Book Reviews

M. Eugene BORING. *Disciples and the Bible: A History of Disciples Biblical Interpretation in North America.* St. Louis: Chalice, 1997. 502 pp. $39.99.

This trailblazing work was written by M. Eugene Boring, I. Wylie and Elizabeth M. Briscoe Professor of New Testament, Brite Divinity School of Texas Christian University. It is pioneering for at least three reasons.

First, it is the first detailed and comprehensive effort to present a history of approaches to the Bible among preachers and scholars in the Disciples of Christ. It also includes one chapter each on Churches of Christ (from 1906) and Christian Churches/Churches of Christ (from 1927). The subtitle limits the provenance of the book to North America, a standard form of inclusiveness these days, though a bit misleading in this case since all the persons discussed lived in the United States. Most of the people scrutinized in detail are opinion leaders; in the early stages, preachers, or preacher/professors like Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott and Alexander Campbell; in the middle stages, preachers/writers/editors like Isaac Errett and Henry H. Halley; in later stages, professor/preachers like J.W. McGarvey and H.L. Willett; and finally professors like J. Philip Hyatt and S. Vernon McCasland. The controlling factor is whether these persons engaged in major reflections on the Bible or wrote commentaries. Boring is to be commended for undertaking this task, inasmuch as few biblical scholars write on the history of biblical studies, except for the biblical topics on which they are experts, and even fewer on biblical studies in denominational settings.

Second, not only does Boring present a history of biblical studies, but he has set forth new parameters for the history of the Disciples of Christ as well as for the Churches of Christ and the Christians Churches/Churches of Christ. For the Disciples he identifies five generations of scholarship: (1) 1804–1866, the creative period of the founders; (2) 1866–1892, the crystallization of the tradition; (3) 1892–1929, the struggle for the direction of the heritage; (4) 1929–1968 issues pertaining to struggles of the Church and/or the Academy; and (5) 1968–   , the period of the Quest for whether a heritage sense of biblical studies should survive. He took up four stages for the Churches of Christ and three for the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. This approach provides helpful insights not only into biblical matters but also new perspectives on the history of the Stone-Campbell movement. Boring gave what I consider the best perspective possible on the first stage, in good

restorationist fashion, relishing its primordial glamour. I agree with him that the period was openly creative, but I am not so confident as he of placing Alexander Campbell and others in the stream of the mighty acts of God theology (heilsgeschichte) as opposed to identifying them as Enlightenment empirical rationalists.

Third, not only does Boring present a history, but ends with suggestions as to "Where do we go from here?" In this case, he addressed only the future of the Disciples. After discussing the need for the Disciples churches to overcome biblical illiteracy and recover their own "rule of faith," he offers a "five-finger exercise" in biblical theology consisting of: (1) Creation, (2) Covenant, (3) Christ, (4) Church, and (5) Consummation. If one is to be limited to five items, this list is suggestive, and the question then becomes to what extent one agrees with Boring's theological presentation of each.

I found especially commendable and insightful Boring's tracing of various trajectories through the history of the Stone-Campbell movement, for example, the Gospel Plan of Salvation which shifts from that of Walter Scott even in the second generation, and the threefold measures of the gifts of the spirit which were honed by the second generation such as B.W. Johnson. I myself would have been much more interested in the manner in which studies in the biblical languages and biblical backgrounds influenced the outcomes of biblical scholarship in the movement. Boring's is a commendable effort and a helpful prolegomena to any future history of biblical studies in the Stone Campbell Movement.

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Dale R. STOFFER, ed. *The Lord's Supper: Believers Church Perspectives.* Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1997. 334 pp. $24.99.

This collection of essays originated as papers for the Eleventh Believers Church Conference which included representatives of several Free Church traditions. Many of these traditions hold Restorationist positions and affirm the centrality of baptism and the Lord's Supper to the corporate Christian experience. The particular emphasis of this Believers Church Conference was how one might understand the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper in light of the fact that believers churches have traditionally held a memorialist view of the Supper.

The essays are organized into six sections. The first three include historical, biblical, and theological inquiries into the question of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. These sections include Everett Ferguson's excellent

overview of the development of the concept of "real presence," its evolution into the doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, and the emergence of the recent understanding of transignification. This section also includes discussion of the views of the meaning of the "Lord's Supper in the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century," with a particular emphasis on Brethren and Anabaptist views. Ben Witherington III's exposition of 1 Corinthians 8–10 and John 13–17 offers fine insight into the first century social setting of the Lord's Supper and argues that the Lord's Supper has been "over-ritualized" and therefore loses its meaning when taken out of its meal (and perhaps Christian home) context. Marlin Jeschke also argues for a restoration of the *agape* meal in "Making the Lord's Supper Meaningful," and affirms that "if we want real presence, the only way to realize it is to be a real church."

The fourth section contains various denominational perspectives on the Lord's Supper, including Brethren, Quaker, Seventh-Day Adventist, Free Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal, Moravian, Baptist, and Christian churches (Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ). This is followed by two eclectic sections that offer some "Proposed Theses for a Believers Church Theology," ecumenical responses to the conference papers, and a summary report from the Findings Committee of the conference.

As noted by the editor in his preface, there has been a "mere whisper" of scholarly discussion of the meaning of the Lord's Supper among believers churches. The issues raised by these essays are significant and the conclusions of several authors challenge those committed to New Testament faith and practice to reexamine the meaning and observance of the Lord's Supper in the contemporary church. Of special note is the doctrine of transignification as a new direction in understanding of the presence of Christ in the Supper and the importance of celebrating the Supper in the context of the *agape* feast.

Most collections of conference papers such as this are inconsistent. The essays differ in length and academic quality and do not all follow the stated emphasis of the conference (real presence). One might also question the arrangement or inclusion of a couple of articles which seem to have little connection or contribution to the section or topic. The Denominational Perspectives section is the weakest, with essays that are frequently wooden and truncated.

John Mills's contribution from a Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement perspective ("The Lord's Supper as Viewed and Practiced by the Christian Churches, Churches of Christ, and the Disciples of Christ") is disappointing. Rather than examining views of the meaning of the Supper (he does not deal significantly with the "real presence" issue), Mills focuses on the mechanics of observance: frequency, centrality in worship, open communion. His discussion

of "ordinances or sacraments?" and explanation of the rejection of transubstantiation rehash old controversies. He uses the term "our people" but defines it rather narrowly (probably meaning independent Christian churches). Mills' essay, however, may reveal much about "our people's" understanding of the Lord's Supper: perhaps we do focus more on mechanics than meaning. A more troubling question might be: does the modern Stone-Campbell Movement have anything significant to contribute to a dialogue on the meaning of the Lord's Supper? In addition to this essay, there are other issues of interest to those in the Stone-Campbell tradition such as John C. Thomas's essay on footwashing which raises significant questions about restorationist hermeneutics.

This book is useful for especially the academic community but could be a good resource for the local church. The "Proposed Theses" and "Report of the Findings Committee" provide excellent "discussion starters" for dialogue and Bible study on the meaning and practice of the Lord's Supper. One cannot read this book without being stimulated to "Make the Lord's Supper More Meaningful."

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Millard J. ERICKSON. *Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. 163 pp. $14.99.

Into this ever-growing area of evangelical foray concerning postmodernism comes the prolific pen of Millard J. Erickson. Few evangelical theologians have tracked with the postmodern paradigm shift as early on as has this distinguished scholar; even fewer yet deserve the audience that Erickson is entitled to as evangelicalism's academic heir to the legendary Carl Henry.

In this 1998 work, Erickson attempts to chart six prominent evangelical responses to postmodernism—three negative, three positive—in an attempt to do what he has demonstrated so well over the years, achieve a balanced, yet thoroughly biblical stance on the issue. In a manner similar to, but more irenic than his 1997 title, *The Evangelical Left*, the veteran professor gauges what he sees as both the strengths and weaknesses of these evangelical postmodern theologies.

Beginning with a brief, readable summary (an Erickson staple) of the historical roots of postmodernity, the author stipulates that both modernism and its successor have two general ideological types—hard and soft—which are important distinctions in determining the compatibility of these worldviews

with historic Christianity (17-19). For instance, soft modernism was not inherently antisupernatural, only its harder variety. Likewise, soft postmodernism and its rejection of näive objectivity is less threatening to the theist than its harder counterpart which in its deconstructive mode repudiates any sort of objectivity and rationality (18-19). Erickson's soft/hard definitions at least provide a more neutral ground for evangelical/postmodern discussion.

Erickson then selects three distinct voices that articulate a negative response to postmodernism: David Wells, Thomas Oden, and, surprisingly, the late Francis Schaeffer.

While each of these thinkers represents strong opposition to coupling Christianity with postmodernity, their approaches are quite diverse. For Wells, who contends that modernity needs to be studied more in a social-historical manner than intellectual, the response is to return to the biblical concept of truth (23-24, 36), or in the media-conscious summary of Erickson, "Just say no!" (to postmodernism). On the other hand, is the intellectually much-traveled Oden who "after modernity" proposes a return to the classical orthodoxy represented in Christian writings of the first millennium (57-58). Erickson's inclusion of Schaeffer, whose ministry was essentially to the modern mind, is a tribute to this popular apologist's prophetic methodology, who years ago captured the inevitable slide toward postmodernity in his *Escape from Reason* while arguing that only the biblical worldview could alone make sense of life in the external world (69-78). Aptly, Erickson remakes Schaeffer's articulation of postmodern despair into an "escape to (biblical) reason."

Next he turns to the more positive evangelical responses to the postmodern phenomena which include the well-known Baptist theologian, Stanley Grenz, Canadians Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton, and the lesser known Southwestern Seminary colleague of Erickson's, B. Keith Putt.

Again, using a somewhat playful battery of descriptions, he discusses Grenz's postmodern theology (postindividualistic, postrationalistic, postdualistic, and postnoeticentric) as an attempt to "Boldly go where no evangelical has gone before" (83-96). Readers of the latter's contribution in *The Challenge of Postmodernism. An Evangelical Engagement* (ed., Dockery) will no doubt recognize and chuckle over the Star Trek imagery. Likewise the Walsh and Middleton chapter is a clever play on the author's book, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be* (Erickson: "Theology is Stranger Than It Used to Be") as Erickson summarizes and evaluates their focus on the narrative character of Scripture as well as our obligation "to contribute to plot resolution in a future that is genuinely unscripted" (120). The third "postmodern positive" is generally unknown to many outside Keith Putt's own academic environment due to a scant publishing trail (27). However, Erickson notes that the writing style of his fellow faculty member gives evangelicalism a theological thought process akin to deconstructionists such as Mark C. Taylor (128). Calling for

evangelicals to move past "both classical theism and Taylor's a/theology, Putt nonetheless uses Taylor-like slashes, overstrikes, and parentheses ("G~~OO~~D") to "deconstruct" evangelical perspectives in a manner familiar to anyone familiar with Derrida and Caputo (Putt's adopted philosophical mentor). In Erickson's characteristic whimsical way, the Putt chapter is not surprisingly entitled, "De/con/structive Evangelicalism."

Following his summary and evaluation of each of the six postmodern responses, Erickson pens an insightful conclusion based upon a question which was posed to a panel which he served: "Can deconstructed horses be led to water?" (151). Based upon the previous 150 pages, he surmises that there are four possible answers to this inquiry. First, there is the answer which would be best represented in Putt and to certain degrees in Walsh/Middleton and Grenz: "Yes, but the water, itself must be deconstructed" (151-152). The second response, "Yes, but it must be a deconstructed rope" is best seen in Walsh and Middleton's narrative presentation (152). The third and fourth "yeas" are generally representative of the negative voice: (3) "Yes, but the horse is not really deconstructed" bears the polemic tone of Wells as well as Oden's contention that postmodernity is actually hypermodernity (152-153); and (4) "Yes, the horse must first be deconstructed" echoes Schaeffer's approach of pushing the person to the impossible outcome of his/her own position (152-154). Erickson, then, offers his own preference of these four options (actually a combination of 2 and 4) which both allows him to take the position of the "dialogue partner" as well as force the postmodern (deconstructionist) to admit the inability to live consistently within that radical worldview (154-157). With this said, he abruptly (postmodernistically?) concludes the book.

