

BOOK REVIEWS

Inerrancy. Edited by Norman L. Geisler. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979, 516 pp., \$9.95.

This is an important volume on the subject of Biblical inerrancy. It represents most of the scholarly papers delivered at the 1978 conference that produced the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, and it will shed light on the theological thinking that lay behind that document. Since inerrancy is a doctrinal plank of the ETS, all our members will be interested to see whether they agree with this way of formulating and defending this conviction. The best way to review this volume within reasonable limits is to take up the four major issues it raises and comment on them. These four issues are the Biblical testimony to inerrancy, the challenge of Biblical criticism, the problem of definition, and the historical roots. There are several essays that raise issues related to Biblical inspiration but not inerrancy per se, and these will be referred to briefly at the end. The question of greatest concern for me is: "Does this presentation of Biblical inerrancy represent the best we can do in its explanation and defense?" My general impression is that it does not.

On the matter of the Bible's teaching pertaining to its own inerrancy, we are given nothing not already argued in John Wenham's *Christ and the Bible* (1972). Essays by Wenham himself and by Ed Blum present the case for the God-breathed character of the final text of Scripture. The point is well taken and ought to receive greater attention from scholarship in general, which likes to pretend that this witness does not exist. Two things seem lacking, however, that are needed to make the position more credible. First, all the writers like to leap from this basic Scriptural witness all the way to Warfield's doctrine of errorlessness as if the Bible itself actually taught his theological construction exactly, as if the development of evangelical doctrine played no part at all in its formulation. Often conservatives seem unaware that the Bible cannot be made to teach the inerrancy of the sixty-six books of the Protestant canon. Something has to be said about post-Biblical developments that led us to this precise conviction. I am far from saying this cannot be done, but only that it is almost never done even when our scholars open their mouths as they do here on the issue. Silence on questions such as these is not likely to impress outsiders and tends to discourage supporters too who hope for something better. And when unwillingness to face up to important questions is coupled as it often is with shrill denunciations of alternate positions, the impression is intolerable.

More disappointing still is the lack of fulness in the presentation of the Biblical witness itself. There is evidence of such selectivity of data. Any text that promises to support the factual inerrancy of the Bible is seized upon, but one that suggests the messianic liberty with which Jesus and the apostles all handled the OT to show its relevance to the new situation is either bypassed or discussed as a problem. There is little or no feeling for the canonical process in which earlier texts receive new interpretations in fresh contexts, and thus no reflection on the meaning of it for inspiration. What is everywhere discussed in contemporary Biblical research is nowhere discussed here. How can it be that a matter so central to the Bible's internal hermeneutic and self-awareness is put aside? My own opinion is that it is absent because this volume is committed to defend the traditional doctrine of conservatives and not to improve our understanding even exegetically. It seems to be a defensive argument, using selective induction, to protect the party line from the other evangelicals who are straying from it. A better way to deal with this problem would be to improve rather than simply reiterate the case. This saddens me as one who believes this could be done. The Bible's own witness to itself is rich and dynamic and does not need to be sold so short.

There can be no doubt that the greatest challenge facing us in the matter of Biblical authority is Biblical criticism, and it is appropriate that two essays should address it. Unfortunately the scholars selected to dispose of this problem, Gleason Archer and Barton

Payne, both long-time and respected members of the ETS, represent the most reactionary negative stance toward Biblical scholarship in our society. They do not recognize the nuanced inerrancy approach of many of us, including certain of the essayists in this volume such as Feinberg, but operate on the assumption that inerrancy means complete factual errorlessness in detail. From that it follows as a matter of course that the real enemies of inerrancy are not James Barr or Brevard Childs, who are beyond the pale, but Stephen Davis, Dewey Beegle and Jack Rogers. I only wish that the book might be placed on a list of forbidden titles for nonevangelicals to read on account of these essays in it because they would never know from reading them of a great tradition of evangelical scholarship that engages the real issues in Biblical studies today. Of concern to Archer is the circumference of Solomon's laver, and to Payne the Mosaic authorship of virtually the entire Pentateuch. Even though the Chicago Statement itself gives liberty to reverent Biblical criticism (Article XIII), a liberty exercised in the pages of *JETS* in almost every issue, there is no sign here that anything positive has emerged from intensive Biblical research of the past century or that we need to be evaluating redaction criticism or structuralism. A few years ago James Barr attacked us for being fundamentalists when it came to Biblical studies, and some of us replied by saying our work was sometimes better. When Barr reads this volume, as he certainly will, or worse still reviews it in some journal, he will have been proved largely right. My hope is that the many members of the Society will disassociate themselves from this response to Biblical criticism and insist that inerrancy for them means the full teaching authority of Scripture, not the perfect errorlessness of each detail in the text measured by some modern criteria of precision. There is more than one way to read the Chicago Statement.

