

BOOK REVIEWS

The Princeton Theology 1812-1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. Edited by Mark A. Noll. Baker, 1983, 344 pp., \$14.95.

The evangelical controversy over issues of Biblical authority and inerrancy often gravitates toward differing interpretations of the Old Princeton theology as this relates to contemporary formulations of the doctrine of Scripture. Well aware of this, Noll has here done the evangelical community a great service by providing this splendid anthology of selections from the writings of the four dominant theologians of the Old Princeton school: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield. The selections are narrow in focus, offering characteristic treatments of these theologians' writings on theological method, Scripture and science. In addition, selections from the polemical writings of C. Hodge and Warfield—largely on the same topics but in response to contemporaries—add historical perspective to the issues with which they dealt. Noll bemoans what he sees as the "relatively scant *historical scrutiny*" (p. 11) the Princetonians have received, both by evangelicals and nonevangelicals, and hence he here endeavors to place the writings of these great thinkers in their proper historical contexts.

Certain features of the volume commend it as equally to evangelical theologians as to historians of nineteenth-century American culture and religion. First, the selections presented here are largely from sources to which there is no easy access. Reference is always made, however, to the sources so that readers who wish may seek out the complete works from which these selections come.

Second, Noll presents here a substantial (both in length—38 pp.—and in content) introduction in which he provides background to the four main Princeton theologians along with their contemporaries and successors at Princeton, the institutions of Princeton theology, major themes of the Princetonians, and the place of the Princeton theology in the modern controversy over Scripture. Noll's assessment of the Princeton theology is marked by balance and scholarship. For example, in discussing the role that Francis Turretin's *Institutio theologiae elencticae* played on the Old Princeton school Noll acknowledges the modern view that sees Turretin's influence as the dominant note in Princeton theology but then shows this view to be overstated, and hence reductionistic, in light of the multiple important influences on the Princetonians. Likewise Noll's discussion of Scottish Common Sense Philosophy in relation to the Princetonians resists the course of overemphasizing the impact of Reid and Witherspoon on these theologians. Again, because the thought of the Princetonian school "contains many elements that fit poorly into a scheme dominated by the mechanical categories of Common Sense" (p. 33), it is overstated to label the Princetonians as simply theologians of Scottish Common Sense. The introduction is a valuable contribution to understanding these theologians in their own historical and cultural setting.

Third, the selections are each introduced separately, providing more specific background to the controversy or setting that elicited the given work. And last, an extensive (though not exhaustive) bibliography is provided that is divided into five sections: manuscripts, bibliographies and indices, major books of the major Princeton theologians, secondary works, and dissertations and theses on the Princeton theologians. Subject and name indices are also included.

This anthology is a welcome addition for those interested in the historical and theological importance of the Princetonians. It is hoped that future discussions of Biblical authority

will be better informed of the contributions of these influential thinkers as a result of the availability of this fine collection.

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God So Loved the Third World. By Thomas D. Hanks. Orbis, 1983, 152 pp., \$8.95 paper.

Hanks comes to this task with impeccable credentials. Having studied at Wheaton, Princeton, Garrett and Concordia, he has invested the past twenty years in teaching at the Seminario Biblico Latinamericano in San Jose, Costa Rica. Orlando Costas, a soul brother, recommends the book in a long introduction.

The bulk of this short book is devoted to careful study of the Biblical data on oppression. There is almost a pedantic tabulation of OT words relating oppression to poverty, slavery, murder, humiliation and pain. Careful lexicographical study is illustrated by quotations from contemporary writers such as Ronald Sider, Jose Miranda and Jurgen Moltmann, as well as Barth and von Rad. Hanks demonstrates to his satisfaction, if not the reader's, that the poor are the sinned against and the rich are the sinners.

Turning to the NT Hanks builds his argument on the slender foundation of James and Luke-Acts. Here he sees repeated emphasis on socio-economic liberation and a de-emphasis on spiritual salvation.

Part 3 focuses on the oppressed servant of Isaiah as described in Isaiah 52-53. Here Hanks' viewpoint raises my hermeneutical hackles. This section is categorically relegated to a Second Isaiah, and the "rich" are labeled with the emotive, modern term "capitalists." The servant is identified with Jesus, whose example of liberation seems to outweigh his substitutionary death.

Finally Hanks sets up the jubilee model as a pattern of true Biblical liberation. Trying to steer a course between the rock of revelation and the reef of violence, the author challenges both liberationists and North American evangelicals.