Postmodernizing the Faith represents a capable attempt by a respected theological sage to mediate a balanced, nonreactive yet critically astute evangelical reading of postmodernism. Millard Erickson clearly emerges as one who resists a Grenz-like "revisioning" of the faith, and its rejection of virtually all modern categories, yet one who, like his fellow Baptist theologian, is eager to be genuinely contemporary in his theologizing. While closer to David Wells theologically, than a Walsh or Middleton, he nonetheless is more critical of Wells than perhaps any of the other responses, due to the former's refusal to interact with important epistemological issues (39-40). In short, Erickson provides a forum for intelligent discussion rather than partisan diatribe. This spirit of fairness alone, makes this book a contribution.

Amidst its considerable strengths, *Postmodernizing the Faith* has a few weaknesses. One, in his historical survey of the shift from premodern to modern thought, Erickson merely narrates the displacement of one paradigm by the other without noting major causes for this development (i.e., the scientific revolution). As my mentor, James Strauss, has continually lamented, very few

evangelicals seem to be interested in (or even aware of) the philosophical/theological tenets that supposedly were read from a new cosmological model. Modernism was a flawed epistemology from the very beginning. Consequently, any attempt to deal with its postmodern progeny must first critique the Newtonian universe which yielded modernity. Second, Erickson's five summaries and evaluations read a bit like an "inside joke" which is somewhat animical to its easy-to-understand writing style. Erickson's clever chapter headings are humorous only to those familiar with the six authors, betraying his "introductory-type" approach. On the one hand, this book would seem ideal for a first-year seminarian. Yet, I am not sure that such a student would appreciate what all was taking place. Perhaps this reviewer is seeing this volume as something other than what it was intended to be, but it seemed to have a primer-like potential. Finally, in one of the author's most creative chapters (conclusion), I was the most let down. After wonderfully articulating the four "deconstructed horse" questions and his own promising synthesis, Erickson quit writing. This reviewer was primed to receive a generous helping of specific Erickson postmodern strategies, but none was forthcoming. I would love to see how a "deconstructed rope/deconstructed horse" approach might be positively formulated.

However, these complaints are minute when it comes to assessing the overall value of this book. In *Postmodernizing the Faith*, Millard Erickson has given us a useful compass for navigating our way in Toto's new intellectual environment.

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James GILBERT. *Redeeming Culture: American Religion in an Age of Science.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. 408 pp. $28.95.

Growing up in Southern California, I realized early on that the newspaper provided a window beyond family, neighborhood, and church. The religion page on Saturday was always rich with reminders of the peculiarities of Southern California churchfolk and our (the Church of Christ) claim to unique truth. There were also indications of a social life in church that I would only dream about. Each weekend it seemed there were events around films produced by the Moody Institute of Science and on occasion there were accompanying pictures of happy young people like myself leaving these gatherings. Such pictures of young people having their moral compass fine-tuned by films devoted to the cultivation of faith and morals came to mind as I read James Gilbert's fine book.

Gilbert has given us insight into the interplay between science and religion in America in the years since the Scopes Trial. He has placed particular emphasis on the years following World War II. There are books that offer the reader great quantities of information. There are books that play out the meaning of events and trends. Sometimes, as does Gilbert here, a study will do both. Gilbert is a member of the History faculty at the University of Maryland and he has the breadth of vision not only to provide the details but to tie things together as well.

> My interest is in questions of culture and history. How in a practical and real sense, have the domain of science and religion interacted? . . . How has religion managed to retain its place at the center of American Culture when it might be expected to decline? (3)

Redeeming Culture is a book that is broad in scope. The author ties things down with personalities from William Jennings Bryan to Frank Capra, from John Maynard Hutchens to Immanuel Velikovsky and he does so in such a way that the reader understands the connections. Anyone interested in current conversations about "creation science" would do well to begin here. So too would a student of anti-Catholic sentiment in America during the Cold War.

Gilbert's interests are encyclopedic as his list of publications makes clear. These broad interests are both a strength and a weakness. The strength lies in the ability to both illustrate and explain why connections are important. The weakness of the book is this very breadth. He paints with a large brush and sometimes it is hard to juggle so many personalities, many of whom are lost in the mists of the recent past.

This is not an easy read, but the effort is worth it. I found myself repeatedly thinking about things that had puzzled me, and now they made some sense. For example, Gilbert notes that the background of many of the leading scientists of the mid-20th century was traditionally religious, and therefore their willingness to fall back on religious language and metaphor when confronting the implications of their work is not surprising. They spoke out of what they were familiar with even when coping with the unfamiliar (60). It was a Judeo-Christian culture that was the incubating medium for the great era of modern science and when the bloom was off the rose, the language of Judeo-Christian tradition also defined its limits.

I found it particularly interesting to read of the conflict between democracy and science and to see how it played out. The notion that anyone with common sense could speak scientific truth with confidence took a body blow in Dayton, Tennessee, with the destruction of William Jennings Bryan. Bryan was not a great scientist. His showing at Dayton paved the way for the emergence of acceptance of an elite who could do and speak of science with

authority. We are often witness to a similar struggle in regard to Scripture where we have jealously protected the notion that anyone could understand the Bible if they simply used common sense. Suddenly I understood why in a democracy that has valued common sense and paid homage to the common man, there was room in a scientific worldview for religious ideas. Gilbert outlines the interplay and offers much that explains as well as provokes.

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Mark A. NOLL. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997. 335 pp. $17.99.

For years, teachers and Bible students have longed for a simple introduction to the history of Christianity that "hit the high points" and did not get bogged down in details. This book largely accomplishes that goal by focusing on significant turning points in the history of the church.

After a helpful introduction on the value of studying church history, Noll looks at thirteen decisive moments: The fall of Jerusalem, the Council of Nicea, the Council of Chalcedon, Benedict's *Rule*, the coronation of Charlemagne, the Great Schism, the Diet of Worms, the English Act of Supremacy, the founding of the Jesuits, the conversion of the Wesleys, the French Revolution, the Edinburgh Missionary Conference, and the Twentieth Century. By his own admission, these choices are the result of his personal reading and teaching. However, his choices do represent a significant cross-section, chronologically and geographically, of the spread of the Christian faith.

The heart of each chapter is a detailed account of a turning point. Noll places each turning point in a faith context by beginning each chapter with a hymn and ending with a prayer from the time period in question. A particular strength of the book is the use of brief quotations of original sources in each chapter. Well-chosen illustrations also enhance the book's appeal.

A conservative Protestant, Noll is evenhanded in his discussion of Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. He even has an extremely positive assessment of the value of monasticism.

Although he attempts to write in nontechnical language, the greatest weakness of the book is that the level of writing is at times too technical. In another work, Noll bemoans the lack of education among conservative Christians. He seems to have underestimated that lack in writing this volume. It would profit greatly from simplified vocabulary and sentence structure.

Having said that, this book is the best introduction to Christian history for the average student and church member. There are obvious limitations to

the turning points approach, such as the limited choice of events and the neglect of daily ordinary moments of history. However, it is a helpful introductory method. After searching for several years for a suitable text for an introductory church history course for non-Bible majors, we adopted this book last year at David Lipscomb University. We have not regretted the decision. It is recommended for ministers and all church members to give them a perspective on living the Christian faith at the end of the twentieth century.

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Kathryn TANNER. *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology.* Guides to Theological Inquiry. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997. 176 pp. $15.00.

This is the fourth book in a series entitled Guides to Theological Inquiry that Kathryn Tanner and Paul Lakeland are coediting. The books intend to "introduce students, scholars, clergy, and theologians to those academic methods, disciplines, and movements that are most germane to contemporary theology." Fine studies of Nonfoundationalism (Thiel), Literary Theory (Dawson), and Postmodernity (Lakeland) have already appeared.

Part One of Tanner's book focuses on what integrates a culture and how a culture gives personal identity. Answering these two questions involves a survey of the history of the concept of culture culminating in a postmodernist critique of modern anthropological understandings. These first three chapters assume the reader already understands much of the theoretical refinements and historical information involved.

Modern anthropologists replaced the Enlightenment's idea of a single rational worldwide culture with a pluralistic understanding. Multiple cultures became envisaged as different self-contained societies, each an internally consistent whole, with its own legitimate traditions, fixed customs, sharp boundaries, and exclusive loyalties. As a result, contextualism (involving distinct but incommensurate groups) and functionalism became significant problems theology has to deal with in interacting with cultural studies.

Recently, postmodernists like Tanner have critiqued this modern understanding of cultures as being dangerously ethnocentric and totalizing. It imposes an illusory homogeneity (a totalizing view which ignores diversity and dissent within each culture). It claims an illusory distinctiveness (overlooking how porous the walls between cultures are). It advocates an illusory value-free stance (forgetting that all knowledge has a history and is ideologically in ser-

vice to power). It ascribes an illusory objectivity to itself (since all cultures are actively constructed by humans).

As a result, Tanner's proposed "new agenda for theology" redefines cultures not as modern communities of consensus but as postmodern communities of argument.

Part Two spells out some of the consequences for theology now that its new partners in dialogue are cultures inevitably filled with conflicting views and experiencing constant dissent and revision. The bottom line is that there is no culture today that has the authority to speak once and for all for all its members, not even the church.

Tanner deconstructs Gordon Kaufman's constructivism, David Tracy's and John Milbank's revisionisms, and George Lindbeck's postliberalism as inadequate modes of defining Christian identity in terms of the Christian community. Judging them to be self-serving and ultimately self-defeating (93-110), she contends that Christian identity formation today depends primarily on a radical openness to God's creative and free Word which breaks with tradition and normality.

SCJ readers will value the postmodern critique of modernity's idolatry of clarity, comprehensiveness, and consistency (82-83) and the rejection of a naïve biblicism which acknowledges truth as located in the Bible only (88-89). While the call to recognize the hidden ways in which culture impinges on theology and church life is valuable, many readers will disagree with the explicit rejection of the revealed Scripture as the originally given, authoritative, *a priori*, normative standard of correctness (78-79). Tanner gives no content to the liberating concept of God's free and creative Word.

Tanner's conclusion is that claims advocating the ordination of noncelibate gays (79) should not be rejected because of the alleged consensus of church tradition or Scripture but listened to as valid contemporary expressions of an alternative Christian interpretation of Christian identity.

This densely written book introduces important themes and resources that will help the teacher interested in the interaction of sociology and theology. Except as an example of a feminist postmodernist framework, it may, however, not be of much direct use to conservative preachers, graduate students, and professors.

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Daniel BLAZER. *Freud vs. God: How Psychiatry Lost Its Soul and Christianity Lost Its Mind.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998. 253 pp. $22.99.

Blazer, a distinguished psychiatrist with religious roots in evangelical Christianity, examines the ugly ditch between psychiatry and Christian counseling theory and practice. He probes potential points of contact which might engage the two in dialogue and in turn provide mutual benefit in repairing souls. With candor he examines weaknesses amid two loves, neuropsychiatry and Christian community which have long held each other at bay. Freud is credited for the genesis of the polarity, yet Blazer acknowledges the larger contextual problem of the limits of scientific tools in accessing religion.

Clinical cases raised questions that summoned from Blazer a need for healing intervention from both communities. Yet each hold apprehensions or even prejudices about the other. Repeatedly there appeared to him the need for rapprochement between medical and religious models for a wholistic therapy. As neuropsychiatrist he seemed to echo the teaching of the great Greek mentor of medical practitioners, Hippocrates, who instructed his students to "let your patients teach you medicine." Psychiatry has moved away from utilizing the patient's "story" by over medicalizing and relying on psychotropics. Suffering occurs both in one's body and spirit. Yet there is no paradigm available to integrate these realities. The mind-body problem may be analogous to that of the nature of light in physics (particle vs. wave theory). An alternative concept "supervenience" is proposed as a bridge.

Psychiatry has stopped examinating its own philosophical roots, lacks a common theory, specializes to the point of jeopardizing dialogue even within itself, and its DSM dictated codes have focused on description, leaving unattended needed concerns for psychosocial etiologies. Christian counseling and pastoral care have themselves failed to offer a superior therapeutic alternative. The popular writers in these fields have borrowed liberally from secular theorists, sprinkled Scriptures along the way, and "marketed" their own forms of Christian psychiatry. They have, however, Blazer believes, fared better in marriage and family work but now seem pulled another direction into politicizing in the arenas involving gay rights, feminism, and educational conflicts with family values. Christian counseling, he adds, has not addressed the need for scholarly, informed attention to severe emotional problems.