The quality improves when we come to an essay by Feinberg on the matter of defining inerrancy and one by Gordon Lewis on the humanity of Scripture. A great irony in the battle for inerrancy lies in the fact that there is no agreement, even in this volume, about the precise understanding of the operative term. Feinberg and the Chicago Statement itself present a more generous definition than Archer and Payne hold. He grants, for example, that Scripture may not be historically precise or scientifically exact as we measure such things, or inerrant in all the sources cited, or free of all redactional refinement of earlier material. He even grants that Jesus may not have actually uttered exactly those words that the gospels depict him as teaching, an idea specifically denounced by Payne. Consequently, Feinberg is also polite and fair with evangelicals who have honest doubts about this whole discussion. I am glad his essay stands in this volume because it signifies that a moderate construction of the meaning of inerrancy is also possible within the framework of the Chicago Statement and also the ETS. It also points the way to ironical dialogue among evangelicals on the subject. Such friendly discussion would not work out with other voices in this volume, however.

The humanity of the Bible is obviously a crucial issue in the modern debate, and it is tackled by Gordon Lewis. He correctly notes that there is a danger that the authority of the Bible will be denied in the name and under the guise of the Bible's humanity. After all, Unitarians believe in the humanity of Christ and the Bible, do they not? But he is also aware that the Bible, in the manner of our Lord, comes to us in the form of a servant. It is not adorned in literary glory but assumes the garb of ordinary human literature. In his treatment Lewis operates within Warfield's doctrine of God's sovereign confluence. God is able to give us his Word in human writing because he is in control of the vehicle and can determine the results. Inerrancy is not threatened by the fact of the Bible's humanity. Though this is a very Calvinist argument (indeed, this is a very Calvinistic volume generally), it merits attention and deserves respect. Of course God can prepare a Paul to write letters that please him in his salvific plan. But we need a little more than this. How far does God's permission of human weakness in the Bible extend? The text would suggest at least on the surface that it goes quite far: emotional outbursts in the Psalms, divergent traditions of the same event, duplicate materials, Semitic world-description, pseudepigraphy in the Song of Solomon, and so on. One thing we conservatives need to learn is to be more honest with the

Biblical text as it actually is and less eager to reconstruct it to fit our preconceptions of what it must be like. We should not criticize liberals for balking at the plain sense of the text if whenever we meet some discrepancy we eliminate it by means of some wild theory we hardly believe ourselves.

Further on confluence: We cannot go on complaining that we are falsely charged with believing in dictation when that is what a tight theory of sovereign confluence implies. God can get his own way with the final text of the Bible regardless. He can dictate it without having to dictate it. We cannot expect any but the strictest Calvinist to take our denial of dictation very seriously. Surely what we want to say is that God gives us his Word by means of free agents whose abilities he wisely uses for that end. But that would involve certain risks that a Warfield would not wish to contemplate even though the Bible manifests their results.

Recognizing the importance of historical theology, there are three essays given over to the development of this doctrine, where the familiar point is made that the greatest possible respect is accorded the Bible in the thinking of the great orthodox divines. Even though the mood of these chapters by Preus, Gerstner and Krabbendam is defensive and harsh at times, there is no doubt that we need a historical discussion of Biblical inerrancy that will tend to shed new light on our contemporary debates. At the present time, of course, work is being done by noninerrancy evangelicals, such as Jack Rogers and Harold Loewen, which challenges the case presented here concerning the antiquity and importance of inerrancy so that the next few years should see a vigorous and educational exchange of ideas that could actually have a healing effect. The last word has certainly not been spoken. The position taken in this volume is a defense of Warfield's reading of the historic doctrine of inspiration in strict inerrancy terms, and it will have to come to terms with the revisionist interpretation now emerging that stresses the accommodation motif in the earlier divines. My own impression at this point is that neither side is being entirely candid about what the sources reveal in their wholeness, that neither side is sufficiently unbiased to do justice to them as yet, and my hope is that we will soon be given a fairer and more comprehensive picture. In this volume Gerstner is gunning for Rogers' bold theory about how the Princeton theology developed, and Krabbendam is out to defend Warfield against Berkouwer. I am beginning to understand better now why outsiders feel that much of our so-called evangelical discussion is really neo-Calvinist and not as ecumenical as we wish to suggest. The point nobody seems to be raising is: "What assistance can Calvin or Luther really give us when it comes to our having to evaluate form criticism?" It seems to me we are pretty much on our own and had better begin to make up our own minds without producing ancient proof texts from the Church fathers and mothers.

Now there are four other essays in the book that are interesting in themselves but that do not treat the topic indicated by the title *Inerrancy*. Walter Kaiser pursues his beloved thesis on hermeneutics in a way more rigid than the Bible itself seems to require. Packer defends the Biblical notion that God can reveal himself in human language, a thesis that relates to inspiration rather than inerrancy per se. It is a pity that he did not address the main topic here inasmuch as he has expressed his belief elsewhere that evangelicals are not wedded to inerrancy language and shown himself quite liberal in his definition and use of the category. Geisler tells us of the alleged philosophical assumptions that underlie the denial of Biblical inerrancy though they chiefly underlie the denial of Biblical inspiration. I see the essay as a little extraneous because I can distinguish the two topics even though he cannot. It is very disappointing to find that he views evangelicals who disagree with him on this in much the same light as unbelieving skeptics, a spirit that does not encourage any dialogue. Sproul gives us an essay on the witness of the Spirit to the Bible, wishing to refute the neo-orthodox tendency to minimize the objective authority of the text and to promote his own somewhat rationalistic proclivities in apologetics. It makes one wonder to what extent this debate about inerrancy is not in fact a question of apologetics rather than Biblical or theological knowledge. Often that is what it seems to be, and apologetic necessity can induce theologians to jump through some very strange hoops.