Appendixed to the book is a dramatic "Open Letter to North Americans" penned by an unnamed Inter-Varsity group in Costa Rica. The gist is an accusation that North America has exploited Panama by building and controlling the canal, which should be returned to Panamanian government as a jubilee gesture.

This short work is significant because it represents an effort to draw both Latin Americans and North Americans into what Hanks sees as a Biblical course of thinking. With F. F. Bruce we applaud the author's "sound lexical and exegetical foundations," although his concessions to higher criticism are disturbing.

Less helpful is the bias of the author. He resorts to sarcasm in an effort to play down his North American heritage and evangelical background. His treatment of the poor is sometimes more patronizing and middle-class than it is genuinely involved.

On balance Hanks' book is necessary and provocative. It exercises a healthy critique of both Latin liberationists and North American evangelicals. A most convincing commentary is the publisher's note to the effect that the royalties from this translation are designated for ministry among the poor people in Costa Rica.

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What the Faith Is All About. By Elmer L. Towns. Tyndale, 1983, 479 pp., \$8.95 paper.

Elmer Towns of Liberty Baptist Seminary has given the Christian community a valuable work for those who need a Biblical presentation of the basic doctrines of Christianity. This survey is divided into 52 chapters that conveniently fit a schedule of one chapter for each week of the year. Even though this book is designed for the "average Christian," it may well be used as a first-year text for Bible doctrine survey in many Christian colleges

and Bible institutes. However, an annotated bibliography and a subject index would have greatly increased the value of the book.

In spite of the positive contributions that this study makes, there are definite weaknesses or omissions that need to be mentioned. In chap. 8, "The Attributes of God," there is an omission of God's justice as an essential quality of his person. Also, there is confusion in the discussion of God's goodness (which to this reviewer is an aspect of God's love). In chap. 9, "The Law of God," Towns does not make clear distinctions between the "moral law of God" and the "Mosaic law" when he uses the expression "the law of God." He incorrectly interprets Matt 5:18 as denoting the Mosaic law when it obviously denotes Scripture. Christ came to fulfill Scripture. He makes this same mistake on p. 192. In chap. 10, "The Work of God," nothing is said about the work of God in the manifestation of his justice. Thus totally omitted in the entire section on the doctrine of God is the fact of God's wrath. In chap. 15, "The Offices of Christ," it would have been helpful if the kingship of Christ had been related to the Davidic Covenant. In chap. 24, "The Person of the Holy Spirit," the convicting work of the Holy Spirit should have been included in his list of the acts of the Spirit. In chap. 25, "The Present Ministry of the Holy Spirit," Towns makes an inaccurate statement: "The sin which keeps people out of heaven is unbelief." This is a partial truth. The reason people do not go to heaven may be expressed in several ways: (a) They are sinners (by nature and by practice), (b) they are condemned before a holy God, (c) they are not of the elect, or simply (d) they have never been saved. Another weakness of this chapter is the omission of any discussion on the subject of spiritual gifts. In chap. 27, "The Freedom of Man," an attempt is made to make a definite distinction between "image" and "likeness" in regard to man and God. The result is doubtful and unconvincing. Towns is guarded in his statements about man's freedom (apparently he does not want to offend his Arminian friends). One question that he should address is this: Does the Holy Spirit bring "enlightenment" to every person (p. 250), or does the Holy Spirit call only those who will respond with saving faith? In chap. 39, "The Nature of the Church," there is a serious omission of the purpose of the Church as stated in Eph 4:12-16. In chap. 47, "The Rapture," one could have desired a more detailed rationale for the pretribulational rapture of the Church.

On the other hand, some outstanding strengths of this book are a tactful presentation of unlimited atonement, an inoffensive explanation of the dichotomous constitution of mankind, an excellent summary of the fact that man possesses a sin nature, and a very good concise study of the doctrine of the Church. Since the primary area of Towns' expertise has been the local church, it is to be expected that he would be more detailed in his section on the Church.

In summary, *What the Faith Is All About* is one of the best surveys of Bible doctrine on the market. Every pastor, Bible teacher, and student of the Scriptures ought to have this tool for ready reference.

Richard T. Moore

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Christian Apologetics in a World Community. By William Dyrness. InterVarsity, 1983, 197 pp., \$5.95 paper.

