentioned. The equation of the famine relief visit (Acts 11:27–30) with the first Jerusalem visit mentioned in the Galatians narrative (Gal 1:18) is rejected explicitly (p. 173), but the possibility that the second visit (Gal 2:1–10) was the famine relief visit is not addressed; the “revelation” mentioned in Gal 2:2 is assumed to be a personal revelation from God to Paul (p. 190). Paul’s failure to employ the apostolic decree of Acts 15:23–29 (which included no requirement for circumcision of Gentile believers) in his argument against his opponents is dismissed by Martyn with the suggestion that Paul was unaware of the decree (p. 200). Following Martyn’s reconstruction, Paul’s oath that he is truthful in the narrative of his encounters with the Jerusalem leadership (Gal 1:20) seems inconsistent with the lack of mention of the famine relief visit in Galatians or, alternatively, seems to contradict the chronology of Acts. Martyn does not deal with this apparent discrepancy; his silence may reflect his devaluing of the Acts chronology. This tendency to limit or eliminate discussion of alternatives is one disappointing characteristic of Martyn’s work in this volume.

Paul’s opponents in Galatia, whom Martyn designates as “the Teachers,” were “Christian-Jewish evangelists” (p. 18). The teachers were engaged in their own independent Gentile mission, and came into conflict with Paul when the area of their activity intersected the Pauline churches in Galatia (p. 117). Martyn suggests the possibility that the initial motivation for the teachers’ mission was “thoroughly positive . . . perhaps understanding it to be the means by which God is filling out the infinite number of progeny he had promised to the patriarch” (p. 122).

Martyn views the disagreement between Paul and the teachers as a fundamental cosmological conflict. “Paul does not argue, then, on the basis of a cosmos that remains undisturbed, a cosmos that he shares with the Teachers. A basic part of his message, in fact, is the announcement of the death of that shared cosmos with its legal elements, and the emergence of the new cosmos with its new elements” (p. 22). Martyn summarizes the content of Galatians by describing the epistle as “a sermon centered on factual and thus indicative answers to two questions, ‘What time is it?’ and ‘In what cosmos do we actually live?’” (p. 23). Consistent with this apocalyptic perspective, Martyn views the antinomy of 2:21 as “fundamental to the entire letter” (p. 260). Similarly, the baptismal formula quoted by Paul in 3:28 was interpreted as an announcement of “the end of the cosmos” (p. 376). As valuable as these insights are, one unfortunate result

of Martyn's apocalyptic perspective on Paul is a tendency to over-translate occurrences of *apokalypsis* (as "apocalyptic revelation," 1:12) and *apokalyp̄tō* (as "apocalyptically to reveal," 1:16 and as "invasively revealed," 3:23).

In dealing with the relationship between faith, works, and righteousness Martyn opts for a translation of *dikaiōō* as "to rectify" and of *dikaioσynē* as "rectification" (pp. 249–250). He then explains Paul's soteriology in a manner similar to that advanced by E. P. Sanders. In that discussion Martyn identifies Jewish antecedents for the Pauline term *erga nomou* and concludes that in the Galatian context the phrase was introduced by the teachers with the meaning "observance of the Law" (pp. 260–263).

The intent of the Anchor Bible series is "to make available all the significant historical and linguistic knowledge which bears on the interpretation of the biblical record" (p. ii). Judged by that standard, Martyn's work is successful. He interacts with the most recent work on Galatians (e.g. Betz, Dunn, and Longenecker) and, with his emphasis on the apocalyptic nature of Paul's thought, presents a valuable perspective on the apostle to the Gentiles. Though evangelicals may not agree with all of Martyn's conclusions (most notably his tendency to neglect or reject the historical accuracy of Acts), this volume, together with those of Dunn and Longenecker, is a valuable addition to the field of Pauline studies and should be considered by anyone seeking to probe the theology of Paul.

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Interpreting the Epistle to the Hebrews. By Andrew H. Trotter, Jr. Guides to New Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids; Baker, 1997, 223 pp., \$13.99 paper. *Hebrews.* By Thomas G. Long. Interpretation. Louisville: John Knox, 1997, xii + 153 pp., \$21.00.

Trotter provides an excellent manual of methods and principles for interpreting the genre of Hebrews, part of a series of guides by various scholars who do the same for other NT books to help "college religion majors, seminarians, and pastors who have had at least one year of Greek" (p. 9). His work is not a commentary on Hebrews as the word is understood but seeks to provide the tools to help the reader interpret the text either to teach or preach Hebrews.

The book has two major parts, the first providing background material, historical and cultural context including readership and date, and then authorship, genre, structure of the book, and interesting particulars of the Greek text. Part two enables the reader to do word studies in Hebrews, and then notes the grammar, its various styles of speech and, finally, the theology that comes from the text: the doctrines of Scripture, Christology, eschatology, and sanctification and perseverance.

The latter part also contains a chart of key words in Hebrews, examines the various styles in the Greek text, depending on what the author wanted to emphasize: his exalted statements about Christ in Heb. 1:2–3; the majestic affirmation of the Word in Heb. 4:12–13; the elegant statement of the nature of the priesthood of Melchizedek in Heb. 7:1–3; the rational argumentation of the philosopher in Heb. 4:1–9; and so on, all of which is helpful in interpreting Hebrews. Trotter offers a valuable contribution regarding this guide to help the student or pastor exegete this book.

He is very careful with the issue of authorship, suggesting it could be either Barnabas or Apollos, but that the evidence is not conclusive. His final point is that while "we do not exactly know who wrote the epistle," this "is not the same thing as saying we know absolutely nothing about its author" (p. 41). He demonstrates that much can be known from how he writes, the content of his material, his knowledge of the OT, as well as his good command of Greek.

Since Trotter is interested in the cultural background of Hebrews, one wonders why he could not consider Heb 1:1–3 as a Messianic Jewish *kaddish*, which is offered at the grave site but here as a testimony to the glory to God and the Messiah as this congregation mourned the homegoing of its pillars, James, Peter, and Paul, by 64 or 65 AD.