In closing, our evangelical belief in the full and final authority of the Bible is a conviction that needs to be defended. Insofar as inerrancy represents this conviction—as it does in large part—inerrancy too needs to be defended. But it does not need to be defended badly. I suspect that for every evangelical scholar who finds this book illuminating and supportive there will be another who will feel saddened that this account of his or her conviction will be the one to be read for some years to come as a definitive statement. If only the Chicago conference had invited other papers that would have contributed greater balance and moderation. If only time could have been given to the confessing process so that rash wording and onesided conceptions might have been avoided. I can only hope that future volumes from the ICBI circle will be less dominated by the rigid wing of the party and give the discussion greater depth and balance. Knowing the people involved, I feel confident in this hope.

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Inerrancy and Common Sense. Edited by Roger R. Nicole and J. Ramsey Michaels. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980, 203 pp., \$5.95.

Inerrancy and Common Sense is a sampler of eight articles written by faculty members at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Three of the writers are leaders in the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Nicole, Packer and Sproul). They all affirm "that a high view of Scripture is fully compatible with the sound pursuit of scholarship" (p. 11).

The volume does not attempt nor intend to develop an inductive, Biblical case for inerrancy. Rather, the articles discuss epistemological and hermeneutical issues that are frequently raised by those who seriously question Scripture's authority and accuracy. Because it presupposes that the reader is versed in the Biblical doctrine and historical discussion of inerrancy, the reading audience will be generally limited to serious Bible students, pastors and academicians.

As with most multi-author volumes there is varied quality among the articles. The less than best are discussed first. Richard Lovelace (chap. 1, "Inerrancy: Some Historical Perspectives") ends his article by commending David Hubbard's defense of the Fuller statement of faith as "a clear and beautiful exposition of essential evangelical truth" (p. 38). This is hardly compatible with the introductory affirmation of Gordon-Conwell's president (pp. 7-8) and the volume's editors (pp. 11-13). Lovelace's concluding comments cutting Harold Lindsell (pp. 45-47) and the several references to inerrancy being espoused in Christian "ghettos" (pp. 39, 41) fuzzes the supposed historical focus that his article attempted to accomplish.

Gordon Fee (chap. 7, "Hermeneutics and Common Sense") self-admittedly (p. 164 n. 4) distorts the usual definition of exegesis as "what it meant then" and hermeneutics as "what it says today." These self-imposed definitions are used throughout the chapter and really cloud rather than clear the issues. This is especially true in his discussion of the role of women in the twentieth-century Church (p. 175-176, 182-183).

J. Ramsey Michaels (chap. 2, "Inerrancy or Verbal Inspiration? An Evangelical Dilemma") and Roger Nicole (chap. 3, "The Nature of Inerrancy") present the most helpful articles. Their affirmations are clear (p. 70, 88) and their discussions insightful. Perhaps Nicole makes the most profound statement in the entire work (p. 90). He writes that "the authority and inerrancy of Scripture are not dependent upon our ability to provide in every case a rational explanation of difficulties encountered. The authority of Scripture is not dependent upon the ability or resourcefulness of any man to vindicate its truth at every point. Therefore, we should never be reluctant to acknowledge that we may not at the present time be in possession of the solution of particular difficulties."

Other helpful contributions are made by Douglas Stuart in chapter 4, "Inerrancy and Textual Criticism," and R. C. Sproul in chapter 5, "Biblical Interpretation and the Analogy of Faith." The editors appropriately conclude with J. I. Packer's discussion of inerrancy and preaching. He aptly notes of the preacher (p. 203): "His aim, rather, will be to stand

under Scripture, not over it, and to allow it, so to speak, to talk through him, delivering what is not so much his message as its."

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The Inerrancy Debate. By Richard P. Belcher. Chicago: Moody, 1980, 80 pp., \$2.50.

Belcher has assembled a series of independent essays that are self-acknowledged to be less than a systematic presentation of inerrancy as taught in the Bible (pp. 7-8). His choice of topics and their order of presentation are without immediately apparent design or logical sequence.

The author's audience is a Christian layman. In this reviewer's opinion Belcher has underestimated the average layman's intelligence by simplifying the issues beyond accurate recognition. His documentation is sparse (e.g., chap. 1), and his sample of men who err is so limited that he inadequately describes the current battle.

A counterfeit is most easily detected by one who is trained to recognize the authentic. Principally lacking in *The Inerrancy Debate* is a strong Biblical case for inerrancy. One who reads this volume will be equipped to recognize only a few, among many, counterfeits. Unfortunately he/she will not be trained in the real thing.

While the author commendably champions the orthodox understanding of Scriptural inerrancy he does not measurably contribute to its triumphant advance by this offering.

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The Bible in the Balance. By Harold Lindsell. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 384 pp., \$9.95.

Everybody wants to be popular, and the best way to do that is to avoid controversy and talk in vague generalities. But Lindsell does neither. He tackles the most important matter in the Christian Church today—the inerrancy of the Word of God—and to be very practical he mentions names. If he had just dealt with the Bible's infallibility in the abstract, few people would have spoken out against him—and very few would have read him or have been influenced by him.