One of the legacies left by the late Francis Schaeffer is a group of younger scholars who have been influenced, in one way or another, by his thought. One thinks of Clark H. Pinnock in theology, Os Guinness in Christianity and contemporary thought, and the author of this book, William Dyrness. Dyrness has a rich and varied background out of which to write an introduction to apologetics. His second doctorate was in art history and featured a treatment of the French impressionist Georg Rouault (cf. *Rouault: A Vision of Suffering and Salvation* [Eerdmans, 1971]). In addition, his experience at the Asian Theological Seminary in Manila gives his work an international perspective.

Dyrness' work divides into two main segments. In the first four chapters he gives an overview of the apologetic task historically and philosophically, concluding with his own model for apologetic methodology: "Christianity as the Project of God." The second segment consists of six chapters that respond to challenges from alternative world views and religions and the insights of contemporary science.

The strengths of this work are many. First, Dyrness is fair in presenting the variety of ways in which theologians have understood the apologetic task. Although it seems clear that he favors an approach more "presuppositional" than "evidential," his tone is irenic. Second, the book is comprehensive; it serves as an excellent introductory text for college-educated Christians. With each chapter Dyrness has included review questions, which enhance the volume's value as a text for college-level classes. Third, and perhaps most valuable, is Dyrness' emphasis on context. Since most apologists have worked in contexts that are western, academic and rational, insufficient attention has been paid to how Christianity is to be defended in other cultural settings. (A lonely exception is Raymond Lull, the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century missionary to Moslems.) As Dyrness observes, the question of God's existence is a nonissue in most of the third world. Rather, as Paul Piereson, longtime missionary and Dean of Fuller Seminary's School of World Mission, observes, the most crucial spiritual question in the third world is: "Is Jesus stronger than the spirits?" It does no good to answer unasked questions.

The weaknesses of the book are few and generally represent the converse of the strengths. The fact that it is an introductory work means that new trails are not broken in the apologetic task; most chapters represent recapitulations of other, older ideas. Second, in the epilogue Dyrness seems to drive an unfair wedge between apologetic reasoning and the believer's assurance. When this reviewer negotiated a crisis of faith in college, works of apologetics were the vehicle used by the Holy Spirit to keep him in the faith. In response to the waves of doubt I was enabled to say, "I may not *feel* that God is a 'heavenly father [who] cares for us' (p. 183), but I *know* that He is."

A final weakness is the book's pivotal chapter, "Christianity as the Project of God." To his credit Dyrness does try to develop an apologetic approach that will blend the insights of the empiricists (e.g. Montgomery), the rationalists (e.g. Van Til), and the subjective-moral "apologetic" of Kierkegaard *et al.* Further to his credit he is trying to overcome an artificial division between Christianity as an intellectual construct and Christianity as a life committed to Christ. However, it is hard to see how Dyrness' model differs substantially from Schaeffer's "Final Apologetic" (cf. *The Mark of the Christian*) or "The Pilot Plant" (cf. *Pollution and the Death of Man*). It amounts to the contention that the Christian community is a self-validating expression of truth. The approach also seems to concede too much to pragmatism as a test of truth: Christianity works (in history and in the individual), therefore it is true.

These reservations aside, *Christian Apologetics in a World Community* is a fine introductory volume that pastors will want to share with students and other thinking Christians.

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Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks. Edited by Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King. Fortress, 1982, 340 pp., \$15.95.

The book fulfills its promise to introduce "the student of theology" to "the primary shape and substance" of the Christian tradition and to suggest the issues for systematic theology growing out of the challenge to that tradition by modern thought (p. vii). The first chapter, "The Task of Systematic Theology," is in the nature of prolegomena; the second chapter, "Scripture and Tradition," is transitional; and the bulk of the work deals with

basic topics—God, revelation, creation and providence, human being, sin and evil, Christ and salvation, Church, Spirit and Christian life, kingdom of God and life everlasting, and the religions. The final chapter, “An Epilogue: The Christian Paradigm,” attempts to draw together several of the more prominent themes and offers some general reflections.

The chapters are profitable reading either by themselves or in conjunction with one another. They resemble a mosaic in which each piece contributes to the overall pattern, or “a room of mirrors in which each glass reflects the whole from a different angle” (p. ix). This is enhanced by taking a common approach to the topics: a statement of the classic position, followed by a discussion of the intrusion of the Enlightenment, and rounded off with some suggestion of what direction we may take as a result. Each chapter concludes with a bibliography meant to aid those who wish to study the topic further.