Blazer addresses a wide range of influences in medical science and various religions which inhibit dialogue and cross-fertilization. The analysis of the current state of relationship between medical psychiatry and Christian counseling is sensitive and perceptive. It is a rare but welcome challenge coming from an articulate Christian psychiatrist. An array of theologians, psychiatrists and psychologists, sacred and secular, literary figures, counselors, Christian and pagan are reviewed to point up the need for a multilayered exchange. Attempts to

explore mutuality have occured both in the APA and some psychiatric training centers. These have held exciting potential but scant results. If dialogue or debate should further ensue, then professionals in the healing services will owe Blazer a debt of gratitude for summoning the disciplines to serious discussion. He lucidly presents the need but could well have accented even further the urgency.

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James O. DUKE and Anthony L. DUNNAVANT, eds. *Christian Faith Seeking Historical Understanding: Essays in Honor of H. Jack Forstman.* Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997. 314 pp. $40.00.

Echoing Anselm's famous dictum, the phrase "faith seeking historical understanding" stands at the heart of this *festschrift* for longtime Disciples and Vanderbilt University theologian H. Jack Forstman. During a long and distinguished career, Forstman sought to understand the Christian faith in its historical context, using "critical, self-critical, and constructive thinking" (1). This commitment to critical encounter with the Christian faith is reflected in the book's fifteen essays, published with support from the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. The essays also cover the full range of Forstman's historical and theological interests, from Schleiermacher to Tillich, from Campbell to contemporary dialog between the Disciples and the Roman Catholic Church. The prodigious and diverse nature of Forstman's work is fully attested to in the book's select bibliography of his numerous writings.

Divided into two distinct but related parts, part one focuses on the broad range of modern Christian thought, while part two explores aspects of Disciples theology. Although readers may be tempted to skip around the essays, that may defeat the purpose of the book, which seeks to set the more narrow concerns of denominational history in a broader historical and theological context. Therefore, it would be helpful to read the book as a whole.

The essays in part one are organized around two themes, the historical challenges of modern theology and "faith's inclusivity and history's particularities." Among the former are articles looking at Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, and Tillich. The second set of articles explores the biblical understandings of Zion, white and black perspectives on slavery in antebellum America, the possible contributions of G.E. Lessing to ecumenical dialogues, and a helpful look at general education from the perspective of a theologian.

Readers of *SCJ* will find Part Two the most useful of the two sections, as it examines the history and theology of the Stone-Campbell movement.

Although all six essays deserve close reading, the articles by James Duke, Newell Williams, and Tony Dunnavant deserve particular attention. In a move with which some readers of *SCJ* may disagree, Duke seeks to demonstrate that the Stone-Campbell movement stands theologically within the Reformed tradition. Utilizing a broad definition that does not limit the Reformed tradition to Calvinism, he notes the ways in which nineteenth century Disciples, including Stone and the Campbells, modified and refashioned the Reformed tradition in pursuit of their goal of Christian unity. Further support for this thesis comes in Richard Harrison's piece on Disciples worship. Despite the changes the Disciples made in the worship, the basic outline of their worship services differed little from that of Presbyterianism. Even the commitment to weekly communion had precedent in Calvin's writings.

The irony that a movement devoted to unity divided on at least two occasions undergirds the essays of Williams and Dunnavant. Both essays in different ways explore the factors that led to separation within the movement. Dunnavant shows how conflicting views of restoration, unity, freedom, and eschatology contributed to division. He concludes that the same factors present in the two earlier splits are also present in the current disagreements between the Disciples as a whole and Disciple Renewal. Williams' essay takes a more narrow focus, examining the role played by the "Commission on Restudy" in seeking to mediate the growing differences between liberal and conservative Disciples from 1935 to 1949. The commission encompassed leaders of both sides of the debate, including Edward Scribner Ames, Frederick Kershner, Dean Walker, and Edwin R. Errett. In spite of their efforts the divisions over membership and theology that had begun in the 1920s could not be overcome.

As in any *festschrift*, the quality of the essays varies. In addition, a few anachronistic references to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) appear in reference to the movement prior to restructure. However, this is an excellent book directed to a scholarly audience, though most of the articles are quite accessible to seminary students and pastors. The second half of the book offers those from outside the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) an insightful look into current Disciples thinking on theology, worship and ecumenicity, making it a very worthwhile read.

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Walter HOOPER. ***C.S. Lewis: A Companion and Guide.*** **San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996. 940 pp. $42.00.**

A book of this sort and size is not meant to be exciting. However, for Lewis lovers it will be an exciting book. Here inside two covers is all that information one wishes he had had for years. Walter Hooper, Lewis's indefatigable secretary and editor, has provided (1) a short but very useful life of Lewis, (2) a chronology, (3) a digest of each of his published books grouped under eight headings, with summaries of each and quotations from the major reviews of the day, (4) a section on Lewis's "Key Ideas," (5) a "Who's Who" of all the people around Lewis (Hooper must have spent years getting this information), and (6) a "What's What" explaining the major events, institutions, journals, and other references surrounding that life. The book closes with a complete bibliography of Lewis's writings and index.

The most valuable sections for me were the "Key Ideas" and "Who's Who" sections. While Lewis bibliophiles and devoted trivia collectors will love the publication data collected here, serious students of Lewis will focus on Hooper's discussion of thirty-five important theses or ideas in Lewis's books, a veritable profile of Lewis's mind. For my own purposes I separated them into four categories: Literary Criticism, Popular Errors, Theology and Philosophy, and Politics. In the way I group them, theological and philosophical ideas are the most numerous but not those receiving the most individual attention. The lengthiest treatments are given to Lewis's ideas of Imagination, Myth, Reason, and Natural Law. The most interesting to people of the Stone-Campbell movement will be Church Unity, Disinterested Love of God, Goodness, Hierarchy, and the discussion of the unity of imagination and reason (590), the last because of the inveterate tendency our people have always had to elevate reason over feeling and treat art in any form as a purely utilitarian addendum to preaching.

The cross-referencing in the book is especially helpful because of the symbols Hooper creates for each of Lewis's works, a table listing of which is found in the opening pages. Many of Lewis's essays are quoted throughout the book, and readers can consult the bibliography to find the special collections in which they are found. It is also good to know that all of Lewis's unpublished letters, original or in copy, are now held both at Oxford's Bodleian library and Wheaton College's Wade Center. I found only one error in the symbols list: Hooper uses LOL (37) for a book designated LCSL in the symbols list (xv).

Hooper explains that he created this book to assist the generation born after Lewis's death to understand his "hard words," those concepts and that terminology which will grow increasingly distant from them, but also to show that despite Lewis's many different writing interests he was still "one Lewis."

It came as a surprise to me that some children who love his Narnian tales are still writing letters to him, even when they are told he has died.

A warning: for all those who think they can get a quick "fix" on all Lewis wrote and thought from the summaries in this volume for teaching or preaching purposes, there is no substitute for reading Lewis himself. Hooper's book can never be a replacement for the real thing.

Still, I shall dip into this book both out of necessity and for pleasure the rest of my life.

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Wolfhart PANNENBERG. *Systematic Theology: Volume III.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 713 pp. $45.00.

The two greatest living Protestant theologians in the world in the opinion of most scholars are the Germans Jurgen Moltmann and Wolfhart Pannenberg. Both men have written extensively, and the Christian world has been measurably enriched by their contributions. Over the last fifteen years or so Pannenberg has been engaged in the production of his three-volume *magnum opus, Systematic Theology.* By any criterion it is a masterful achievement.

God is the subject of these volumes, whatever the specific doctrines of Christian faith under consideration. This work is authentic theology, logos (language, thought, reasoning) about God as Scripture bears witness to him. Volume I deals specifically with the character of God as history discloses him. History is the medium of God's self-revelation to the human beings he created in his likeness. The Word-revelation as detailed in Karl Barth's massive *Church Dogmatics* comes under criticism for failing to give history its proper radical place in the revelational process. By focusing on history as the venue of revelation Pannenberg can argue persuasively for the indirect character of revelation, every historical event expressing something about God: the exodus (in its full context), as well as the career of Jesus Christ (1:245-251). God gives himself to be known in these events in such a manner that human beings may be drawn into trustful, saving relationship with him. Volume II takes up creation, anthropology and christology. In Volume III the church is the main consideration.

After the resurrection of Jesus the task of making God known to the world is given to the Messianic Community, the fellowship of individuals who believe in Jesus Christ (3:97). It is not the case for Pannenberg that the principle transactions resulting in salvation are vertical relationships solely between believers and God. The community (church) mediates the faith of individuals

by proclaiming the gospel and maintaining the liturgy and sacraments with which it has been divinely entrusted. Believers are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit whom they receive as a gift upon their baptism in water (241). In union with Christ, Christians are also in union with each other, enjoying freedom "from anxiety about their finite existence, from fear of others, and from the powers of this world. The Spirit grants this freedom not only by liberating us from fixation on our own ego and lifting us above our own finitude but by becoming lastingly ours as He gives us a share in the sonship of Jesus Christ" (Rom 8:13-14) (130).

In an arresting comment on the Divine Character of grace, Pannenberg observes that "precisely as a gift grace is identical with God himself, namely, with the Holy Spirit who is given us" (Rom 5:5) (200). Love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, the love of God which also enables us to come to faith and to anticipate thereby the glorious consummation of history in the Kingdom of God (200). This is eschatological language describing the eschatological reality of the new life imparted to believers by the Holy Spirit, a life of participation by faith in the saving event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (201).

The Christian fellowship is distinguished by its focus on the evangel in both preaching and sacraments. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are significatory rituals identifying the church as the eschatological community which both represents the Kingdom of God and anticipates the Kingdom's fulfilled realization. In both sacraments the Word of promise is indispensably important: baptism in the Divine names (Matt 28:19), and the words of institution (1 Cor 11:23-26) accompanying the Lord's Supper (anamnesis and epiclesis—recalling and invocation) assure of the presence of Christ in these liturgical acts. Forgiveness of sins is a major benefaction for the participant who is washed in the baptismal water and who gives himself to be "taken up into the death of Jesus" as he eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord's Supper (239-336).

Theologically speaking, baptism is an act of transfer, delivering the baptized into God's hands, signifying the surrender of whatever independence he may have imagined himself to own. He is now sealed as God's possession, assured of "eschatological deliverance at the coming world judgment, a sign of (his) election and hope" (239). In eating and drinking the bread and wine at the Table of the Lord we celebrate both the oneness of the Church and the sacrificial character of its fellowship.

Pannenberg discusses the unity of the church in connection with consideration of its ministry. Of great interest is his emphasis on the task of the ministry at every level—local, regional, and universal—to protect and defend the unity of the church. It is suggested that at the universal level all churches might consider the ministry of the Bishop of Rome as the unifying symbol (if not

"authority") for the whole church on earth. I doubt that Pannenberg will convince many Protestant leaders that this is the route to genuine ecclesial unity.

"Body of Christ" and "people of God" are the two metaphors descriptive of the Church to which Pannenberg gives substantial attention. The latter derives from the former and is distinguished from it primarily by the sphere and context to which it refers. The "people of God" are those chosen by God (elect) to be a holy "nation" separate from the world, belonging to Him (448-498). They are strangers and pilgrims in this world. As "Body of Christ" the church is a fellowship of which Christ is Head, created by faith and baptism, manifesting in its liturgical worship the one universal church of Christ.

The final chord in Pannenberg's splendid theological symphony is the resounding eschatological vision of the consummation of the Kingdom of God in which all sorrow is transformed into joy and all things are reconciled to the God whose gracious love is invincible.

Finally, I must say that I wish to encourage preachers and others to read this masterful, theological study as well as others. Many treasures for preaching are missed by neglecting a rich resource like this one.

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James B. TORRANCE. ***Worship, Community & the Triune God of Grace.*** **Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997. 130 pp. $12.99.**

In November 1994, James Torrance, professor emeritus of systematic theology at the University of Aberdeen, presented the Didsbury Lectures in the Nazarene Theological College, Manchester. InterVarsity Press offers these lectures in written form with a preface and appendix added by the author.

Worship is the central concern of the volume, which brings the author to emphasize the nature of God particularly as trinitarian and gracious. Worship is described as "our participation through the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father" (15). We "worship the Father through the Son in the Spirit" (22). We "participate through the Spirit in the incarnate Son's communion with the Father" (59). "The real agent in all true worship is Jesus" (17). Granted the ambiguities involved in such phraseology as "participation through the Spirit" and "Jesus as the only true agent," we nevertheless see that Christ's "priesthood" is not simply in regard to something completed; it is the sole ongoing basis for perpetual relationship to God, in life generally and in worship especially.