There is a time to speak in generalities, but there is also a time to be specific. Lindsell has done both. In his two books, *Battle for the Bible* and the sequel *The Bible in the Balance*, he gives us general principles about the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. But he also is very specific. He mentions seminaries and theologians who have departed from the historic Christian position on the Bible and who say that the Bible has errors in it.

And nobody should say that he does it without love. Too often today it is thought that it is wrong to mention a specific person. It is thought that there is a conflict between truth and love. But Eph 4:15 tells us that we should be "speaking the truth in love." And this is what Lindsell does. Not truth without love and not love without truth, but both.

What is most ironic in the situation is that Lindsell is accused by some of his reviewers of being divisive because he holds to the importance of the inerrancy of the Bible. Here is a teacher-editor-author upholding the traditional truths of Christianity, and yet some newcomers who deny these truths call him divisive when they are the ones who are causing problems by their departure from the historical position.

If the reader has not already read the first book, *The Battle for the Bible* (Zondervan, 1976), he should by all means begin there. Then he should move on to the follow-up of that first book, *The Bible in the Balance*. In this one Lindsell develops still further the thesis of his first book, again being very specific and even reacting to some of his critics.

Controversy sharpens issues, and that is one of the values of these two books. The writing of the first book, the reaction of theologians to it and then Lindsell's response help to clarify the matter.

The central issue of both books is this: Is the Bible true in all its parts (Lindsell's posi-

tion and that of historic Christianity), or is it reliable and trustworthy only in its central message—the message of salvation (the position of many modern evangelicals)? To put it another way: Does the Bible have errors in the so-called periphery—in the area of chronology, history, geography and science—or is it dependable there, too?

For the unwary reader the issue can be confusing because these modern evangelicals pour a whole new content into the old terms. Historically, as used by theologians the word “infallibility” has meant “without error.” This is also the common understanding of the word as indicated by *Webster's Third International Dictionary* and the *American Heritage Dictionary*: “incapable of error.” But some modern evangelicals, in calling the Bible infallible, mean that the Bible is infallible with errors. Now to most people this is very confusing—some say even dishonest, since the average layman is misled—but it is permissible as long as the terms are clearly and openly defined. For these modern evangelicals an infallible Bible means a fallible Bible that is true in the central core but that has errors in the periphery.

Confusion has also risen over the term “evangelical” that has just been used. At this point the reviewer disagrees with Lindsell, but this is only a matter of terminology and not of substance. In his first book Lindsell wrote that one who does not believe in inerrancy (or infallibility—the two words mean the same thing, at least, to the older theologians, laymen and the dictionaries) is not an evangelical. He was misunderstood at this point by many reviewers as meaning that one who denies the infallibility of the Bible is not a Christian.

Now many—including this reviewer—use the term “evangelical” as synonymous with being born again and bound for heaven, regardless of the unbiblical ideas he may have on many subjects, including the inerrancy of the Bible. Lindsell, however, uses the term “evangelical” to mean a person who holds to the basic Christian truths, including inerrancy. This reviewer would not quarrel with him as long as the terms are defined. But it is important to realize that contrary to what some of his critics assert, Lindsell does not assign to hell everyone who believes the Bible has errors.

A major thrust of both books is that a denial of the inerrancy (infallibility) of the Bible leads inevitably to the denial of other basic Christian truths. Once God's Word is broken and its so-called peripheral matters are questioned, there is absolutely nothing to hold back an eventual denial of the central gospel truths. Lindsell documents this in case after case.

Now consequences are not the ground for believing that God's Word is true. (The only basis is God's self-testimony in his Word.) But everyone who is concerned about the basic Christian truths should be aware that many of these great truths are eventually denied after one begins with the denial of the truthfulness of the Bible. History is clear.

I would encourage everyone to read and study both of these books.

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The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 1: Introductory Articles. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979, 734 + xvi pp., \$19.95.

One would have to search long and far for a single book offering a more comprehensive survey of Biblical introduction and background than is provided in Volume 1 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Topics ranging from “The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible” to “The Metrology of the Old Testament” are given succinct and comprehensible treatment by evangelical scholars well chosen for their respective assignments. Although limitations of space prohibit extensive development of the material (the articles average about 10,000 words in length), the expositor for whom the series is written will find most important issues at least mentioned. Bibliographies appended to each article, although not nearly as complete as might be hoped for, provide guidance for the interpreter wishing to go further.

Not unexpectedly, the first article is devoted to “The Authority and Inspiraton of the Bible.” Carl F. H. Henry sets forth concisely and cogently the arguments for viewing the Bible

as a genuine revelation of God, authoritative in its pronouncements, inspired ("breathed out") by him and thereby without error. Henry devotes particular attention to the contemporary debate over the adequacy of human speech as a medium of divine communication.

After a brief survey of the transmission and translation of the Bible by F. F. Bruce, Geoffrey Bromiley tackles the subject of "The Interpretation of the Bible." While providing an illuminating historical survey and some useful principles, Bromiley disappointingly fails to interact with the intense modern discussion of hermeneutics. Surely some orientation to contemporary linguistic criticism and the "new hermeneutic" is appropriate for the expositor who wants to stay abreast of his discipline.