Long's commentary on Hebrews is also part of a series of volumes on interpreting the books of the Bible. As professor of preaching at Princeton Theological Seminary, he employs his skills to demonstrate that the author of Hebrews is also a preacher, preaching a sermon "rabbinic in design, Christian in content, and heroic in length" (p. 2). While the letter has some resemblance to an epistle, by and large Hebrews is a message, and the preacher appeared to be a well-educated Jewish Christian with excellent training in Hellenistic thought. While Long considers several candidates for authorship, he comes to no conclusion, and the dating is suggested to be between 60–100 AD.

Long paints the preacher as a patient pastor who sought to encourage the people of this congregation; he does not see people as really backslidden (5:11–14; p. 71) or on the verge of leaving the congregation (6:4–6; pp. 72–73), but rather takes the clue from 6:9 to encourage the congregation to move from "dire predicaments" and "more hopeful circumstances of his congregation" (p. 73). While Long recognizes people can leave the faith (which will be questioned by some), he considers the warning in Hebrews as the means to encourage the folk to rise above their circumstances and live victoriously.

Long has provided an excellent commentary, speaking from the point of view of a gifted preacher, using all the various styles of Hebrews as well as a number of excellent illustrations that will be of help to the modern preacher who decides to tackle this book for his congregation.

One concern I have is the absence of any serious consideration given to Jews who became believers under the Mosaic covenant. According to Long such Jews, "offered imperfect sacrifices through flawed priests" (p. 98) and never knew the possibility of perfection in the conscience (Heb 9:9). A distinction needs to be made between the remnant-believers and the rest as unbelievers where the former knew the Law to be holy and the commandment as holy, righteous, and good (Rom 7:12). Yes, the Messiah had to come to set in motion an entire new people of God where everyone knew the Lord, but one must not overlook what was possible under the old covenant, where many found the Lord and walked with him.

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James. By Kurt A. Richardson. New American Commentary 36. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997, 272 pp., \$27.99; *James*. By David P. Nystrom. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997, 338 pp., \$22.99.

The near simultaneous publication of two commentaries on the epistle of James, both written by able theologians with deep roots in the local church and both published in series directed toward the exploration of the contemporary significance of the ancient text, provides an excellent opportunity for a comparative evaluation.

Let us begin with Richardson's volume, which purports to be a "theological exposition" (p. 22) of James's letter. Although the standard introductory questions are addressed in the opening section, it is clear that Richardson has little interest in making a contribution on this level. The text is understood to have emerged from the pen of James, the brother of Jesus, and is said to evoke at once the literary qualities of an

epistle, diatribe, and parenthesis. By Richardson's own admission the structure of the letter is not readily apparent; nonetheless, the basic outline proposed by P. Davids on the basis of the 1970 study of F. O. Francis is accepted without further discussion.

Richardson's comprehension of his task as one that "presses beyond the strictures of exegetical minutiae toward the larger and more fundamental meaning of the epistle" (p. 22) is evident from the outset. The reader will search in vain for a cogent explanation of the contours of James's missive and find instead a wide-ranging reflection upon the implications Richardson finds buried in the text. The entirety of James 1 is subsumed in Richardson's mind under the topic of wisdom, a quality that is attainable through faith and in turn strengthens faith. James 2 begins then with a clear break, introducing the first of four exhortations on authentic faith by showing how faith is to be lived out in relation to others within the Church. Strangely, for Richardson, the issue in James 2:14–26 has nothing to do with salvation or divine judgment, but with the practical value of faith without works: "faith without deeds is good to no one . . . without deeds the needy do not receive help" (p. 129). Since only God saves, Richardson cannot imagine that James could possibly assert that active faith is instrumental in salvation. Hence, he proposes a reading of the text in which the initial question of 2:14 is curiously redirected in the course of James's argument into a matter of faith's "uselessness" (v. 20) in providing for the poor. Next, James moves on in 3:1–12 to a discussion of the tongue as the key to a virtuous life of faith. From there, 3:13–4:10 are said to alert the readers to the source of correcting their warring desires and 4:11–5:6 delivers James's final attack on self-exaltation. There remains only the closing section, Jas 5:7–20, which Richardson reads as an encouragement to the believers to take heart in their coming victory. The justification for this broad outline remains throughout unhampered by exegetical minutiae and, in the final analysis, the discussion of the epistle's contents reveals perhaps as much about the theological acumen of the commentator as it does about the ancient message of the early Christian author.

David Nystrom's assignment as articulated by the NIV Application Commentary series editors differed significantly from the approach adopted by Kurt Richardson. The fundamental starting point of this innovative series is the consciousness that the NT documents are occasional in nature, addressing specific situations that emerged in the unrepeatability of history. Nonetheless, the series editors insist, Scripture remains timeless in its significance, evoking the need to "bridge contexts" into the contemporary world. This model, which requires the commentator to write three sections for every passage—"Original Meaning," "Bridging Contexts" and "Contemporary Significance"—for all its unwieldiness has the decided advantage that it encourages the reading of the ancient text from within its ancient context. Indeed, one will readily recognize that Nystrom has expended much greater effort in the historical understanding of James's letter than has Richardson. But does he thereby succeed in illuminating the text?

Interestingly, Nystrom adopts the same approach to the introduction and conclusion of James's letter with as little discussion of its merits as did Richardson. But for Nystrom, Jas 1:2–27 is less a unity woven around the theological concept of wisdom than a multi-layered introduction to the themes of the epistle directed towards personal morality. In contrast to the letter opening, Nystrom suggests, the letter body addresses a similar set of issues in the corporate context. In his explanation of this central section, Nystrom repeatedly appeals to the existence of false teachers who advocated favoritism, the pursuit of status, and an antinomian spirit, which together were the cause of bitter envy, ambition, and dangerous divisions. This artificial method of holding the text together known as "mirror reading" may fail to convince the critical reader, but it is the only principle of coherence Nystrom offers beyond an occasional catchword connection. Like Richardson, Nystrom then endeavors to lump the entirety of Jas 5:7–20 together as the last major section of the epistle, despite the clear unity of 5:7–11 with the immediately preceding pericope. Nevertheless, regardless of these shortcomings, the

struggle to confront the issue of James's literary unity is engaged with a greater attention to exegetical detail in Nystrom's commentary than in Richardson's. The end result, however, only underscores the amount of work which remains to be done in the study of this frequently overlooked gem in the NT canon.