The burden of chapter one is that in worship we do not come to the Father on our own but in Christ. The former approach Torrance calls "unitar-

ian worship," while advocating the latter, "trinitarian worship." There are two forms of the unitarian view, one found in the older modernism, where people are urged to immediate relationship to God (Harnack). The other is found in the existential view, which acknowledges the past salvific work of Christ but does not involve him as priest in the present worship of the Father. The incarnational trinitarian model wants to involve identification with the finished work of Jesus as savior and the present person of Christ as priest.

Chapter two focuses on the vicarious humanity of Christ, which serves both in the God-humanward movement and in the human-Godward movement. "Our response in faith and obedience is a response to the response already made for us by Christ to the Father's holy love, a response we are summoned to make in union with Christ" (53-54). According to Reformed theology, in the first movement human repentance comes in response to God's logically prior forgiveness as based on the substitutionary goodness of Christ. In like manner, human worship of God is already fulfilled in Christ, who embodies substitutionary humanity and does substitutionary worship. Humankind joins in that substitutionary worship.

Chapter three deals with the ordinances within the context of worship. Both baptism and the Lord's Supper are *post facto* signs of what has already happened in the work of Christ. Baptism is a participation in the vicarious baptism of Jesus where he set his face to the cross and its vicarious baptism of blood. The Lord's Supper is similarly a participation in that vicarious baptism of blood realized at the other end of the Lord's earthly ministry.

Chapter four integrates the feminist debate into this larger upward relationship to the Father, especially as it impacts worship. Of course, the historical use of Father by Jesus himself and the church had nothing to do with the distinctives of male sexuality. Insofar as the church has unwittingly drifted into adding those connotations to the analogy, Torrance agrees with the feminist concerns. However, the feminist answer can choose the wrong road by attacking the doctrines of the trinity and the incarnation (106). Christians do not approach God as an unknown but as one in fact revealed in such a way that Father and Son are the realities in that revelation. Neither do we talk about God merely as creator, redeemer, and sanctifier because those truths put in ultimate position do not do justice to the personal communion between the persons of the triune God. Adding motherhood to Fatherhood is another approach that would not likely help the feminist concern anyway if we can learn anything from ancient Canaanite religion. Among other things, that emphasis created the adverse effect by bringing sexuality into deity and emphasizing it The result was a perversion of worship and human living that was attendant to the fertility cults.

The current feminist pattern follows a recurrent one in the history of the church. It takes a valid New Testament idea and detaches it from the person

of Jesus and the gospel of grace, attaching it to the self instead. It ends up then attacking the original doctrines of the Bible, in this case the Trinity and the incarnation. God and his will end up being replaced by the projections of human self-understanding with humankind left adrift on a sea of subjective relativity.

In the Appendix the author comments further on the feminist issue by differentiating between similes, metaphors, parables, analogies, and name. Ultimately readers of the Bible are to understand Father as meaning what Jesus put into it. That understanding "evacuates all biological, male, patriarchal, sexist content" (153). The positive emphasis falls on the interpersonal element in Father: person, communion, love (124).

The power of these essays is somewhat affected by the reader's attitude toward the Reformed theology that informs the larger context. Torrance does as good a job as anyone in "interpersonalizing" an aspect like worship while apparently working within a system that is driven by legal concepts like vicariousness and federal headship. The approach sets aside the impersonalism of Greek ontology (51) but adopts in its larger context the impersonalism of legal process. Having entered that context, it is difficult to portray a satisfying interpersonalism in selected particulars. It would seem preferable to understand the system itself in interpersonal terms and then emphasize interpersonal realities in contrast to contractual ones, as Torrance wants to do (54).

Despite such issues in the larger field of thought, there are important reasons for reading a book of this sort and this quality. Although the serious reader will find much here to agree with, his main endeavor is not to decide whether he agrees at each point, but to learn as much as he can from the experience. The very concern to set more specific matters in the full context of Christian understanding is itself instructive. Too frequently the habit is to be eclectic and treat specifics as discrete items; Torrance's example is a healthy antidote to piecemeal thought. Another value comes from being exposed to the broad categories that theological reflection must have in place and keep in focus. A world-class scholar can integrate a wide range of insights and draw on a vast array of resources. Finally, a good writer stimulates thoughts that are not part of his own presentation; they may in fact be in contrast to it. Either way, progress is being made in the understanding of matters that would not move forward without the experience.

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J.P. MORELAND, *Love Your God With All Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul.* Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997. 244 pp. $14.00.

One can reasonably hope that with sufficient exposure Moreland's book will have even more impact on the evangelical landscape than the cumulative efforts of Blamire's *The Christian Mind*, Stott's *Your Mind Matters*, and Sire's *Discipleship of the Mind*. Moreland admirably demonstrates why a properly developed Christian mind is crucial for the church and even one's own soul. His thesis is best articulated when he says, "If we are going to be wise, spiritual people prepared to meet the crises of our age, we must be a studying, learning community that values the life of the mind" (39).

Moreland is a first-rate Christian philosopher and professor (at Talbot) with significant academic works (*Christianity and the Nature of Science*, *Scaling the Secular City*, and editor of *The Creation Hypothesis*). But his experience as a church planter and pastor, campus ministry leader, and regular church teacher further justifies his demanding proposals for Sunday schools, preacher's sermons, preparing church youth for college, college students, church libraries, corporate worship, personal reading, parenting, church fellowship, and evangelism. He rightly exposes the deficiencies of typical practices and perspectives, but he does so with a positive reforming objective, not with simple denunciations.

Moreland covers an amazing breadth of material with insightful depth. The first three chapters address why the mind matters in Christianity. The first chapter, "How We Lost the Christian Mind and Why We Must Recover It," presents an excellent analysis of secularism and the spiritually lethal nature of "Christian" anti-intellectualism and subjectivism. The second chapter offers a cogent, biblical case for the value of the mind which contains solid exegetical analyses of key passages, including those often misinterpreted to justify "Christian" ignorance (1 Cor 1–2; John 14:26; 1 John 2:27; Col 2:8). The third chapter, "The Mind's Role in Spiritual Transformation," discusses the nature of the soul and the mind and shows how and why the mind is integral to sustaining and changing belief systems.

Chapters four and five consider how to develop a mature Christian mind. Moreland exposes prominent obstacles ("hobgoblins" and "cobwebs") and then offers suggestions on how to overcome them. The main "hobgoblin" is the nearly ubiquitous "empty self," an individualistic, infantile, narcissistic, passive, sensate, hurried, and externally focused self that is a danger to society and the church. Affected Sunday school classes unintentionally contribute to a thievery of the mind by prompting false pride because "group feedback is almost always affirming no matter how inaccurate or poorly reasoned a point is" (97). In his response to the "cobwebs" in the "mental attic," Moreland

includes a useful twelve-page summary of formal and informal logic and even appeals to the need to "improve our syntax and grammar."

Four chapters show what a Christian mind looks like in evangelism, apologetics, worship and fellowship, and one's vocation. The treatment constitutes an effective blend of solid philosophy and theology with practical suggestions and examples. The chapter on apologetics furnishes profitable responses to skepticism, scientism, and moral relativism, though his formal definition of apologetics falls short of including the task of exposing the inadequacies of alternative belief systems. One chapter especially challenges Christian disciples to integrate their worldview with their career—even truck drivers!—but it also recognizes that "different vocational areas do not interact with a Christian worldview in the same way" (181) and on some issues "a Christian worldview is simply silent" (178). Few worldview-study advocates acknowledge this point; yet Moreland poses specific questions and examples to help make this difficult judgment.

The final chapter offers many intriguing suggestions for recapturing the intellectual life in the church. Preachers should be more thoughtful about using supplemental material. They should distribute detailed handouts, sell books and give reading assignments, periodically address the upper intellectual one-third, and rotate speakers because "no one who preaches week after week can do adequate study for a message or deeply process and internalize the sermon topic spiritually" (194). Sunday school "as it's currently practiced is not doing the job of developing the Christian mind" (196). It must "educate," not just "enfold." Moreland proposes "alternative parallel classes" and even "study centers" with required texts and assignments. Sunday mornings should include vocational or apologetic testimonies, periodic book reviews, and dedication services for people to think Christianly in their life work. Christian intellectuals need to be prayed for and held up as heroes and vocational role models among our teenagers. Moreland rightly asserts that "our churches are not preparing young people for what they will face intellectually in their college years, and we simply must be more intentional about this" (199). Some of Moreland's proposals may be considered radical, but I cannot identify one of them not worth serious consideration. If you don't agree, Moreland prods, "then at least argue about them among your brothers and sisters. Find out where and why you think I am wrong and come up with better suggestions" (189).

The book is adequately documented and includes appendices on intellectual resources (organizations, magazines and journals, publishers) and a topical bibliography in eleven areas of "general interest" and in twenty-four categories which integrate a Christian worldview with vocations. In short, Moreland has "won me over." Having taught a college worldview class for fourteen years, I will begin using it as one of the required texts. Perhaps, with

God's aid, it can help reinstate the Christian mind as a powerful cultural force, inextricably encompassed by the essence of Christian discipleship.

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Alyce M. McKENZIE. *Preaching Proverbs: Wisdom for the Pulpit.* Westminster: John Knox, 1996. 160 pp. $15.00.

Alyce McKenzie finds proverbs everywhere but in the pulpit and laments, "while pastors are in their studies skipping right past Proverbs on the way to somewhere else, their congregations are out in the world living by proverbs" (xi).

If this is true she has rediscovered an important genre for sermons appropriate for the xgen, postmodern, contemporary, generation. She makes the point that topical preaching reigned during the early part of this century and was succeeded by biblical, or expository, preaching. Proverbial preaching is an invaluable subtype of biblical preaching that "allows itself to be shaped by the literary genres of the Bible" (xv).

This book is neatly organized into three parts. Part one introduces proverbs as wisdom for the pulpit with discussions of syntax, structure and other characteristics. She tells how to create sermons from parables with a how-to section. Part two demonstrates how proverbs both created order and subverted order in the times they were written and also today. Part three continues the how-to discussion with some sermon models for each type of proverb.

Do not expect trite definitions for proverbs in this book, and do not expect her to restrict the discussion to the Book of Proverbs. She identifies them in both testaments, especially in the teaching of Jesus. Biblical proverbs are neatly categorized by type without forcing them into improper designations.

Conservative preachers may be put off by chapter six, the sayings from the Q document, but read on. She concurs that Q belongs in the long line of Hebrew wisdom collections and treats it as such. This reviewer would have preferred more attention to the Synoptics. However, the chart on the Synoptic proverbs at the end of the chapter is worth the wait.

The book is well indexed. Anyone who wants to preach the parables will benefit from the bibliography. Readers will appreciate the wealth of contemporary proverbs that permeate the book, coming from many cultures, from Korea to Nazi Germany. McKenzie has a sense of humor that pervades the work and has quirky ways of saying things that make for pleasant reading.

How may *Preaching Proverbs* be used? It would work as a textbook for a class on Proverbs, or as a textbook for a class on types of biblical preaching. More than that, she causes the traditionally trained expository preacher to think twice about what they are doing Sunday after Sunday in the name of biblical preaching. There is much more to it than finding a proposition in a Scripture and partitioning the text into an outline.

The problem with the book is the conclusion. There is none. This reviewer hankered for a zesty conclusion but, like so many preachers, she said it all in the introduction. Maybe another volume is forthcoming. Perhaps the publisher lost the final chapter. Maybe Alyce McKenzie subscribes to Proverbs 10:19, "the prudent are restrained in speech."

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Daniel I. BLOCK. *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24.* NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 887 pp. $48.00.

The NICOT series is noted for its quality scholarship and high view of Scripture. This new volume on Ezekiel (chapters 1–24) is no exception. Daniel I. Block has produced a masterful volume that will challenge students of Ezekiel for years to come.

The introduction covers the necessity subjects, such as Ezekiel's cultural background, authorship, date, purpose, literary structure and style, Jewish and Christian traditions of the book, and its theology. A select bibliography of 270 entries (82 are foreign language) is provided. The indexes include selected subjects, authors, scripture references, extracanonical literature, and selected Hebrew words and phrases.