Somewhat surprising, in view of the fact that no other single aspect of the theological spectrum (except bibliography) is treated as a separate topic in the volume, is the inclusion of an article on "The Eschatology of the Bible." Writing from a premillennial, pretribulationist stance, Robert Saucy nevertheless gives due attention to the element of eschatological fulfillment in the first coming of Christ and is, on the whole, commendably fair on a topic that often divides evangelicals. One would have expected, however, in an article of this nature more discussion of eschatology as an interpretive framework for understanding Biblical revelation.

The wise selection of contributors is reflected in the articles on "The Bible as Literature" by Calvin Linton, "Christianity and the World's Religions" by Norman Anderson and "The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha" by Bruce Metzger. Harold Hoehner's article on the intertestamental period is devoted almost entirely to a historical survey as a result of which, unfortunately, almost nothing about theological developments is said.

G. Douglas Young ("The Language of the Old Testament") offers a comprehensible treatment of the rudiments of Hebrew phonetics, morphology and syntax while surveying other linguistic factors that affect interpretation.

B. Waltke ("The Textual Criticism of the Old Testament") contributes a penetrating study, endeavoring to infer the dynamics of scribal tradition before the time of extant manuscripts and text standardization. This chapter discusses as well the history of Hebrew textual transmission and delineates other OT ancient versions.

Utilizing the discipline of historical criticism, R. K. Harrison ("The Historical Literary Criticism of the Old Testament") seeks to demonstrate the general trustworthiness of the Biblical record, appealing to extra-Biblical evidence exhumed by archaeologists. The limitations of literary criticism in dealing with authorship, date, and so forth are underscored in a brief study of the Pentateuch, Isaiah and Daniel.

J. A. Motyer ("Old Testament History") offers a succinct and easily readable historical overview while W. C. Kaiser, Jr. ("The Theology of the Old Testament"), contributes in effect an abridged version of his book on OT theology.

D. J. Wiseman ("Archaeology and the Old Testament") offers a digressive and informative synthesis of Biblical and archaeological materials. Not unexpectedly, he embraces the maximalist approach (contra Thompson and van Seters). Of special assistance to the Biblical student is the dimension of discussing Biblical characters actually mentioned in extra-Biblical sources. The chapter includes a helpful diagram detailing archaeological levels and periods of human occupation in Palestine, together with concurrent archaeological data from Egypt and Mesopotamia.

G. Herbert Livingston ("The Relation of the Old Testament to Ancient Cultures") was faced with the impossible task of having to construct within an extremely short space a cultural anthology for no fewer than 18 distinct peoples of the OT world. The chapter necessarily lacks the clarity and cohesion of longer treatments available and, placed as it was immediately following a more extensive archaeological discussion, is somewhat redundant.

G. Archer has contributed two chapters ("The Chronology of the Old Testament" and "The Metrology of the Old Testament"). The former is well-organized. Amid a vast array of technical chronological discussions that are available, it offers that seldom-observed quality of comprehensibility (though at times his dates are much too precise). Insistence on the early date for the Biblical exodus (against other articles in this volume) and the "long"—

that is, MT—interpretation of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt requires Archer to aver (1) that Abraham migrated to Palestine at a time when it was politically dominated by Egypt and (2) that Joseph rose to great heights from within a genuinely Egyptian court.

His latter chapter addresses metrical terminology and supplies diagrams listing and comparing measures of distance, volume and weight.

Having sought to distinguish carefully between canonicity and canonization—that is, between an “inherent” and an “attributed” sacredness to the books of Holy Writ—Milton C. Fisher (“The Canon of the Old Testament”) enumerates three evidences of canonization: (1) The concept may be observed in extra-Biblical documents from Near Eastern antiquity, (2) the concept may be observed in classical and early Jewish sources, and (3) the concept comports well with the statements of Christ and the early fathers.

William S. LaSor (“The Dead Sea Scrolls”) recalls the discovery and antiquity of the finds at and near Khirbet Qumran. As in his previous publications he seeks to dichotomize between the Essenes and Qumranians, and he delineates the significance of the scrolls.

In his usual manner of combining extensive documentation and lucid writing style, E. M. Yamauchi (“Archaeology and the New Testament”) sets forth the archaeological research and data that impinge on the several periods of NT history. (This chapter and its OT counterpart [Wiseman] have been published separately by Zondervan [*The Bible and Archaeology*, 1979].)

J. H. Greenlee’s discussion of “The Language of the New Testament” is lamentably brief, not including for instance any mention of the continuing debate over the nature of NT Greek (N. Turner’s name does not even appear in the bibliography). New Testament textual criticism is very ably treated by Gordon Fee, as are historical and literary criticism by Donald Guthrie. (These two essays, along with their OT counterparts by Harrison and Walke, have been published separately by Zondervan [*Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary and Textual*, 1978].)

A question might be raised with respect to the structure employed by Samuel Mikolaski in his survey of NT theology. By using a synchronic, systematic grid, distinctive contributions of different NT authors are inadequately highlighted and the crucial issue of unity and diversity is ignored.

Arthur Rupprecht devotes most of his attention to the Greco-Roman world in his article on “The Cultural and Political Setting of the New Testament,” providing particularly useful information on Roman provincial administration and the economic situation.