Clearly the concept of a Biblical commentary is undergoing a transition in American evangelicalism, with interest shifting away from the hard science of historical interpretation towards the process of contextualizing the Biblical message into the contemporary scene. In this climate, two concluding observations are perhaps appropriate. First, any attempt to illuminate the contemporary significance of Holy Scripture must begin with a convincing analysis of the text's ancient meaning. This task can only be treated as an unwanted distraction at our own peril. Secondly, due to the lack of consensus on the methodology of moving the Biblical message into contemporary life, it might after all be better to reserve the genre of Biblical commentary for the discussion of the ancient meaning. Taking Nystrom's treatment of the contemporary significance of James's letter as an example, one might fairly wonder if the lengthy series of anecdotes from the commentator's own ministry really illumine the Biblical message in a way that a well-written explanation of James's message to the ancient Church would not. Given that the length of Nystrom's commentary exceeds that of more weighty academic treatments, have I really gained anything by assigning my students to read this volume rather than, say, P. Davids's work in the New International Greek Testament Commentary series (Eerdmans), or for the English reader S. Laws's in Harper's New Testament Commentary (Harper)? I am not sure the students themselves would think so.

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Revelation. By J. Ramsey Michaels. IVP New Testament Commentary. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997, 265 pp., \$17.99.

Michaels daringly begins his brief commentary with this quote from *The Devil's Dictionary*: Revelation is "a famous book in which St. John the Divine concealed all that he knew. The revealing is done by the commentators, who know nothing" (p. 13).

According to Michaels, Revelation is a "prophetic letter" rather than an "apocalypse." Its first-person style makes it a "spiritual autobiography, a testimony or personal narrative" of what the author saw and heard on Patmos. John, for example, was amazed at what he saw and responded emotionally to it (5:5; 17:6).

The traditional date for the book may be accurate, says Michaels, but Revelation addresses a *perceived* crisis, rather than actual persecution; it is a wake-up call to Christians who do not realize they are in danger. John depicts the Church and the Roman Empire on a collision course because of a growing culture of compromise and complacency within the Church.

Michaels calls his interpretation of the book a "qualified literalism" that takes explicit predictions of the future as genuine prophecies, but sees most of chaps. 4–22 as a "series of first-century visions containing promises and warnings to Christian believers always and everywhere" (pp. 25–26). What John presents is simply what he saw, not the literal course of future events.

The purpose of Revelation is to warn Christians to maintain an honest and forthright testimony in spite of the threat of persecution. The one sin that stands out above all others in the book is lying—pretending to be something one is not. John warns that the "cowardly" and "all liars" will be refused entrance into the New Jerusalem. These include Judaizing Gentiles, who are fearful of being seen by Rome as distinct from

Jews, and Nicolaitans, immoral prophet-teachers who are urging Christians to compromise with Roman values and religion in order to win social acceptance.

The seven "letters" (Revelation 2–3) are not letters at all, but the oracles of a prophet, given in the name of Christ. The "overcomers" in each congregation are those who "triumph" over hypocrisy and complacency, following the model of Christ himself (3:21).

Michaels dances around several possible interpretations of the Beast's number 666 (13:18), but ultimately deduces that the number may simply mean that the Beast (which somehow represents the Roman Empire and its ruler) is evil and will be "like Nero." He concludes that John presents a premillennial view of Christ's return, but this does not tell us much about future chronology, since Jesus did not literally return when the Roman Empire came to an end.

The commentaries in this IVP series are designed to be useful to pastors and Bible study leaders; however, teachers of Revelation would be better advised to consult the more extensive works by Mounce, Beasley-Murray, Ladd, and Walvoord. Michaels tries to enliven his commentary by including homiletical illustrations and applications, but his overemphasis on the visions in contrast to their meaning as future prophecy will make it more difficult for readers to trace the Biblical author's purpose. This is deadening for a commentary, especially on the Apocalypse.

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Challenges to New Testament Theology: An Attempt to Justify the Enterprise. By Peter Balla. WUNT 95. Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1997, xvi + 284 pp., DM 98.00 paper.

This book is "a version of [the author's] thesis brought up-to-date" (p. viii). The title is an accurate indication of the author's objective. Balla attempts to justify the enterprise of NT theology, which, as most seminarians know, is questioned by many in the academy on two counts: first, that the NT canon is a theological and artificial delimiting of the textual evidence for early Christian thought; and second, that "theology," in that singular, titular fashion, overlooks the real truth that even in the "artificial" NT canon there exist multiple "theologies." Thus, it is claimed, one should rather speak of and engage early Christian theolog-*ies* rather than NT theology.

Balla's point of departure is a reaffirmation by H. Räisänen (*Beyond New Testament Theology*, 1990) of the declaration by W. Wrede in 1897: "the name New Testament theology is wrong in both its terms. . . . The appropriate name for the subject-matter is: early Christian history of religion, or rather: the history of early Christian religion and theology" (p. 1). Balla revisits those scholars most responsible for this redefinition (D. F. Strauss, F. C. Baur, H. Koester, R. Bultmann, *et al.*) and begins the process of defining and refining terms and concepts in ways that make his case. The result is that he wrests the idea of NT theology back from the liberals. To his credit, he splits hairs with the best of them. And anyone who has had to earn a degree under conditions of ideological dissonance can appreciate the struggle. However, evangelicals may not be entirely satisfied with what he delivers: an enterprise so carefully defined that we may be content to say that only the confessional approach can be properly called NT theology, let the academic approach claim whatever it will.