The text and commentary is divided into three main sections: 1) The Call of Ezekiel to the Prophetic Ministry (chs. 1–3), 2) Signs and Visions of Woe for Israel/Judah (chs. 4–11), 3) A Collection of Prophecies of Woe against Israel (chs. 12–24). Most pericopes include an introductory discussion of its nature and design before a fresh, new translation is given, with detailed textual notes. A verse-by-verse commentary follows with full and scholarly footnotes. Each pericope ends with a theological implications section. This last feature is the attempt by the author "to make this prophecy understandable and meaningful for contemporary readers." Pastors and teachers will especially appreciate the practical application and theological insights given on the basis for the text's exegesis. This commentary will dispel the general opinion that "Ezekiel is too strange and . . . too complex and bizarre to deserve serious attention."

Block translates closely from the Masoretic Text but does not do so

uncritically. He is bold to use other readings from the versions or even offer conjectural emendations when necessary. He is in constant contact with other highly critical views on a given text and when he differs with the view, he argues cogently and rationally, usually landing on the "conservative" side (meaning that he accepts a high view of the inspiration of Scripture, the historicity of the Ezekielian story, and predictive prophecy as genuine). For example, he writes: "There is no reason to dismiss 17:17 as an *ex eventu* interpretation in principle simply because it accords precisely with historical events. Would it be more readily accepted as authentic if the prophecy had failed?" (546-547).

Perhaps the best part of the commentary is the ginger handling of the "semipornographic" style of chapters 16 and 23. Block admits that "the line between appropriate shock and offensive lack of taste is extremely fine," but he does walk that line by rendering the offensive texts "euphemistically in the translation, and leaving the literal interpretation for the commentary" (467).

This book will serve both the scholar and the diligent Bible students who seek real answers and resources for such a difficult OT prophet. Volume two (Ezekiel 25–48) should be even more insightful and interesting since the first volume covered mostly judgments against Judah and Jerusalem, while the second volume will include judgments against the nations as well as the future hope and glory of God's people.

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Choon-Leong SEOW. *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* New York: The Anchor Bible, 1997. 419 pp. $39.95.

"Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body" (Eccl 12:12, NIV). These observations at the conclusion of Ecclesiastes have been verified by a valuable addition to the body of literature examining this biblical book. Seow of Princeton Theological Seminary is best known for his *Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* that has been used as a text in numerous colleges and seminaries. He continues in the tradition of scholarship established by that previous work with a scholarly and readable discussion of Ecclesiastes which does *not* weary the body.

In his opening essays, Seow discusses customary issues which arise in biblical introduction (authorship, integrity, structure, canonicity, text). As he does so, Seow amasses a significant volume of data to undergird his assertion that Ecclesiastes was written during the Persian period (c 400 BC) by a wisdom

writer who adopts a common literary genre of his time, the fictional royal autobiography. He observes that the language of royalty does not extend past the second chapter and that it appears that the remainder of the book views kingship from a distance. In taking this approach, Seow seeks an interpretive middle ground. He denies Solomonic authorship because, in his judgment, such a conclusion ignores decisive linguistic data that is to be found in the book. At the same time Seow rejects assertions that Ecclesiastes was written during the Hellenistic period.

Building upon that conclusion, Seow surveys the sociology and economics of the Persian period and discusses the impact that information has upon the interpretation of Ecclesiastes. While the value of this discussion for Ecclesiastes study is diminished for those holding Solomonic authorship, it does provide valuable insight into the Persian period that can be applied to the study of other biblical books falling into that era. In his introductory paragraphs, Seow also seeks to place Ecclesiastes into its context as wisdom literature by examining ancient Near Eastern and Israelite wisdom. In doing so, he notes parallels between Qohelet and similar literature. He suggests ways in which recognizing these parallels can inform Ecclesiastes' study while concluding that trying to determine relationships of dependence is ultimately a futile pursuit. Throughout the introduction, Seow takes a moderately critical approach and provides readers with insight into contemporary thinking on this book.

Seow recognizes the structural unity of the text which is framed by the "vanity of vanities" statements in 1:2 and 12:8 and pivots on 6:10-12 falling at the midpoint of the text. He suggests that Qohelet, taking an approach that is typical of ancient wisdom, begins with the human situation ("under the sun") and then reflects on that predicament theologically. Seow proposes that three major themes dominate Ecclesiastes: (1) The Sovereignty of God, "Qohelet says that everything is in the hand of God: the righteous and the wise and all their works, including their love and hate (9:1)." (2) The Mysteriousness of Life: Life with its ambiguity and many apparent contradictions "under the sun" is characterized by "vanity;" "So the activities in the world and their unpredictable consequences are said to be *hebel*. . . . They are unpredictable, arbitrary and incomprehensible." (3) The Imperative of Enjoyment; Seow notes that Ecclesiastes is characterized by repeated encouragement to enjoy life in spite of its incongruities. Such joy can only come as a gift of God.

As he elaborates these themes, Seow provides "Notes" and "Comments" for each passage. This is in keeping with the standard approach of the Anchor Bible. The Notes assume a knowledge of Hebrew and deal with issues of technical exegesis. The Comments provide the reader with an exposition of the text which may make reference to the original language but does not necessitate a knowledge of such. In this way, the commentary has value for a wide

audience. It is structured in such a manner as to be equally beneficial to the seminary student and the preacher. Also of value is the extensive bibliography that includes works on the Ecclesiastes from across the theological spectrum and provides a good reference point to begin further study.

This volume would be a valuable addition to any preacher or professor's library. While probably too advanced and too controversial on some issues to be used as a textbook at the undergraduate level, Seow's work is quite valuable as a supplementary text for an upper-level class in Hebrew wisdom or as an exegetical commentary for preaching and teaching.

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Richard BAUCKHAM, ed. *The Gospel for All Christians.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 192 pp. $22.00.

Most scholars assume that each Gospel was written to a specific Christian community. In a paper addressed to the 1995 British New Testament Conference, Richard Bauckham argued that this assumption was wrong. He suggested instead that the Gospels were addressed to all Christians. This book arises directly from Bauckham's confrontational paper. In the introduction Bauckham states that this book is a collection of contributions by "other British scholars who found that the thesis he presented converged with the direction their own thought had been taking" (3).

The first chapter is an expansion of Bauckham's original paper. Bauckham writes that other chapters "presuppose the argument presented in the first chapter," and "explore in more detail particular areas of discussion which that argument opens up and develop further implications of the argument" (4). This is an important goal. For Bauckham's thesis to be seriously considered, it must be shown to have explanatory power. However, when the chapters are studied, they are instead found to provide further supporting arguments for the thesis of the first chapter.

For example, in the chapter entitled "The Holy Internet: Communication Between Churches in the First Christian Generation," Michael B. Thompson shows that communication between Christians took place frequently and relatively quickly in the first century A.D. This is an expansion of one section of Bauckham's original thesis.

Loveday Alexander's chapter, "Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels," is more informative than Thompson's. She makes extensive use of primary sources to show that Christians could have quickly and easily copied and distributed books. Relying on Harry Gamble's research, she

also shows that the codex was an especially useful form for early Christianity's texts. However, it must again be noted that this is supporting material for Bauckham's main thesis.

Only in Bauckham's second contribution is the original thesis taken further. In "John for Readers of Mark" Bauckham tackles the issue of the relationship between these two Gospels. Bauckham shows that certain elements in John are best understood as notes of explanation for those already familiar with Mark's Gospel. If each Gospel were written only for its own community, why would this be necessary? This contribution is significant because it shows that Bauckham's main thesis can address at least one difficulty in Gospel relationships.

The other chapters in the book are: "About People, by People, for People: Gospel Genre and Audiences," by Richard Burridge; "Can We Identify the Gospel Audiences?" by Stephen C. Barton; and "Toward a Literal Reading of the Gospels," by Francis Watson.

Overall, this volume does show that scholars should reassess the hypothesis that the Gospels were written to isolated communities. Also, through additional supporting arguments, it shows that Bauckham's thesis is plausible. Ultimately, however, this volume does not accomplish its stated purpose. For Bauckham's thesis to gain greater credibility, it must be able to address difficulties in Gospels criticism. In Bauckham's second essay, a glimmer of this potential can be seen. However, it is lacking in the other contributions in this volume. An alternative picture of Gospel origins is presented, but much work remains to be done to convince a majority of scholars of its validity.

This volume is directed at those who are interested in the specific historical question of the origin and setting of the Gospels. However, it is relatively short and written at a level that would be accessible to most advanced undergraduates.

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Craig A. EVANS and Peter W. FLINT, eds. *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.* Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 176 pp. $20.00

The recent release of all the Dead Sea Scrolls to the public has caused a resurgence of interest in comparing the scrolls with the New Testament. These texts, from cave 4 of Qumran, had been for several decades in the possession of only a select few. The public access to these documents coincides with the sharpening public debate over Jesus and his cultural-theological environment. Was it Hellenistic or Jewish?

Abegg and Flint, the general editors of the new series (Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature), project several future volumes, both collected essays and monographs, to interpret the newly released scroll texts, especially as they relate to the New Testament. In addition, some essays on the Old Testament will be included. The topic of the present review is volume one of this series.

The essays of this volume fall easily into three categories:

1) Old Testament:

Paul E. Hughes, "Moses' Birth Story: A Biblical Matrix for Prophetic Messianism"; and Craig C. Broyles, "The Redeeming King: Psalm 72's Contribution to the Messianic Ideal."

2) Dead Sea Scrolls:

Peter W. Flint, "The Daniel Tradition at Qumran"; Martin G. Abegg, "Who Ascended to Heaven? 4Q491, 4Q427, and the Teacher of Righteousness"; and John J. Collins, "The Expectation of the End in the Dead Sea Scrolls."

3) New Testament and Judaism:

Craig A. Evans, "Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran Cave 4"; James M. Scott, "Throne-Chariot Mysticism in Qumran and in Paul'; and Dietmar Neufeld, "'And When That One Comes': Aspects of Johannine Messianism."

These essays were first presented to an assembly at Trinity Western University (all but two of the presenters are on the faculty of Trinity Western) with a subsequent panel discussion. An interesting summary of the discussion and questions from the audience have been included at the end of the books. Indexes and bibliography complete the volume.

Inevitably, some of the essays are more significant than others. The most informative essays were those of Flint and Collins. Flint organizes nicely all of the texts and fragments from Qumran that relate to Daniel. Collins collects masterfully the eschatological references from the Qumran texts to sketch the end-time program of the sect. He concludes that they had expected the end of the age sometime in the middle of the first century BC.

The most creative article is that of Abegg who surmises that the mysterious Teacher of Righteousness had a mystical experience which enabled him to be "reckoned with the gods" (4Q491, 4Q427). Also creative is the essay by Scott which essentially analyzes one word from 2 Corinthians 2:14, θριαμβεύω (*thriambeuō,* "triumph"). Scott concludes that Paul saw himself as God's prisoner in a triumphal procession.

In all of the New Testament essays there is a persistent theme—almost an apologetic motif. The interest seems to be to show that Judaism, not Hellenism, is the real fountain of the Christian faith. Thus, Scott claims (with some difficulty I think) that Mercabah mysticism lies behind Paul's understanding of

2 Corinthians 2:14. Neufeld concludes: "A heavenly, transcendent Messiah was not a unique invention of the Christian community but the outgrowth of the reflection that had its roots in Judaism" (10). The tendency is also manifest in Evans's correct, if sometimes jejune, conclusions concerning four of the newly released texts. Evans maintains, for example, that the title "son of the Most High" (Luke 1:32) in particular and Jesus' teachings in general were "right at home" in Palestinian Judaism (94-95).

The main benefit of a collection such as this, indeed of the series as a whole, is that it informs the reader about the current status of Qumran and related research and the use at least some scholars are making of this research. Thus, for both the average reader and the New Testament professor, there is much here to learn even if one does not happen to agree with all of the conclusions.

The main weakness of this volume is the diverse nature of the articles which leaves one feeling that this collection is a grab bag. More focus could have been maintained if all of the articles had concentrated just on the scrolls or just in the scrolls and the Gospels, saving the others for later volumes.

Still, this collection contains some useful and stimulating thinking about the scrolls and therefore belongs in every good seminary library.

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Jack D. KINGSBURY, ed. *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997. 307 pp. $24.00.

As the title suggests, this book attempts to cover theoretical issues in both narrative-criticism and the more recently popular social-scientific method. What this actually means is that Kingsbury has brought together literary critical readings which assume that the Gospel narratives developed within an actual historical context in which there were real "social relations," an actual "ethos," and an actual "symbolic universe" shared by the respective readers and authors alike (166).