Julius Scott (“The Synoptic Gospels”) and I. Howard Marshall (“Jesus in the Gospels”), despite some duplication of material, provide the reader with a remarkable amount of information about the life of Christ and the documents that relate to it. Both men are to be commended for breadth of research, a willingness to give reasoned responses to critical theories, and comprehensiveness (although perhaps Scott gives too little attention to alternatives to Markan priority).

Turning from the gospels to the letters we find a discussion of letter-writing in Paul’s day by E. M. Blaiklock, while R. Alan Cole is given the Herculean task of surveying the life and ministry of Paul. Cole’s article, which stresses the background and humanity of Paul, is marred by some rather unusual allegorizing in support of the contention that Paul saw his ministry in light of the suffering servant theology of Isaiah (and surely the date of A.D. 38 given for the Jerusalem council [p. 573] is a typographical error).

A. Skevington Wood relates the history of the apostolic Church, in the course of which he advocates a couple of debatable points: that A.D. 64 marks the termination of the apostolic Church and that, in the Pauline period, “the Hellenistic church displayed a remarkable homogeneity” (p. 588). But these problematic positions should not detract from the overall value of the “bird’s-eye” picture Wood gives of these formative years.

“The Chronology of the New Testament” by Lewis Foster is a concise, well-researched summary of the salient material. Foster is also to be commended for the helpful tables he supplies in his article on NT metrology. He sets out in parallel columns the relevant Greek term, the English equivalent, Biblical references and a selection of translations.

Roger Nicole surveys messianic prophecies and suggests some basic principles in dealing

with the use of the OT in the New, but he fails to take into account the possible influence of Jewish methods, such as midrash and pesher, on the NT authors. Nor does he provide any discussion of the vexing question (particularly for evangelicals) of the text-form of the quotations.

The article on "The Canon of the New Testament" by A. F. Walls is adequate as a survey but is disappointing in not devoting more attention to crucial issues such as the criteria for canonicity and pseudepigraphy.

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The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein. Volume 9: John by Merrill C. Tenney; Acts by Richard N. Longenecker. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981, 573 pp., \$19.95.

The current commentary brings to four the number of volumes published in the projected twelve-volume EBC series on the Old and New Testaments. Based on the *NIV* text, the treatment is designed to be a scholarly tool for the exposition of the Scriptures and the teaching and proclamation of their message. With Frank Gaebelein at the editorial helm, the product is lucid and smooth-reading. Previous volumes have been of unusually high quality for a work of composite authorship. The present volume is no exception and in my opinion is the finest yet to appear in the series.

Both authors are seasoned, well known, and competent evangelical scholars and teachers. Merrill Tenney is currently emeritus professor of Bible and theology and emeritus dean of the Wheaton Graduate School. Tenney's writings are legion and his skill as a careful, readable and witty scholar is widely known. An equally noteworthy scholar, Richard Longenecker, currently professor of NT studies at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, has authored several highly regarded volumes and numerous journal articles.

What is especially refreshing about the treatment of these two NT books is that both authors are firmly committed to the genuine historicity of the writings without sacrificing the theological intent of the first-century authors. In two areas where modern scholars have raised serious suspicions in regard to the historical credibility of the narratives, Tenney and Longenecker both steer us between the equally unappealing extremes of viewing the text as mere historicism or a mythologically coded message.

Tenney argues for the traditional late date of the fourth gospel (c. 85-90) but speculates that it might have been "composed at a fairly early date but that its 'publication' or wide circulation began later." He does not, however, enter into any serious dialogue with John A. T. Robinson's earlier dating (60s) of the book. After surveying current views on the authorship of John, Tenney concludes that the traditional ascription of the book to John, the son of Zebedee, "seems reasonably certain." Unfortunately one of the contemporary Johannine scholars he cites in favor of the apostolic authorship has since changed his mind (see R. E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*, p. 33).

Written probably to Gentiles (the possibility of Jewish-Christian recipients is not discussed), the gospel had as its purpose to combat "the rising tide of Cerinthianism," which played down the OT and taught that Jesus was only a human personality who received the Christ-spirit at his baptism and relinquished this spirit before his cross death. This was Irenaeus', the ancient father's, point of view. While no discussion of the various views of the purpose is given, the author seems in some respects to follow C. H. Dodd in affirming that the primary thrust of the gospel is to evangelize the Gentiles.

The fourth gospel is understood to develop the theme of "belief." Thus the Prologue (1:1-18): The Proposal for Belief; The Presentation for Belief (1:19-4:54); The Reactions of Belief and Unbelief (5:1-6:71); and so forth. However, the actual outline of the book that forms the skeleton for the exposition drops this thematic development and concentrates more on a topical presentation of the life of Christ as the "Word." One could have wished for more of a theological understanding of the structure that would have interpreted the

various events in the life of Christ and shown their organic relationship to the theme.

In the exposition Tenney has given us a good blend of straightforward comments on the text coupled with critical notes that discuss textual and other more detailed matters related to the passages. These notes are the most helpful in areas of Greek grammar, syntax and word meanings where the author's expertise shows through well. They are less helpful in interaction with contemporary literature, especially the major nonevangelical commentaries on John such as Barrett, Brown, Schnackenburg, Moody Smith and Bultmann. All in all, however, Tenney has enriched the series and given us a very serviceable treatment that should provide much help to the pastor and teacher of John's gospel.