Balla's first thesis is that one may properly speak of and study the NT as a canon because when "a group of Christians separates its writing from the writings of another group of Christians, the historian is justified in making the distinction between 'canons.' The New Testament . . . emerged as one part of Christianity. Thus . . . the

historian may make distinctions among the early Christian literature” (p. 146). Balla succeeds in his claim that such a canonical process took place and that evidence for what became the final canon appeared very early in the process. I think, however, that he would also be forced to conclude that from the point of view of the historian the other “canons” are equally legitimate. His identification of the NT is, therefore, descriptive rather than prescriptive in any way.

Likewise, Balla thinks the problem of competing and developing theologies “may be solved if we understand doctrine and theology as broad terms” (p. 147). Thus, defined broadly enough, Balla’s “thesis is that New Testament theology should be understood as an enterprise describing the theological content of the New Testament—and thus ‘the theology’ of the group of Christians that produced the New Testament canon” (p. 207). Again, the result is descriptive.

Balla is clearly sympathetic to the confessional posture with a high view of Scripture, and he struggles with this in his fifth chapter. He concludes that “faith should not be regarded as a requirement for engaging in the enterprise of New Testament theology. However, we may add that an openness toward the *Sache*—or, in other words, an empathy to religious utterances—is necessary” (p. 217).

At some point one has to ask about the benefits of Balla’s conclusions. He has delivered less than evangelical scholars are likely to desire. And he has probably not convinced his nonevangelical counterparts either. However, he has demonstrated that defining terms and presuppositions is a vital part of any academic exercise. Given his presuppositions, his conclusions follow.

The writing style, although very academic and precise, is also somewhat stilted because, I suppose, English is Balla’s second language. Although the author quotes sources in their original languages, principally German and Greek, less in Latin and Hebrew, the work is nevertheless very readable. It will be of use especially as a graduate-level text.

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Text and Truth: Redefining Biblical Theology. By Francis Watson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, viii + 344 pp., \$45.00.

Francis Watson picks up where he left off in his 1994 volume *Text, Church and World* (reviewed in *JETS* 40 [1997] 148–150) by defining Biblical theology as “a theological, hermeneutical and exegetical discipline” wherein the “hermeneutical and exegetical disciplines are placed at the disposal of the overriding theological concern.” Specifically, he “seeks to dismantle the barriers that at present separate biblical scholarship from Christian theology” (p. vii).

Watson’s chief concern is that modern scholarship’s division of Biblical interpretation into “three autonomous interpretive communities” (OT studies, NT studies, and systematic theology) is “ideologically motivated” (p. 6) and “*systematically distorts* their subject matter” (p. 7). For Watson, that subject-matter is the God of the gospel revealed in Jesus Christ, as witnessed to by the Christian canonical Scriptures. To isolate Biblical studies from theological concerns, as is the practice of modern historical-critical methodology, may produce helpful individual insights into the texts but results in an overall falsification of what the Bible is all about.

Following an introductory chapter, Watson divides his work into two parts: “Studies in Theological Hermeneutics” (pp. 33–176) and “The Old Testament in Christological Perspective” (pp. 179–329). The first part seeks to underscore the relationship between the Biblical text and its subject matter. For Watson, there is no truth without text

(hence the book's title). Jesus is not found somewhere behind the Biblical text, as per the historical-critical tradition, but rather is inextricably bound up with the Biblical witness. Nor is Jesus merely part of a "narrative" and thus confined to "intratextual" or "fictive" status. Rather, the Biblical narrative points beyond itself to the extratextual *history* of Jesus (chap. 1). Furthermore, the Biblical narrative speaks with a "single sense," and not a "multiplicity of voices," as per deconstructive literary theories such as those of F. Kermode (chap. 2).

Watson continues his polemic against radical deconstructivism in chap. 3 by affirming "unfashionable concepts" such as "literal sense," "authorial intention," and "objective interpretation." Such "current hermeneutical dogmas" should be rejected not merely for reasons of incoherence, but primarily "*because they conflict with the dogmas held to be foundational to orthodox Christian faith, and because, in the light of that conflict, certain inherent problems and implausibilities come to light*" (p. 97; emphasis Watson). Having set forth the Augustinian/Anselmian *fides quaerens intellectum* as his fundamental approach, he nevertheless spends most of the chapter affirming traditional literary theories, such as those of E. D. Hirsch (p. 125 n. 7), by appeals to common-ground arguments rather than the theological *a priori* he has previously articulated.

The fundamental problem with the modern discipline of Biblical studies, Watson insists in chap. 4, lies not merely in misinterpreting the canonical texts but in attempting to "erase" those texts, in particular the OT. Such "neo-Marcionism" excludes the OT text entirely from the realm of Christian theology (Bultmann being the outstanding example), and seeks to go behind the NT text to find out the discontinuities between Jesus on the one hand and the apostolic witness to Jesus on the other. Historical surveys of Schleiermacher, Harnack, and Bultmann demonstrate that each of these influential German scholars sought to critique and at times dismiss the Biblical texts in light of *a priori* Enlightenment convictions rather than the Christian canon. For example, Schleiermacher's polemics against the OT were part of his larger program of "de-judaizing of Christian faith" (p. 138) by dismissing the entire idea of textuality, in order to base their theology on "the openness of human nature to immediate experience of God" (p. 140).

Watson's desire to break down the walls between the respective "guilds" of OT studies, NT studies, and theology finds expression in Part 2, "The Old Testament in Christological Perspective." His thesis in chap. 5 is that "the Old Testament comes to us with Jesus and from Jesus, and can never be understood in abstraction from him" (p. 182). He surveys three modern attempts to rescue the OT from scholarly isolation and take seriously its place in the Christian canon, giving higher marks to G. von Rad's emphasis on the typological relationship between the OT and NT than to W. Eichrodt's emphasis on "covenant" or Brevard Child's "canonical criticism."

Chapter 6, "Creation in the Beginning," reflects on the significance of Genesis 1, which posits a foundational, once-for-all beginning of creation as the basis upon which the entire Biblical narrative rests. Genesis 1 thus provides the clear-cut beginning necessary for a properly integrated narrative (i.e. the Biblical canon), as per Aristotle's analysis of the nature of narrative. Creation is an "absolute beginning" (p. 225) and foundation for all that follows, and not a dynamic, ongoing process as per the theology of J. Moltmann. On the other hand, creation is "*only* a beginning" (p. 225; emphasis Watson) which sets the stage for the divine covenants, and is not a proper basis for a "natural theology" such as that propounded by some in the Reformed tradition and, more recently, by J. Barr (pp. 243–248).