The book meets its titular goal by creating a foundation upon which more sophisticated interpretation of the Gospels can take place by taking account of both the literary and the historical. The articles range from focus on the literary to the historical while attempting to maintain dialogue between the two poles. The goal is to move away from the perception that these are in fact poles towards a better understanding of their complex relationship. This goal is not always achieved, but in general the impression of the book is the same

as Mark Allen Powell's comment about narrative criticism: it "challenges the dichotomy between literary . . . appreciation and historical or theological understanding" (125). The articles vary in the degree to which they integrate literary, social and historical critical issues. At times, the writers are merely historical critics who have bothered to pay attention to the realities of language and its role in generating history. Some spend a lot of time stating the obvious in literary rather than historical critical terms. Thus, Kingsbury sums up his essay on "The Significance of the Cross within Mark's Story" with the rather anticlimactic (re)statement of the obvious: "the significance of the cross within the story of Mark is that the cross is the place where this story reaches its culmination" (104). The theoretical discussions in the articles also vary in degree of competency. While Mary Ann Tolbert's article (71-82) is an excellent introduction to foundational concepts in literary criticism, Fernando Sergovia, in an otherwise fine essay important for its introduction to the function of the symbolic value of social code, latched onto the phrase "cultural criticism" and beat it to death with the wrong stick, an all too frequent mistake among biblical critics caught in the recent flurry of interdisciplinary terminology. Sergovia consistently misuses the rather ubiquitous phrase, assuming it to be a reference to criticism of the culture surrounding the Gospel texts, when it typically refers to noninstitutionalized forms and objects of criticism.

The offering Kingsbury has laid before us is quite typical of his previous work. It does not actually add new information to either historical or literary approaches to biblical texts—taking note that Kingsbury's three articles in the book are essentially digest versions of three previous works—as much as it grants newcomers and the uninitiated (if there are any left) access to what is going in the field. With this in mind, the book is quite helpful as an introductory level reader. Perhaps, in the college/seminary classroom, it would find its greatest use as a text from which specific chapters could be assigned for reading in order to increase the diversity of a student's knowledge of the biblical text and methods for reading it. The fact that the book covers a significant amount of ground in new and traditional issues within Gospels criticism and has a dedicated section for each of the four Gospels as well as a fifth section dedicated to the historical Jesus means that it is quite versatile as a text from which readings can be assigned for a number of different class subjects.

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Walter A. ELWELL and Robert W. YARBROUGH. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey.* Encountering Biblical Studies. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. 416 pp. $44.99.

Walter Elwell, Professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Wheaton College, and Robert Yarbrough, Associate Professor of New Testament at Trinity International University, have combined their efforts to produce the first volume in Baker's new series of textbooks designed for undergraduate biblical studies courses. The target audience of the book and its purpose are: to introduce "the modern young reader, or older nonspecialist" (16) to the literature of the NT by means of surveying the contents of the NT, introducing the key themes and scholarly concerns associated with each book.

The book is divided into four parts—Jesus and the Gospels, Acts and the Earliest Church, Paul and His Epistles, General Epistles and the Apocalypse—with each part having a chapter devoted to surveying the biblical books. The first part also contains chapters on historical background, life of Jesus, teaching ministry of Jesus (Elwell commits the "Christological Fallacy;" see J. Cottrell, *What the Bible Says about God the Creator*, p. 166), modern approaches to interpreting the NT (an examination of historical criticism), modern study of the Gospels (introduction to source, form, and redaction criticism), and the historical Jesus debate.

For those chapters devoted specifically to discussing Bible books the treatment of the material follows that of other NT survey books. When discussing the message of the books, the Gospel discussion is organized around themes, whereas the epistles are discussed in relation to their outline. Scattered throughout every chapter are yellow, blue, and tan boxes. Yellow boxes explore "ethical and theological issues of interest and concern to modern-day collegians" (13). Topics include: God's will, eternal punishment, homosexuality, environment, relativism. Blue boxes provide primary source material, including biblical and extrabiblical texts. Tan boxes are called "focus boxes" that "isolate key issues and make relevant applications" (13). Each chapter ends with summary items, review questions, study questions, key terms, and further reading. Generally speaking the study questions (short answer/essay) have more value than the review questions (fill-in-the-blank).

The suggestions given for further reading do provide a good sampling of introductory level readings and more advanced reading material, but the two categories are not always differentiated. The freshman college student who wants a Thessalonian commentary and puts Wanamaker on his Christmas list because he has read that it is "among the best recent commentaries on these epistles" (344) will be surprised on Christmas morning when he opens his new book and sees all the Greek. Also, the revised editions of books are not always listed. An example is Robert Stein's *Method and Message of Jesus' Teachings* (151).

In a couple of places, the intended audience was forgotten. Terms like "predestination" (58) and "agora" (313) are not defined. Concerning the use of the OT Apocrypha, Elwell tells the reader that "Protestants pay respect to the apocryphal books as valuable sources of information about Jewish life and thought . . . while Roman Catholics and others revere them as part of their Bible" (62). Who are the "others"? Concerning the citation of sources, often the European publisher is listed. (For example, p. 411, n.6 reads John W. Wenham, *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991). To aid the student who may try to locate this book, the American publisher should have been used, for this example, Downer's Grove: InterVarsity.

There are other concerns: targum is called both a paraphrase (63) and an Aramaic translation (64). Elwell says that the Pharisees "believed in God (in almost a deistic fashion)," but in the same sentence he says that the Pharisees believe in providence (57). A basic definition of deism is that of an antiprovidial God. So, how is "deistic" being used? Elwell makes the sweeping statement that "Jesus never quoted any other sources, whether rabbis, Greek writers, Apocrypha, or other well-known sources of his day" (61). Does Elwell have sources that the rest of us do not have? Do we have a record of everything Jesus said? Surprisingly and disappointedly, the best feature of the book is the full color photographs, although the photographs on page 192 and 254 are not identified. The Reformed tradition of Yarbrough comes out in his discussion of Romans when he says, "All people are cut off from God . . . because of their built-in tendency to ignore who he really is" (278) and "God will never reject the people whom he awakens to faith" (281).

A multimedia interactive CD-ROM, produced by Chris Miller and Phil Bassett, is packaged with the book. The CD-ROM requires Win95, WinNT or Macintosh and a sound card.

Each chapter in the book has a corresponding "folder" in the CD-ROM program where high points of the chapter are re-presented using interactive graphics. The key terms listed in each chapter are also listed with a definition and often with an audible pronunciation. When a person is associated with a place, a map is displayed, and the user is asked to locate the place on the map. The review questions that appear at the end of each chapter in a fill-in-the-blank format in the book are given on the CD-ROM in a multiple-choice format.

Besides reviewing the chapters there are video and photo libraries. The video library contains clips with Elwell and Yarbrough speaking on such topics as anxiety, decision-making, guilt's effects and solution, hope, loneliness, race relations, and social division. There are also video clips of different sites in Israel. The clips are aerial fly-bys of the Jezreel Valley, Caesarea, Jordan River, Wadi Qelt, Masada, Shephelah, wilderness, Dead Sea, Jerusalem (destruction, western wall, eastern wall, temple model, and the temple mount). Unfortunately, the

video quality is fuzzy. The photo tours are grouped into 6 categories with approximately 10-12 pictures in each. The groupings include Jerusalem, Galilee, Eastern, Southern, Northern Israel, and the Mediterranean. The photos are clear and crisp with captions identifying each one.

The CD-ROM is a useful supplement to the text. Students will find the program user-friendly, the review material basic, possibly too simplistic, but they will enjoy the video and photo elements of the CD-ROM.

In conclusion, besides the full-color layout of the book, the chapters dealing with the modern issues surrounding NT interpretation (chapters 10-11) and the search for Jesus (chapter 12), and the photo and video portion of the CD-ROM, I am not sure that the book has any more value than previous attempts to write NT surveys. The book accomplishes what it sets out to do, and it does it well. Would I use it to replace what I currently use? Probably not. However, I will reserve final judgment until I see the soon to be published supplemental and companion volume *Readings from the First-Century World: Primary Sources for NT Study.*

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David A. FIENSY. ***The Message and Ministry of Jesus: An Introductory Textbook.*** **Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1996. 336 pp. $34.00.**

The 1990s have seen a large number of books on the study of Jesus. Many of these have either been by associates of the "Jesus Seminar" or reactions from its critics. Most are attempts to sift the known evidence and literature about Jesus to reconstruct a likely version of his life. The last decade has also seen the publication of a number of new commentaries on each of the four Gospels. These offer commentary from a generation that has been influenced by the literary theories of our postmodern age, such as narrative criticism and various types of reader-response interpretations, as well as sociological and economic studies of the New Testament era.

This work falls somewhere between these two types of books. It is somewhat like the old life of Christ studies that walked through all the biblical material relating to Jesus in a harmony approach. This affinity may be seen in a useful feature of this work. It is organized with the sections of Kurt Aland's Synopsis of the Four Gospels in mind and includes Aland's division numbers for each section. But Fiensy has certainly surpassed this life of Christ approach by cautiously including material relating to Jesus from sources outside the New Testament. This includes not only the standard traditions from the early

church fathers, Josephus, and the long-known apocryphal gospels but also information from Nag Hammadi texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and findings from recent sociological and cultural studies on ancient Palestine and the Roman Empire. A particular strength of the book is Fiensy's exhaustive knowledge of early Jewish sources (Mishnah, etc.) and his careful use of this material when appropriate.

Thus, the book consists of a biblically controlled survey of Jesus with many sections of Fiensy's interpretation of relevant texts. For example, chapter 9 is a brief survey on parable studies accompanied by Fiensy's own compact interpretations of a good number of parables. Chapter 13 is more than a rehearsal of a reconstruction of Jesus' Early Judean Ministry. It is also a discussion of the various theories concerning the unique traditions of the Fourth Gospel, as well as interpretations of some of the texts contained in John.

In many ways this is a very satisfying book. It is the work of a believer, not a doubter, an unashmed modern disciple of Jesus. He is not shy about such standard evangelical doctrines as the atonement (291). Yet he maintains a tone of careful scholarship throughout and is never afraid to end a discussion by saying "we don't have all the answers to this question." A good example of this is Fiensy's discussion of whether or not Lazarus should be identified as Simon the Leper (275). Particular strengths of the book are Fiensy's chapter on first century Jerusalem (17) and some of his footnote discussions (the discussion of leprosy with current bibliography, 164, n. 2).

There are some flaws in the work, however. Some problems are simply quibbles over interpretation. Although his presentation of the synoptic problem in chapter 15 is brief but good, his defense of Matthean priority is unconvincing. Some problems are more serious, with even a few factual errors. The Samaritan Temple on Mt. Gerizim was destroyed by the Hasmonean John Hyrcanus in 128 BC not by the Romans in the Jewish War of AD 66-70. The Elijah confusion is associated with Jesus' statement from the cross "My God, my God . . .", not "I am thirsty" (313). As with many scholars, Fiensy considers the Zealots to be a party associated with the time of the Jewish War but fails to explain why one of Jesus' disciples would be named Simon the Zealot thirty years earlier. There are some bothersome omissions, too. Why no discussion of the Transfiguration or the Good Confession? Such topics are central to any understanding of Jesus.

University Press of America is not known for strong editorial support. So the book is marred by numerous errors a good editor would have corrected. There are various misspellings and other errors such as "compell", (7-8); "sight" for "site," (82); the pesky "ones" for "one's" (throughout). In addition, the layout has resulted in many widows (145) and orphans, particularly with headings (96). Finally, the useful table of Aland references at the very end of the book seems to be missing a page. Such errors are much less acceptable in

these days of high-tech publication, and may result in loss of credibility with discerning students.

A very picky criticism has to do with the nature of the bibliography material. Fiensy has done a consistent job of listing sources for further study at the beginning of most sections. However, these are not very user friendly and will probably be of limited value to students. Why list Raymond Brown's John commentary for the chapter on the Galilean Ministry without giving the student some clue as to the pages that contain information on this subject? And why list German sources if the target audience is college or even seminary students? If the desire is to be comprehensive, why no French sources? And why list Hal Lindsay's *The Late Great Planet Earth* at all (263)? Having said this, there is a lot of good data in these bibliographies.

In case you cannot tell from what I have written, I like this book a lot. I am seriously considering requiring it for my course in the Gospels in the spring semester of 1999. It has a great deal of the material I want students to know, and Fiensy's approach is very much like my own.

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Morna D. HOOKER. *The Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997. 131 pp. $14.00.