Longenecker's treatment of Acts presents itself as easily one of the finest evangelical commentaries on the book. In my opinion it surpasses F. F. Bruce's splendid treatment even for the fact that it interacts with all the current literature and theories. Longenecker does not hesitate to take on some of the more liberal heavyweights such as Haenchen, Conzelmann and the Tübingen school, and he comes off, like I. H. Marshall, looking quite respectable. More importantly he honors the text as reliable history written for theological purposes.

An important contribution is made to NT scholarship in Acts by this volume. Longenecker is thoroughly aware of the aspects and primary sources for understanding the Judaic environment of the early Church. He brings this background to bear throughout in understanding the text. For example, the discussion of the "Hellenists" and "Hebraists" in 6:1 brings forth helpful discussion utilizing rabbinic and Qumranic materials and results in a criticism of the *NIV* translation, "Aramaic-speaking community." Longenecker might have clarified his position a bit more vis-à-vis Hengel's thesis in general and more specifically Hengel's interpretation of 6:1 (see *Acts and History of Earliest Christianity*, chap. 6). In any event the commentary abounds in insights drawn from first-century Judaism and the history of the Greco-Roman world. Indeed, "what can be said here is that Luke shows, both in his emphasis on the early Christians' meeting in the temple courts and on the favor accorded them by the people, that early Christianity is the fulfillment of all that is truly Jewish and that it directed its mission first to the Jewish world" (p. 291).

Luke's purpose in Acts is fourfold: (1) kerygmatic; (2) apologetic; (3) conciliatory and (4) catechetical. He developed his material not only in a parallel fashion to the way the gospel was developed but also parallels the ministry of Peter (1-12) with that of Paul (13-28). The book ends abruptly because Luke has finished his purpose—not of writing a biography of Paul, but of tracing the extension of the gospel message to the capital of the empire: Rome.

Longenecker argues convincingly for a date of about A.D. 64 for its composition and Luke (as in the tradition) as its author. The exposition itself runs for over 300 pages of tight material and critical notes. It is lucid, historically and archeologically illustrated, and scarcely disappointing at crucial problem texts. Bibliography (including frequent German works) for further study is often included.

Some will find fault with the conclusions reached in certain portions. For example, the seemingly too quick dismissal of the view that the "tongues" in Acts 2 were ecstatic utterances reflecting indirectly arguments that Robert Gundry and others have advanced and ignoring the careful work of T. Thisleton who argues against Gundry's views (see "The 'Interpretation' of Tongues," *JTS* 30 [1979]). Others will note what seems to them as important materials that were overlooked in the discussions. I was disappointed not to find a reference to Colin Hemer's excellent article, "Luke the Historian," *BJRL* 60/1 (1977), in reference to the discussion on the "speeches in Acts," or the excellent book on Acts 17 by Bertil Gärtner (*The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation*, 1955). But these are a few minor points that in no way detract from this important work on Acts.

The price of the volume is more than worth it just for the commentary on Acts. But together with the solid exposition of John it forms an excellent contribution to further understanding of these Biblical books. I warmly commend this volume as an excellent piece of current evangelical scholarly Biblical exposition.

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The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Volume 10: Romans-Galatians, 1976, xvi + 508 pp., \$14.95; Volume 11: Ephesians-Philemon, 1978, xvi + 464 pp., \$14.95.

Motivated by an "outburst of new translations and their unparalleled circulation," Zondervan is publishing a twelve-volume commentary based on the *NIV* and edited by Frank E. Gaebelein. The increasing use of the *NIV* among Christians and churches gives a good base for such a commentary, and the exposition by scholars gives them an opportunity to clarify the text in those instances where decisions of style won out over decisions of exegesis.

Although the preface (apparently uniform for every volume) describes this as written "by expositors for expositors" the work is most certainly within the capacity of lay persons. By and large the expositions are clear, easy to follow and provide the reader with a good comprehension of the message. It is the kind of commentary that should be in all church libraries as well as in the homes of persons who care to understand the Bible beyond Americanized ideologies or self-oriented experience. For scholars it provides another opportunity to read what fellow evangelicals are saying and, frequently, to be enriched by the results of disciplined scholarship. It is possible with this series, both for physical and economic reasons, to have commentaries on the entire Bible on one's own or family bookshelves.

The common format for each commentary includes three major sections: (1) introduction to the literature, (2) *NIV* text and exposition, and (3) notes of a more detailed nature. The latter are clearly marked off so the average reader may pass them by. On the other hand the notes are not of such consistent quality as to provide an adequate treatment of exegetical detail when read alone.

The introductions, ranging from 5 to 19 pages, are divided into traditional subcategories. These vary from 8 to 11 topics such as purpose, canonicity, bibliography (all quite good) and outline of the letter. The most promising one is "Theological Values," which unfortunately turns out to be but a basic listing of theological topics in the letter. Considering the importance and popular shortage of theological understanding, an important contribution could have been made if this unit had been developed into a two- or three-page treatment of the Biblical theology of each letter. Since beginning students (seminary or college) have some difficulty understanding the essence and method of Biblical theology, this could have been a standard reference for both "book" courses and theological courses.