Chapter 7, "In the Image of God," endeavors to demonstrate how a careful historical exegesis of Genesis 1 and 2 can be meaningfully and properly augmented by a careful reading of NT references to Christ as "the image of God" (e.g. 2 Cor 4:4) in order to formulate a *theological* definition of the image of God that avoids the pitfalls of classical definitions that are overly dependent upon Greek philosophical categories. In this chapter more than any other Watson demonstrates the fruits of a Christological, canonical

exegesis that at once pays attention to the historical context of OT texts, and their foreshadowing of God's definitive self-revelation in Jesus Christ: "Jesus therefore discloses what it is to be human, and the Genesis texts are to be understood as prophetic of that event" (p. 300).

The final chapter, "Scripture in Dialogue: A Study in Early Christian Old Testament Interpretation," examines Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* as an example of how Jewish and Christian perspectives on the Jewish Scriptures (also Christian Scriptures in Justin's day) can find significant common ground, but in the end must remain incommensurate, since the difference between Jews and Christians lies not so much in how they exegete individual Hebrew Scripture/OT texts, but in how they relate these texts to Jesus Christ. One somewhat surprising conclusion: for Justin (according to Watson), "a 'high' christology has far deeper and more extensive Old Testament roots than a 'low' one" (p. 324).

Watson's perspective clearly displays affinities to K. Barth's insistence that historical exegesis is only "preliminary" to theological exegesis, and that Jesus Christ is the subject matter of the entire Christian canon. It is therefore not surprising that at times Watson appears to share Barth's tendency to ride roughshod over historical claims of the Biblical text in favor of viewing such stories as "fictive" elements of a narrative that is indeed fundamentally historical but also contains elements that, to be blunt, simply did not happen as portrayed by the Biblical writers (see e.g. his treatment of the transfiguration, pp. 82–88, which Watson views as interpretation rather than as event). But why not on this basis dismiss elements that are clearly theological, such as the objective existence of the devil (which is precisely what Barth did)? Watson's repeated insistence that theological truth is always textually *mediated* must go one step further and insist, as O. Cullmann did more than 40 years ago over against Barth, that the Biblical text not only mediates but also *controls* our interpretations of theological truth.

Given this caveat, however, I find in *Text and Truth* an eminently worthwhile project. Weaknesses in his previous book, pointed out by the *JETS* review mentioned in the opening paragraph of this review, are for the most part avoided here. And while it is true that some of Watson's statements about "fictive" material within historical narrative are reminiscent of R. Gundry's evaluation of Matthew's account of the Magi (which led to Gundry's departure from the ETS), readers who seek to pursue a more positive integration of OT, NT, and theological studies will do well to heed Watson's message.

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Walking in the Way: An Introduction to Christian Ethics. By Joe E. Trull. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997, 344 pp., n.p.

This introductory text in Christian ethics consists of three main parts. The first is an introduction that addresses questions about the nature of Christian ethics. Second, the author examines foundations for Christian ethics. In this section, there are chapters on the role of philosophy and the Bible in Christian ethics, the ethics of the Bible, the relation between the Church and the world, and one on moral decision-making. Finally, the third section focuses upon issues, including "personal ethical issues" and "social" issues. Included in the latter are chapters on sexuality and marriage, human equality, gender and race, biomedical ethics, and economics and politics.

A strength of this book is the balance of attention given to theory and to issues, which serves as a corrective to those that offer little reflection on theoretical questions

before moving on to a discussion of contemporary issues. A second strength of this book is that Trull seeks to guide the newcomer to Christian ethics through each step, showing connections between theory and practice and between what he has discussed earlier and what he is about to discuss. In addition, there is a (relatively brief) glossary, with bold highlights in the text to show which words are found in the glossary. He is to be commended for working at making sure that the reader does not get lost along the way. Third, Trull indicates the importance of the Holy Spirit in Christian ethics, a significant point that is often overlooked.

While the form of this book serves as a model text in Christian ethics, it has weaknesses that outweigh its strengths. First, two relatively minor points. Apart from the book's glossary, it lacks helpful study aids, as there is no bibliography or index, and endnotes are used instead of footnotes. Second, the allocation of space is insufficient for some issues. For example, in one chapter on biomedical ethics Trull attempts to discuss abortion, euthanasia, and reproductive technologies!

There are other weaknesses that are more problematic. Two examples must suffice to illustrate. First, Trull claims that ethics must come before theology. To support his claim, he argues that "the church of the first century was identified not by its theological teachings or its mystical revelation—in the beginning Christianity was a different way of life" (p. 3). Yet what initially and radically changed the early Christians was their belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and their lives were transformed as a result. Indeed, our beliefs always determine (consciously or unconsciously) the way we live.

Second, in speaking of human sexuality and marriage in Genesis 2, Trull asserts that male and female "originated in the undifferentiated humanity of *adam*" and concludes that marriage "is not only a union, it is also a reunion of two who were originally one" (p. 176). He makes this dubious assertion without significant discussion or references, attributing it to theologians who remain unnamed. This view is more akin to Plato's *Symposium* than to orthodox Christianity, and one is left to wonder how carefully the author has considered his views.

To be fair, these examples are not discussed at length by the author, and they may not be significant issues to him. However, they serve as examples of other claims that are either problematic or unsubstantiated. Further, they should be recognized as significant issues by the author and either treated more adequately or left out altogether.

In a brief review it is difficult to do justice to an author's work. There are helpful insights in this book, and it is written in a very accessible style. However, the above examples serve to highlight problems with this work that are not overcome by the positive aspects.

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The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment. By David Basinger. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996, 154 pp., \$14.99 paper.