Hooker's monograph is dedicated to her recently deceased husband, W. David Stacey (d. 1993), and is the fruit of her labors stimulated by his work on *Prophetic Drama in the Old Testament* (Epworth Press, 1990). Stacey's application of his studies of the Old Testament prophets to the symbolism underlying Jesus' actions at the Lord's Supper, published shortly after his death in *Epworth Review* 20 (Jan. 1994), is included in Hooker's book as an appendix entitled "The Last Supper as Prophetic Drama."

Hooker begins by distinguishing between the words which a prophet spoke and—what particularly interests her—the actions which he performed. These actions can be divided into three categories: actions which display divine power and bring either salvation or judgment ("miracles"), actions which point to divine activity which cannot otherwise at the moment be observed (prophetic "signs" or "dramas," such as Isaiah's nakedness or Jeremiah's broken pot), and actions designed to offer proof that the prophet is God's instrument ("authenticating miracles," such as Moses' staff or Elijah's Mt. Carmel sacrifice).

Prophets were identified as much by what they did as by what they said. This is particularly true of John, the forerunner to Jesus. Very little is known

about what he said, but he was noted and named for what he did: baptize. Jesus, too, was considered by his contemporaries to be a prophet. This, Hooker demonstrates, was due not only to what he said but to what he did. Jesus *acted* like a prophet.

While the Gospels clearly indicate that Jesus performed miracles (Hooker's first category), Hooker steadfastly maintains in chapter two that Jesus refused to perform "authenticating" signs. This is not patently clear because, as Hooker recognizes, miracles can be viewed—by those who comprehend their significance—as "proofs" of divine activity. Thus, when Jesus performed a miracle, it was "proof" that he was God's messenger, at least in the eyes of the people (66,77) and in the evangelists' eyes (36,77). As Hooker will attempt to demonstrate in chapter three, however, all of Jesus' miracles were intended by him to be demonstrations of God's power at work to bring salvation or judgment, and many, moreover, can be seen as prophetic dramas. In the meantime, in chapter two the reader can be somewhat confused when Hooker repeatedly asserts that Jesus performed no "authenticating" signs and even rebuffed such requests. She also discusses at length the "authenticating" sign which Jesus did not perform, but promised: the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:39; 16:4; Luke 11:29). She makes the curious suggestion here—elaborately explained, but based on much conjecture—that this "sign of Jonah" is actually the "sign of John": his baptizing.

Chapter three is particularly useful for its insights into how many of Jesus' actions were prophetic, not in the miraculous sense, but in the sense of dramatizing God's will: choosing twelve disciples, eating with sinners, the Lord's Supper. Hooker concludes by retracing the redactional work of the evangelists but with an emphasis on how each demonstrates that Jesus is a prophet, through Jesus' own dramatic actions and the dramatic actions of others. Her brief (79) monologue is followed by an appendix, an extensive bibliography, endnotes and indexes.

Hooker's work is helpful in that it clarifies for the reader how Jesus stands in the midst of the Old Testament prophetic tradition. She also makes many statements which are stimulating and thought-provoking: "Baptism in water and in Spirit in fact belong together: the former is the symbol, or sign, of the latter" (13). "Jesus' healings are part of the inbreaking of the Kingdom, and healings can therefore take place only where people respond to him in faith" (37). "In its [the Lord's Supper] Jewish context, the word represented by *soma* must surely have meant 'self.' In other words, Jesus was saying 'This is myself—this is me'" (49).

This book would be helpful as auxiliary reading for ministers and graduate students studying the life of Jesus. The endnotes in place of footnotes may be easier for the publisher but make reading the book difficult, especially when there are 311 notes, many of which are Scripture references which could easily

have been included in the text. Nevertheless, the book usefully raises our awareness that Jesus was considered a prophet not only for what he said, but also for what he did.

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Howard Clark KEE. *To Every Nation under Heaven: The Acts of the Apostles.* The New Testament in Context. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997. 361 pp. $24.00.

This commentary is the seventh in a series that seeks to make general readers aware of the social, cultural and historical context of the NT. Kee also serves as coeditor of the series, and as a widely published specialist in the social history of the New Testament, he comes to this task with high qualifications.

In keeping with the purpose of the series, Kee avoids lengthy discussion of certain well-worn issues. He omits debate about authorship, though favoring the notion that the we-passages reflect the author's use of a diary as a source. Likewise, he does not examine the historical accuracy of Acts, though sometimes calling attention to what he sees as historical discrepancies while elsewhere insisting on the author's sound grasp of the particulars of the Roman world. The genre of Acts is closer to Kee's concerns; here he follows a growing number who see Acts as apologetic historiography, though Kee suggests some influence from the competing category of romance. The introduction also includes a competent, relatively nontechnical overview of recent scholarship on Acts supplemented with summaries of important recent works on the Roman world.

The commentary proceeds section-by-section, beginning with the author's original translation of the text, which by Kee's description follows principles of dynamic equivalence. Exegetical discussion, frequently supplemented with excurses on key terms or historical and geographical data, follows the translation.

Among recent commentaries on Acts aimed at general readers, this one contains the most information on the social setting of the text. Kee regularly presents historical overviews about cities, religious and philosophical groups, and Roman political administration as these matters appear in the text. Most of this discussion is sufficiently thorough and reasonably brief, though at times the author canvasses developments well after the first century even though they are irrelevant to the immediate purpose. As one would expect, the subjects that receive the most attention are often those on which Kee himself has

written monographs, including first-century synagogues and magic in the Roman world.

Outside of the consistent explanations of the social context of Acts, the book manifests annoying inconsistencies and omissions. Kee indicates an intention to discuss the shared assumptions of the author and the reader and the resultant meaning that the text conveyed in its context. But the commentary in fact gives little attention to shared assumptions outside of a few areas, and Kee's comments generally have more to do with understanding early Christianity as a movement in history than with the significance of that movement as presented by the author. Though Kee is very alert to the repeated use of irony in Acts, he only infrequently calls attention to the development of key themes or recurrent patterns in the text, let alone their implications for understanding the message of the book. For example, this may be the only commentary on Acts in the last one hundred years *not* to call immediate attention to the importance of the geographical notices in 1:8 for understanding the development of the narrative. At other points, Kee does not mention the genuine debates that surround issues on which he makes unsubstantiated pronouncements. For instance, he repeatedly assumes the Sanhedrin's competence under Roman rule to administer capital punishment, a widely debated point, no less so because the very primary sources to which Kee refers can more easily be understood as supporting the conclusion opposite his own. Readers of *SCJ* will also note to their chagrin that Kee repeatedly glosses baptism solely in terms of public testimony, even though the public nature of baptism is nowhere stressed in Acts. Most remarkable, though, is Kee's assertion—utterly without argumentation—that the Herod of Acts 12:1-6 is Herod Antipas. Even the most uninformed reader will then be amazed later to read that the Herod of 12:19-23 is Herod Agrippa I.

Though for the most part lucidly written, the commentary suffers from poor editing. The author's original translation of the text, too often needlessly idiosyncratic and inconsistent, is presented without verse numbers. Though this format facilitates reading the text as a connected narrative, the comments frequently refer the reader to specific words or phrases in the text by means of specific verse numbers. This problem would not be so frustrating were it not for the fact that Kee often uses a different English term in the translation than he does in the commentary, and often neither word is the one found in most English translations. At one point, 9:36-43, a whole section of the author's translation has been omitted. In the comments, redundant phrases and sentences often appear, suggesting that the author inserted revisions without deleting the parts revised. Greek words often are mentioned, always in transliteration, but the typeface does not distinguish between short and long vowels, inviting readers without Greek to mispronounce many words with barbarous effect.

In short, despite its many valuable features, this commentary's omissions and peculiarities will frustrate most readers. Teachers and students of Acts will appreciate its cogent summaries of historical information but will need to go elsewhere for consistent help with the message of Luke's second volume.

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James D.G. DUNN. ***The Theology of Paul the Apostle.*** **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 808 pp. $45.00.**

Such is the distinguished record of its author that this volume comes with its own commendation. That it fills a gap is beyond question (Ridderbos is named as the last full-scale effort, and the post-Sanders need for a new synthesis is offered as further justification (5). More than this, it does so admirably, with the qualities we would expect from Dunn: thorough, readable, and well-informed. It will be a standard work to which all students of Paul will turn. Indeed, it is an education in much of recent Pauline studies.

Something of its breadth may be captured in listing its chapters (and subsections): Prologue (Prolegomena to a theology of Paul), God and Humankind (God, Humankind), Humankind under Indictment (Adam, Sin and death, The law), The Gospel of Jesus Christ (Gospel, Jesus the man, Christ crucified, The risen Lord, The pre-existent one, Until he comes), The Beginning of Salvation (The crucial transition, Justification by faith, Participation in Christ, The gift of the Spirit, Baptism), The Process of Salvation (The eschatological tension, Israel [Romans 9–11]), The Church (The body of Christ, Ministry and authority, The Lord's Supper), How Should Believers Live? (Motivating principles, Ethics in practice), Epilogue (Postlegomena to a theology of Paul).

Making no claim to having 'the last word,' Dunn offers his effort "as a contribution to the ongoing dialogue" on Paul's theology, "a positive and eirenic contribution to [the] reassessment" of Paul currently underway (xviii, 6). In the same constructive spirit, I will make a few critical observations.

Dunn commends a 'theological' approach informed by but taking precedence over social-scientific and rhetorical approaches, urging the need for "sympathy" as against an overzealous "hermeneutic of suspicion" (9-12). But at points more could have been given to the latter, precisely as a matter of theological interest. That is, Paul's contentiousness has sometimes been obscured, not least on matters relating to 'the new perspective on Paul,' on which readers will welcome the gathering within a single cover of Dunn's mature reflections (114-119, 128-161, 334-389, 499-532, 631-658).

Questions remain: How can the maintenance of a religious identity separate from the nations be regarded as a misunderstanding of the law on Israel's part? How, that is, except from a retrospective, Christian, theological point of view? And how, then, has Paul criticized Judaism 'as it really was' (an urgent concern for Dunn)? Can Paul's critique of the law be limited to this 'misunderstanding'? (On these and more detailed questions, see the present reviewer's forthcoming review article in JSNT.)

Dunn's minimalist reading of preexistence in Paul's Christology and of baptism in Paul's soteriology are well known (266-293, 442-459). Having the two together here provokes the methodological question of whether Dunn's own advice on "allusion" in the former case (283-284) is followed in the latter. A further methodological observation concerns the failure to make use of the Louw-Nida lexicon (and its principles), though word study is a staple ingredient of Dunn's work.

At the outset, Dunn claims: "I wish to theologize with Paul" (24). It will be a great disappointment to many readers that this never really happens. Instead, scattered through the book are a series of all-too-brief remarks (the top of 328). Dunn pleads considerations of time and space (715-716), and one sympathizes. But many, I think, would gladly have read another couple hundred pages and would even have waited another few years for them. If Paul is the "the first and greatest Christian theologian," the greatest "of all time" (2-3), then surely he deserves the sustained theological attention of a great theologian!

It is the way with such things that we raise for comment those matters we see as meriting further attention, passing over so much that has been done so well as to provoke no remark. But it is fitting, finally and over all, to express appreciation for Dunn's contribution and congratulation for his achievement.

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J. Louis MARTYN. *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* The Anchor Bible. Volume 33A. New York: Doubleday, 1997. 614 pp. $39.95.

This new commentary on Galatians offers an interpretation of God's grace and movement toward humankind as the source of human justification, particularly when this is called into question by law observance and circumcision requirements for Gentiles as proclaimed by rival "Teachers" (opponents) in Galatia. Martyn's commentary on Galatians is comprehensive, insightful, and up-to-date in its coverage of a wide variety of issues connected with this cen-

tral aim. Martyn, a widely recognized scholar of Galatians, expounds Paul's stance and purposes in writing this polemically charged letter, while also giving due attention and recognition to the positions held by those "Teachers" with whom Paul disagreed.

The commentary follows a recognizable procedure: general introduction followed by divided sections consisting of textual notes and commentary. The general introduction is relatively short; the burden of discussion centers on what type of genre Paul employed, particularly in light of recent rhetorical analyses of the Galatian letter. Martyn suggests that Paul's rhetoric is "more revelatory and performative than hortatory and persuasive, although it is both . . . it is a highly situational sermon" which "reproclaim[s] the gospel" (23).