In general the introductions are adequate for a basic comprehension, the kind of information we would like our people to know and our students to retain. In the case of many persons in the Church who teach and preach this will provide more information than they are accustomed to using. The conclusions to introductory issues fall into our common patterns: "prison" epistles from Rome, pastoral epistles by Paul, and four letters to Corinth.

Though the preface disclaims "technical criticism" the quality of the introductions varies significantly. Perhaps the best presentation is by M. J. Harris on 2 Corinthians. With remarkable clarity and succinctness he handles the four problem areas (2:14-7:4; 6:14-7:1; 8-9; and 10-13) with persuasive presentation of alternate positions. On the criteria of "digression" and "transition" Harris argues for the unity of chapters 1-9. He sees the issue of 10-13 as more difficult, and decides tentatively for the unity of the two parts.

A remarkable conclusion is drawn by J. M. Boice in his introduction to Galatians. With regard to destination he follows the results of W. Ramsay's research to favor a southern Galatia. But rather than dating the letter after Paul's first journey, or as commonly with Romans at Corinth, he is impressed with Paul's lengthy stay at Ephesus (after Paul's second pass through Galatia) and dates the letter in A.D. 52. Arguing that the Greek word *epeita* ("then") does not denote immediate or exclusive sequence, he suggests that Paul reports only his first and third journeys to Jerusalem. This omission of the second journey reported by Luke in Acts 11 seems not to bother Boice either with regard to the reliability of Acts or the quality of Paul's defense, though he "explains" the latter.

The brevity of introduction to the pastoral epistles (R. Earle) is disappointing. Since D. E. Hiebert (Titus) refers this topic back to 1 Timothy, the two-page treatment of authorship is too brief either in proportion or in relationship to the complexity of the issue. His

tactic is strictly refutational, using the very same categories and order as D. Guthrie's *Introduction* (pp. 596-610). There is no mention of alternate theories, whether pseudonymity or fragment hypothesis. Such a presentation is satisfying to the reader who presupposes Pauline authorship, but it will not help the student who wishes to understand the real nature of the problem or the distinctive features of the pastorals.

Matters of chronology and background raise a question with regard to the methods of the publishing house. Why did Zondervan not get the eleven contributors together in a several-day seminar on these topics? This would certainly have enriched the work of the authors, may have provided a (virtually) uniform scheme, and would have been another affirmation of the importance of evangelical scholarship. The reluctance of evangelical commercial institutions (schools included) to spend monies for academic research and development concedes the race to other theological systems and fosters dogmatism.

As it is, the variations in chronological schemes will cause the average reader to wonder how Paul's two years in Rome could range between 58-60 (A. Rupprecht on Philemon), to 59-61 (H. Kent on Philippians) or 62 (C. Vaughan on Colossians) and 63 (A. S. Wood on Ephesians). Too often a beginning student will respond with an indifferent "cannot tell" attitude. The earlier letters (excluding Galatians) correlate better: Thessalonians, spring and summer of 50 (R. Thomas); 1 Corinthians, spring of 55 or 56 (W. H. Mare); 2 Corinthians, fall of 56 (Harris), and Romans, spring of 57 (E. F. Harrison). Earle dates 1 Timothy between 62-66 and 2 Timothy in 67, while Hiebert dates Titus in the fall of 63.

Another area of significant difference between authors lies in the use of the notes that come at the end of each section. They differ in both quantity and kind. Hiebert has only three notes in all of Titus. Boice continues his sermonic itemization style into the notes with additional rather than more technical information. Best use is made by Harris, who in very precise and clear style provides explanatory or elaborative information, including relevant Hebrew information as well. Again, a consultation session among the authors could have clarified the distinction between exposition and notes and thus made a noteworthy improvement in the commentary.

The variety of authors provides the expected variation in theology, particularly as it relates to ecclesiology and eschatology. The Thessalonian epistles (Thomas) are interpreted from the perspective of pretribulational rapture, with evident dependence upon Walvoord. Christ's "coming" (*parousia*) is reported to involve more than one phase, and "meeting" (*apantēsin*) cannot have its technical Hellenistic meaning due to the immediate context and its use in the LXX.

On the other hand, Harrison (Romans) defines "all Israel" (Rom 11:26) as the "nation as a whole" without including "every living Israelite." The effect on Israel, he asserts, is "purely in spiritual terms." And in 1 Corinthians Mare speaks of the second coming without making any distinctions in the phases of the *parousia*. In faithfulness to the premillennial position of the series (though not all authors), Mare identifies 1 Cor 15:25 as the millennial reign of Christ, with allusion to Rev 20:4-6 in parentheses.

But the limited nature of such differences indicates the general uniformity of the series, since the authors "share a common commitment to the supernatural Christianity set forth in the inspired Word" (Gaebelein in Preface).

These volumes, and accordingly the promise of the series, will be very helpful to lay persons, beginning students and many teachers and preachers in the Church. Among the scholars and institutions they will stand as given positions on particular items of interpretation and represent what is commonly done in evangelical exposition. Hopefully this will provide familiarity among evangelical scholars with an increased stimulation for themselves and their institutions to invest in the enhancement and production of scholarly work.

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