"The purpose of this book," writes David Basinger, "is to subject freewill theism (FWT) to a philosophical assessment" (pp. 12–13). Just what is "freewill theism"? It is any theological model that affirms that "God can unilaterally intervene in earthly affairs and does so at times" (*contra* process theism) while it denies "that God can both grant individuals freedom and control its use" (*contra* theological determinism; p. 12). Essentially, then, freewill theism is a broad category that includes *classic Arminianism* (which affirms God's simple and exhaustive foreknowledge while denying God's determination of free choices), *Molinism* (which affirms God has some

significant control over human choices by controlling the states of affairs in which he knows, via middle knowledge, what those free creatures would freely do in those situations), and *open theism* (which denies both God's exhaustive foreknowledge and middle knowledge while affirming that God learns moment by moment what free creatures do, responding to these choices in shaping the future).

Chapter one discusses the basic freewill theist position in comparison to and in contrast with process theism and versions of theological determinism. It becomes clear that libertarian freedom is the concept that unites all versions of freewill theism against any and all determinist models. Chapter two takes up the question of the divine omniscience and argues that the simple (exhaustive) foreknowledge, middle knowledge, and "present knowledge" positions are all compatible with libertarian freedom. Basinger nevertheless favors the present knowledge view. Along with increasing voices from open theism, Basinger argues (cf. the Appendix for sustained discussion) that simple foreknowledge contributes no providential benefit to God. Since such foreknowledge is simply "given" to God, God is not in a position to affect human choices by this advance knowledge. Chapter three explores the issue of the moral obligations God is under when he creates the world. The middle knowledge position most clearly offers God the requisite knowledge to obligate him to create some version of a "best" possible world, but freewill theism, generally, sees God as under only a minimalist obligation, i.e. to create a world in which free creatures are permitted to act freely. Chapter four considers the problem of evil. Basinger here argues that, despite protestation to the contrary, the God of freewill theism is not incompatible with the types and amounts of evil found in the real world. Chapter five turns to the practical advantage Basinger claims freewill theism has in regard to the nature of prayer. Since prayer's efficacy depends on whether our praying makes a difference, only freewill theism's commitment to God being conditioned by human free choices renders it possible for prayer to make a difference to God's plans and actions. But since God cannot unilaterally intervene in ways that violate human free choices and actions (and in so doing leave them *free*), such prayer cannot reasonably be thought to move God to act contrary to human choosing. The book's overall purpose, then, is not to defend freewill theism against every objection but to demonstrate its internal consistency and its reasonableness in the face of some central epistemological, moral and religious challenges.

By way of evaluation, I begin by commending Basinger for the fairness with which he discusses the various positions treated. The spectrum from process theism to Calvinist determinism is considered, and one detects an endeavor to describe each position in non-pejorative and fair ways. Second, I believe Basinger has successfully accomplished his main purpose, viz. to demonstrate the philosophic viability of various forms of freewill theism.

Having acknowledged his overall success, I will mention briefly a few problems and/or areas of concern. First, the book presents the reader with a problem of nomenclature and definition regarding the labeling of various theological positions. For example, Basinger employs the term "standard theism" that, he says, "maintains not only that God and the world are distinct and that God interacts with the world but also that God is omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good" (p. 21). On the next page, he begins his section on process theism by asserting, "Some standard theists, usually labeled *process theists*, believe. . . ." What are we to make of Basinger calling process theists a version of "standard theism" as so defined earlier? How are we to take phrases like "God and the world are distinct," and "God is omnipotent," as these pertain, presumably, to process theism? Because such obvious equivocation is entailed, one wonders whether these terms can carry any substantive, normative meaning.

Similarly, Basinger's use of "freewill theism" itself is not unproblematic. It is clear he wishes to use this term to encompass any theological position holding to God's

creation of the world in a point in time (*contra* process theism) in which he chooses to grant moral creatures libertarian freedom (*contra* determinism). But how many classic Arminians use the term “freewill theism” of themselves? This is a recent term (Basinger says he believes he was the first to use it; p. 134, n. 5), and he notes William Hasker’s use of the term strictly for what is now commonly called “open theism.” So what is the point of using the term for such a broad grouping (i.e. classic Arminians, Molinists, and open theists)? This usage seems to imply the closeness of open theism to classic Arminianism and Molinism, thus minimizing the heated rejection open theism has received by classic Arminians and Molinists over its denial of God’s exhaustive foreknowledge as constituting heresy. On the issue of libertarian freedom, yes, open theism is connected to classic Arminianism, Molinism, but also to process theism. But on the question of exhaustive divine foreknowledge, open theism has aligned itself *with* process theism and *against* classic Arminianism and Molinism. So, what will classic Arminians and Molinists think of the strategy of grouping them together *with* open theists under the banner of “freewill theism” when the openness rejection of exhaustive divine foreknowledge is viewed as so serious a departure from orthodoxy?

Second, some of Basinger’s specific admissions in regard to the present knowledge view (i.e. open theism) need to be weighed soberly. For example, Basinger states that “unless freewill theists who deny that God possesses MK [middle knowledge] also assume that the positive value generated by the reality of significant freedom alone and/or the existence of some blissful nonearthly realm will outweigh whatever negative value the exercise of this earthly freedom might produce, they cannot maintain that God is in a position to ensure that any world he initiates will in fact be a world with even net positive value” (p. 62). But since God cannot constrain free creatures to participate in some blissful nonearthly realm, God is not in a position to know, when he creates the world, that any creatures at all will in fact experience this weightier heavenly good. So, with greater clarity and honesty, Basinger later comments, “Unless a God without MK has decided that the good inherent in *significant freedom itself* outweighs any amount of evil that the use of this freedom might generate in our world, he is not in a position to know what the ultimate balance between good and evil will be” (p. 92, italics added). This is a staggering but altogether true admission. Given God’s present knowledge (only) and hence his incapacity to know what free creatures will do with their freedom, he simply *cannot know* whether freedom will be used such that good will outweigh evil. Therefore, all that the God of open theism can count on with certainty is the “good” of *possessing and using freedom in and of itself*. Will this be acceptable to most Arminians, or will they want to continue insisting that God is justified in creating the world only if he knows, before creation, that his good purposes *will* succeed sufficiently for good to outweigh evil? And yet, will open theists successfully argue that classic Arminianism is in no better position on this issue? That is, to the extent that Basinger is correct that the God of classic Arminianism gains no providential benefit from exhaustive foreknowledge, can the classic Arminian view escape this same implication so clearly stated by Basinger in regard to the openness position?