The textual and exegetical notes are well researched, concisely expressed, and helpful throughout; Martyn does not shy away from advancing his own keen exegetical insights. It is, however, the comments that make up the bulk of Martyn's work. They indicate a deep concern for viewing Galatians as a whole, an integrated argument/reproclamation. Martyn seeks to portray "the story" lying behind the interaction of Paul, the Teachers, and the Galatians. Hence, most major issues are treated in depth including: "a different gospel," *pistis Christou*, chronology of the Galatian letter and the Jerusalem conference, the flow of argument and the inherent audience suggested by Galatians 2:15-21, the content of the Teachers' gospel versus that of Paul, the central role of Galatians 3:26-29, allegorical interpretation, Paul's ethical instructions ("daily life in wartime") and "Israel."

As noted, I found this commentary to be a strong addition to the study of Galatians. Nevertheless, a few caveats may be offered. First, the interpreter's acceptance or nonacceptance of "mirror-reading" (gaining a view of Paul's "opponents" by accepting Paul's rhetoric, polemic, and criticism of them) as a legitimate tool for interpretation is of great importance when reading Martyn's work. Martyn's "mirror-reading" is carefully controlled for the most part, resulting in significant insight, as in the Teachers' Sermon (302-306). Martyn's own rationale for doing mirror-reading, however, is left largely unexpressed and rightly deserved a place in the general introduction. Second, the reader should be aware that Martyn weaves introductory issues into his comments on the text rather than setting them out in the general introduction, such as a full dating/chronology, a view of Paul's opponents, Paul's worldview and theological themes as found in Galatians (Martyn's "antinomies"). This is not to say that Martyn was unwise in dealing with the material in this fashion (I might be inclined to argue the opposite position) but that the user may need to be committed to a full reading of the work before utilizing its commentary on smaller sections. Finally, one should be aware that Martyn's new translation moves easily between translation and paraphrase in certain places, as he appropriately acknowledges from time to time.

This is a fine and insightful commentary on Paul's interaction with the Galatians and the complexity of early Christianity's beginning. The power of Paul's gospel is upheld. The power of the "new creation" is explicated in a way that can be appropriated for our own time. The work is suitable for the scholar's shelf, no doubt, and of great interest for the seminarian or minister who is willing to engage it fully.

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Ralph P. MARTIN and Peter H. DAVIDS, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997. 1289 pp. $39.99.

Called a "very useful, even indispensable" tool for the study of the later New Testament writings, this volume completes the trilogy of New Testament dictionaries published by InterVarsity Press in the last few years. The other two volumes, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, and *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, have already taken their place among the standard reference works for their subject areas.

The three dictionaries each carry the subtitle, "A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship." More accurately, these dictionaries are collections of contemporary evangelical biblical scholarship; the list of contributors reads like a "Who's Who" among English-speaking evangelical Bible scholars (primarily from North America and Great Britain). This is certainly not to minimize the accomplishment. In fact, the publication of these three dictionaries demonstrates the maturity of evangelical biblical studies. As part of the overall quality of this series, its scope and breadth bear strong testimony to the vitality of scholarship in the evangelical world.

The "later New Testament writings" have always posed unusual problems to interpreters compared to the Gospels and Paul. This is probably a combination of the fact that the Gospels and Paul's letters are traditionally more central to the faith of Protestantism in general. Thus, the issues involved in their investigation are better known than those of the later NT. By contrast, much of the later NT has been the subject of heated debate in one way or another virtually from the beginning but especially in recent times. Though the many thorny issues encountered in these writings—such as authorship and canonicity—have sometimes caused evangelical scholars to shy away from these volatile subjects out of expediency, the calmly rational and balanced discussions in this volume are encouraging, reminding the reader that no subject is "off limits," and that evangelical views can hold their own in the marketplace of critical ideas.

The editors of this volume are both scholars of later New Testament writings in their own right, and are sensitive to the scholar's need for information about the ongoing debates surrounding the issues in later New Testament. They are also mindful of the needs of students who may not be informed about the "state of the discipline" in any given field, and do a good job introducing the dictionary in the preface.

The volume contains essays on all the relevant books (Acts, Hebrews, General Epistles, Revelation), as well as all major doctrinal subjects (eschatology, christology, ecclesiology) from the perspective of the later New Testament, as well as historical and sociological subjects of interest (Household Codes, False Teachers, Relatives of Jesus). There are also essays on contemporary critical issues, such as Jesus Traditions, Hermeneutics, Canon, and Structuralism and Discourse Analysis. Each article is contributed by a major scholar in the field, and each is concluded by a succinct bibliography. Campbell/Stone heritage contributors include William R. Baker ("Endurance, Perseverence"; "Temptation"); S. Scott Bartchy ("Narrative Criticism"; "Slave, Slavery"); Barry L. Blackburn ("Stephen"); and Everett Ferguson ("Old Testament in Apostolic Fathers"; "Religions, Greco-Roman").

The size of this series allows for special attention to subjects unique to the later New Testament writings, and this is perhaps where this volume's greatest strength lies. Titles such as "Pauline Legacy and School," "Sociology of Early Non-Pauline Christianity," "Pseudepigraphy," "Noncanonical Writings, Citations in the General Epistles," and a series of five articles on the use of the Old Testament in Christian writings (on Acts, Apostolic Fathers, General Epistles, Hebrews, and Revelation) attest to the value created by the specificity allowed in such a project. No library should be without this set.

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Todd C. PENNER. *The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-reading an Ancient Christian Letter*. JSNTSS 121. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996. 331 pp. $80.00.

Working out of the University of Manitoba, Canada, Penner offers valuable research and thought toward spawning reexamination of, as he puts it, "this often marginalized letter of the New Testament canon" (7). Indeed, he has accomplished something, since his volume is only the second on James in over 150 volumes to appear in the ambitious Sheffield Scholarship Series.

Penner's monograph is simple, well-organized, immaculately documented, and clearly worded. It keeps extraneous discussion in footnotes—albeit

extremely lengthy at times—where it belongs. It gathers up focus issues into four helpful excursuses, "James, Literary Parallels, and the Dating of the Epistle," "Apocalyptic in Early Christianity and Judaism," "Theology and New Testament Criticism," and "P.J. Hartin's *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus.*" Its bibliography is up-to-date on James scholarship as well as New Testament origins but keeps up with important older works.

Penner seeks to release the Epistle of James from faulty notions which have impeded effective analysis of it, many of which have intruded from now defunct theories of Christian origins. For this reason, his first chapter unpacks the mounting consensus that scholarship on Christian origins a generation ago failed to recognize the fragmentary and sparse nature of the evidence upon which all-inclusive theories rested and failed to recognize the diverse complexity of early Christianity. From this starting point, Penner is able to demonstrate in the second chapter how early scholarly conclusions which slated the Epistle of James as late first-century depended on now disregarded assumptions about Christian origins.

For example, the old argument that the Greek of James is too polished to be written by a Palestinian Christian simply disintegrates in light of a plethora of incontrovertible evidence for the influence of Greek education and culture in Palestine (Hengel, Sevenster), especially in Galilee, where the Jesus movement originates, and evidence that early followers of Jesus were not necessarily from the lowest stratum of society (Theissen). He also demonstrates that a post-Pauline dating of James has been based upon a view of Christian origins which presumes the overwhelming dominance of Paul's theology on earliest Christianity, which increasing evidence undercuts. James 2 on faith and works, Penner asserts, fits nicely upon a Jewish/Christian tradition, totally apart from any polemical reaction to Galatians or Romans.

Older tendencies to distinguish writings as either coming from an apocalyptic or a wisdom tradition also are giving way to a recognition that writings of the first century can in fact blend these two influences. Earliest Christianity was not exclusively apocalyptic but was also undergirded by Jesus' wisdom sayings as seen in Q. These findings help clear the way for Penner's conclusion, in contrast to the views of earlier scholarship, that James very likely comes from the earliest stratus of Christian writings.

In chapter 3, Penner provides his most original contribution to James studies. Here he demonstrates the eschatological character of the opening (1:2-12) and closing (4:6–5:12) and argues that these form a framework which colors the wisdom ethics found in between. Following this chapter, in chapter four, he seeks to identify both 1QS and Q as parallel documents to the community based, apocalyptic wisdom motif he observes in James.

In general, reaction to Penner's provocative study should be positive. Especially in the early chapters, he convincingly sweeps away a vast amount of

older assumptions about James whose demise have been long overdue. One could say he even establishes a reliable consensus platform regarding the origin of James on which future scholarship on James can stand. However, his principal piece of original scholarship has its weaknesses.

While his argument that James blends eschatology and ethics is undeniable, his specific claim that eschatology provides the framework for the rest of James is suspect, primarily because he cuts the text to suit his purposes. On the front end, to stop the "opening" of James at 1:12 unduly separates the discussion of "temptation" (*peirazo*) in 1:13-16 from the discussion of "trials" (*peirasmos*) in 1:2-4, which most James scholars recognize as a deliberate link-up based on the Greek cognates. On the back end, Penner fails to explain adequately why 5:13-18 doesn't quailify as the end of the body of the epistle rather than 4:6–5:12. Clearly, 5:13-18 cannot be classed as a traditional closing of the letter since it contains none of those elements, such as a benediction or greetings, which in fact is one of the biggest mysteries of the "letter."

One further element which detracts from Penner's work is his conclusion, which in its first few pages acurately summarizes what his study has shown. After that, however, it launches into a series of highly speculative assertions related to James and Christian origins not supported by his study. The most exotic of these is his statement that the language of James's denunciation of the rich should be understood as actually aimed at "a rival Jewish group or synagogue" (273). This is a leap which would require a supportive chapter—or maybe an entire thesis—to sustain itself, not just a paragraph and a few long footnotes.

For serious study of James, Penner has offered important work. Its readability recommends it to both graduate and more capable undergraduate students, though its cost may deter both from easily accessing it.

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J. Ramsey MICHAELS. *Revelation.* The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997. 265 pp. $17.99

Earlier in this century the English journalist G.K. Chesterton observed: "Critics are madder than poets. . . And even though St. John the Evangelist saw many strange monsters in his vision, he saw no creatures so wild as one of his own commentators."

At the end of the twentieth century we continue to see Chesterton's criticism confirmed. Not so, however, with the publication of Michaels's fine

commentary. It was under the teaching of Michaels at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary more than twenty-five years ago that I was introduced to the beauty and power of Revelation. Michaels's understanding of the book has matured over the years, and I want to offer six points of commendation and one point of criticism.

First, the commentary is sensitive to the scriptural context by placing Revelation in the context of the entire body of Scripture. By practicing "canonical exegesis," the reader is led to appreciate the contribution which Revelation makes to the biblical revelation as a whole.

Second, the historical setting of the book is set forth clearly. John's readers were undergoing, to a limited degree, suffering, but especially they needed to be warned about the dangers of compromising with their culture. Only the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb are worthy of supreme allegiance.

Third, the commentary aids us in avoiding committing a genre mistake which leads to faulty interpretation because we ask the wrong questions of the text. Michaels correctly identifies Revelation as essentially being a Christian prophetic-apocalyptic-circular letter and reflects the importance of this identification throughout the work.

Fourth, one of the reasons why Christians fail to understand Revelation is that they lack an awareness of the use of the Old Testament which permeates the book. Michaels helps us see that John was using language and imagery which were thoroughly familiar to his first readers. Such an approach helps us resist the tendency to read current events back into this first century document.

Fifth, in interpreting the symbols the commentary models the necessity of understanding their conventional or traditional meanings as well as ultimately allowing the immediate literary context to control their meanings.

Sixth, Michaels helps the interpreter to understand John's concern for the original audience, a concern which is timeless. Then and now Christians are called upon to choose between holy living and unholy living, between the paths leading to God or to eternal separation from God. No compromise is allowed. Throughout Revelation John sets up stark contrasts between good and evil and John invited his readers to make a choice in which God will be honored and glorified.

Seventh, even as his student I believed (and still do believe) that Michaels did not give enough attention to the possibility that Revelation frequently uses recapitulation, notably that the seven seals, trumpets and bowls lead the reader up to the final coming of Christ with progressive intensification which results in the punishment of the wicked and the rewarding of the saints. Related to this is the need for scholars to pay closer attention to John's use of an alternating pattern, specifically the interweaving of heavenly scenes and earthly scenes. Such an awareness would perhaps aid us in understanding that

John was not a premillennialist 20 (20:1-3, earthly; 20:4-6, heavenly; 20:7-10, earthly; and 20:11-15, heavenly).

Chesterton would have been impressed with the excellent work. Preachers and teachers will be too.

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