Related to the above, Basinger acknowledges that a God with present knowledge only “can never be sure of having done all that in fact could have been done” (p. 68) to maximize creaturely well-being. What will we say of God’s decision to create a world concerning which he simply did not and could not know whether his purposes would succeed in the end? Is it just possible that most of his creatures will frustrate his purposes, that God’s “blissful” intentions will remain a mere heavenly dream? That is, is it just possible that indeed the risk for God has been unimaginably enormous and that he will lose? When all is said and done, could God ultimately be charged with folly?

Regarding prayer, Basinger holds that God will “actually refrain from doing what he can and would like to do until requested in a very limited number of cases” (p. 122).

What this exposes is the conflicted position of open theism regarding petitionary prayer. Either (as Basinger holds) God will almost always do what is best regardless of whether people pray, in which case the efficacy of prayer is eliminated, or he will refrain from acting until others pray, in which case the genuineness of his love is challenged.

It is one thing for positions to be vindicated as philosophically viable; it is another for them to be true, wise, and Biblically defensible. Although open theism (Basinger's preferred position) succeeds on the former basis, great and weighty concerns face it on the latter. Much work is needed to assess the issues helpfully articulated in Basinger's treatment.

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Missionaries to the Skeptics. Christian Apologists for the Twentieth Century: C. S. Lewis, E. J. Carnell and Reinhold Niebuhr. By John A. Sims. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1995, vii + 234 pp., \$22.95.

In this unique volume, Dr. John Sims, veteran teacher of apologetics at Lee College, Cleveland, TN, explores the approach of three twentieth-century apologists who sought to make the case for Christianity in a secular world: C. S. Lewis (1898–1963), Edward John Carnell (1919–1967), and Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971).

Reading this book was far more than an intellectual exercise. It was an existential experience. Although I was not personally acquainted with any of the three men, through their writings each has touched my life deeply, shaping both my theological thought and ministry style.

The author defines Christian apologetics as “the way Christians commend and defend the Christian faith to their contemporaries” (p. 1). Given that apologetics “mirrors historical change, cultural diversity and different confessional commitments,” apologists invariably differ with regard to both their strategies and theological perspectives.

In eight well-written chapters, bracketed by an introduction and conclusion, Sims examines the personal and philosophical contexts of each of the three apologists and provides an overview of their thought. Three chapters each are devoted to Lewis and Niebuhr, two to Carnell.

Sims does not try to force the three “missionaries” into the same mold. He recognizes their differences: “They were not theological bedfellows, nor did they employ the same strategies for doing apologetics . . . they were distinctly different types” (p. 3). Rather, he finds their community in their “creative and seminal minds and . . . passionate desire to defend the Christian faith against the ‘intellectual despisers’ of the twentieth century” (p. 2). Despite their varied and at times contradictory theological perspectives, they addressed forthrightly the problems common to the whole Christian intellectual enterprise in the wake of modernity.

Sims traces Lewis's pilgrimage under the rubric “From Atheist to Christian Scholar.” He then outlines Lewis's thought under the headings “In Defense of Supernaturalism” and “In Defense of Permanent Things.” Under the former, Sims focuses particularly on Lewis's defense of theism based on the moral law and the quest for spiritual meaning, his treatment of miracles, and his discussion of the problem of pain with regard to both natural and moral evil. He concludes this section with an account of the Oxford don's personal experience with grief at the death of his wife, an aspect of Lewis's life chronicled in *A Grief Observed* and later depicted in the movie *Shadowlands*. With regard to the latter, he selects those subjects in which Lewis challenged the prevailing skepticism of modern thought. Lewis considered himself “an ‘old fashioned’ Christian and an ‘old Western man’” (p. 19). While Lewis did not confuse the two, he

did contend that there was a relationship between them. He believed that Christian and classical pagans shared common ground with regard “to the enduring standards that in times past constituted the essence of our Western Civilization” (p. 69). Both believed in timeless values and moral absolutes, the supernatural, the reality of sin, divine judgment, and some kind of redemptive hope. Because modern Westerners no longer share those presuppositions with Christians, Lewis maintained that “a reconversion to the basic assumptions of the pagan may be a preliminary first step in pointing modern persons back to Christianity” (p. 20).

In the two chapters he devotes to Carnell, Sims traces his intellectual odyssey and then outlines his thought. Carnell stood at the intellectual forefront of the neo-evangelical movement. Seeking to “restore the power and vision of Protestant orthodoxy embracing the tenets of classical orthodoxy,” he distinguished it from what he considered to be the cultic elements of American fundamentalism, which he critiqued for equating the possession of truth with the possession of virtue.

Carnell’s burden as an apologist was to demonstrate both the truth of Christianity and its relevance to human need. While his apologetic strategies varied through the years, his fundamental approach remained constant. In his earlier works, in which the influence of Gordon Clark is most evident, Carnell emphasized the rational coherence of Biblical Christianity. In keeping with this conviction, Carnell held both to a correspondence theory of truth and to the law of non-contradiction. He developed the concept of “systematic consistency” as a means to verify the truth claims of Christianity.

In subsequent works, recognizing the mid-century penchant for existentialism, Carnell appealed to values, the meaning of commitment, and the centrality of love. His critique of materialism, hedonism, scientism, and humanism was trenchant as well as compassionate. Nevertheless, he continued to insist on the rational nature of Biblical faith, maintaining that “Christianity is not an irrational leap into a dark abyss, but a faith that a truly rational person will find unreasonable not to trust” (pp. 124–125).

The last of the trio of apologists examined by Sims is Reinhold Niebuhr. Described by John C. Bennett as an “apologetic evangelist,” Niebuhr was convinced that “the Christian interpretation of life and history is true to the facts of human experience more than any other interpretation” (p. 201).

More so than in his treatment of Lewis and Carnell, Sims interweaves the events in Niebuhr’s life with the formation of the themes distinctive to his thought and apologetic approach. He traces Niebuhr’s formation from its pietist German-American origins through his embrace of liberalism at Yale Divinity School to his pastorate in Detroit where his idealistic belief—that “a love ethic, divorced from power, could bring social justice out of *laissez faire* capitalism” (p. 154)—was shattered.

Following his pastorate, Niebuhr assumed a teaching position at New York’s Union Theological Seminary. There he gave classic expression to Biblical realism in his seminal work *Moral Men and Immoral Society* and his masterful Gifford Lectures published under the title *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. The use of power to serve the interests of justice, he concluded, is always necessary. Niebuhr believed that power to motivate action toward the ends of justice, not rational coherence, is what best commends Christianity to secular humankind.

In contrast to the separate treatment accorded each apologist in the previous eight chapters, Sims concludes the book with a chapter devoted to a synthesis of the three apologists about whom he has written. He does not gloss over their differences, particularly with respect to their views on revelation, but feels that all three have demonstrated their ability to remove the barriers that keep modern skeptics from embracing the truth of the gospel message.

This highly readable volume contains full-page pictures of each apologist as well as a helpful index. A reasonably comprehensive selective bibliography follows the treatment of each apologist. Errors are few.

My hat is off to Sims for this extraordinary book. It would make a good text for a seminar on any of the three apologists or a splendid supplementary text for an apologetics course at the advanced college or basic seminary level. Certainly it belongs in the library of every evangelical institution.

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Vital Ministry Issues: Examining Concerns and Conflicts in Ministry. Edited by Roy B. Zuck. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994, 288 pp., \$12.99 paper. *Vital Church Issues: Examining Principles and Practices in Church Leadership.* Edited by Roy B. Zuck. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998, 248 pp., \$12.99 paper.

Kregel Publications and Roy Zuck, the general editor of the *Vital Issues Series*, have produced a very good though relatively unknown series (twelve volumes planned) addressing crucial issues that the church will continue to address well into the twenty-first century. This one review will cover two books that address similar issues.

If the maxim is true that one must not only study in his or her discipline but also actually study the discipline itself, then these books will be of great value for any pastor or college/seminary student. They are an anthology of articles that have previously appeared in *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Each book has a table of contents and a brief bibliographic description of the contributors. Endnotes rather than footnotes are used to create less technical reading.

Vital Ministry Issues contains such titles as "Called to Serve," by Gary Inrig; "Ideals of Pastoral Ministry," by John R. W. Stott; and "Court Involvement in Church Discipline," by Jay A. Quine (a former municipal judge and deputy prosecutor). Other topics include the issue of women in ministry, the nature and roles of elders and deacons, Biblical worship, and preaching. *Vital Church Issues* addresses similar topics such as "Priorities for the Local Church," by Ray Ortlund, and "Audience Relevance in Expository Preaching," by Keith Willhite. Other issues covered include the restoration of fallen leaders and confidentiality in counseling church members with HIV/AIDS.

Both volumes represent quality Biblical scholarship and can be understood by involved local church parishioners and church leaders along with both graduate and undergraduate students. While the articles vary in length and methodology, a surprisingly consistent writing style and level of research emerges throughout each book.

The obvious criticism of the entire series is that all of the articles have previously appeared in *Bibliotheca Sacra*; thus, many Bible teachers and informed pastors may have already read the articles. However, these books do serve an excellent purpose in educating those in the church who do not read theological journals. I have found the books very helpful as supplemental readings for various graduate and undergraduate courses or in mentoring church leadership boards and other believers. Perhaps the greatest value of these two volumes is that they will help the busy pastor become an actual student of pastoring.

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Lessons in Leadership. Edited by Randal Roberts. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999, 282 pp., \$13.99 paper.

Roberts has compiled an anthology of new articles from fifty authors to address the perplexing issues of providing leadership in the church today. Each article is placed in

alphabetical order according to the author. The contributors to the book are evangelical scholars, pastors, and leaders in para-church organizations. Most have faithfully served Christ between twenty and forty years. The selection includes international, national, and even local contributors with various ethnic, denominational, and gender backgrounds. This provides a diverse and hence balanced perspective throughout the book. While many books have been written on the theology and methodology of leadership, this book is unique. Each article addresses church leadership from a seasoned perspective of how to lead and influence the Church of Christ.

The essays are written in the genre of a letter of advice from one ministry leader to another leader or potential leader. While the articles are written in a friendly style and brief format (three to six pages), review questions follow each article to help the reader clearly think through the substance of the material. Some of the outstanding essays include "Learning the Values and Challenges of Leadership," by Gordon Borrer; "Learning to Understand the Bitter Sweetness of Ministry," by Stuart Briscoe; and "Learning from Mentors and Role Models," by Jay Kesler. Some of the other contributing authors include Garry Breshears, Bill Bright, Jill Briscoe, Robert Cooley, Carl F. H. Henry, Walter Kaiser Jr., Woodrow Kroll, Aubrey Malphurs, Luis Palau, and Earl Radmacher.

The well-written phrases and literary gems of wisdom alone make the book worth reading. As an example, when Grant Howard addresses handling criticism, he reminds us of Joe Bayly's words: "criticism is the manure that makes the plants of the Lord grow" (p. 138). When addressing the issue of avoiding ministry pitfalls, David Roper explains how to "celebrate your incompetence" (p. 251).

Negative criticism of this book will most likely originate from misapplication or misunderstanding. This work is not designed to serve as a textbook on how to methodically initiate change or on how to manage a church; rather, the book presents lessons that contemporary church leaders have learned. The book will serve as an excellent source for primary or supplemental reading in most leadership/pastoral ministry courses (at both the undergraduate and graduate level) as well as for pastors and church leaders. The lasting value of the book for this reviewer is the seasoned, friendly, warm style in which difficult aspects of leadership are uniquely addressed.

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