The contributors are members of the Workgroup on Constructive Theology, formed in the mid-1970s in “an effort to define issues and tasks that could benefit from cooperative efforts” (p. x). The group was originally supported by Vanderbilt University, but in 1978 the sponsorship of the annual meetings was assumed by the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research. Its task is conceived as ecumenical in character and draws upon a relatively broad theological spectrum.

There seems to be a consensus that the Enlightenment has created, in the words of Thomas Kuhn, a paradigm shift (p. 10). Some of the contributors appear to think that we may be in the midst of still another paradigmatic shift of comparable proportions. The general framework of discussion suggests that we may expect to hear much more from the paradigmatic thinking of Kuhn as it is appropriated in theological circles. Perhaps the most critical area will be as it relates to hermeneutics, or so it seems to this reviewer.

The contributors reflect several of the preferences expressed by Christians in the wake of the Enlightenment, ranging from what we might describe as a moderate conservatism to a less temperate liberalism. The concluding chapter tends to obscure these creative differences in preference for a more partisan point of view. Some exploration of the differences at this juncture would likely have contributed to the overall value of the text.

ETS members will not be happy with such categorical rejection of traditional Christian faith as the following: “Obviously, with the collapse of the house of authority this (traditional) way of understanding ‘canon’ must be given up” (p. 55). We continue to believe that the Scriptures are supernaturally inspired and inerrant and that they constitute “the ultimate authoritative rule of faith, doctrine and life.” We will hopefully express our confidence not in word alone, but in the deference we give to Holy Writ—its mandates, admonitions, warnings and consolation.

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The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance. By Leon Morris. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983, 219 pp., \$6.95.

Leon Morris, an evangelical scholar of international reputation, has for many years been recognized as an authority on the atonement. His earlier works, such as *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (1955) and *The Cross in the New Testament* (1965), well justify his acclaim in this important area of soteriology.

The present work, while surveying the same field as *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, is more than just an updated revision of that earlier and more technical treatise. In this book Morris does update his previous research, but he does so while adapting it for a new and broader audience. In the preface he comments: “This book is written out of the conviction that the cross is at the heart of the Christian way. This is the way of salvation and it is the way of Christian living. I have tried to bring out for people who are not experts in theology or in the study of the biblical languages something of the meaning of the great terms used in the New Testament to convey the significance of the atoning work of Christ”

(p. 5). Furthermore, in this work are contained several chapters on words not included previously, such as "Passover" (chap. 4) and "Day of Atonement" (chap. 3). In addition, the chapter on "Sacrifice" is written from a different perspective.

Morris' approach to the topic is lexical. He has chosen several of the Biblical terms that he deems to be "some of the more important picture-words" that explicate the significance of the atonement (p. 13). In particular, eight terms comprise the subject matter of the eight chapters: covenant, sacrifice, Day of Atonement, Passover, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation and justification. Although occasional transliterations of Biblical words occur, Morris is successful in keeping the material within reach of his intended general audience. Numerous contemporary illustrations of difficult concepts involved assist the lay reader in grasping the material at hand, although some illustrations will be more accessible to his fellow Englishmen (e.g. p. 118). Far from being of the superficial caliber of much of Christian fare, *The Atonement* is substantial while not overly technical.

To enhance its usability, the author frequently offers brief and helpful analytic enumerations of significant complex truths, e.g. the particular aspects involved in ancient covenant-making (p. 16), the various sacrificial motions under the priesthood (p. 45), and the complex of ideas gathered up into the Biblical concepts of reconciliation (p. 146), redemption (p. 128) and justification (p. 200).

Especially significant are his occasional digressions on the love of God (e.g. pp. 140, 147, 154, 198). Morris rightly insists with much evangelical fervor that God's love cannot be sentimentalized and used as a tool for prying God's wrath and justice from Scripture. In this regard undoubtedly his most important study is found in chap. 7 on propitiation. He insists on the necessity of a proper understanding of the concept of propitiation and refuses to allow the idea to be absorbed into the less personal "expiation." He comments regarding propitiation: "My quarrel with almost all modern translations is that they do not retain the essential meaning; specifically, they adopt some rendering that glosses over the wrath of God. But this is a very important concept . . . , and it cannot be ignored in any satisfying understanding of the work of Christ" (p. 152).

Another significant contribution to "lay theology" is his treatment of the much-neglected concept of "covenant." In keeping with nondispensational theological formulations, Morris observes the essential moral structure of God's covenants. Contrary to the dispensational notion of the unconditionality of God's covenants, Morris observes: "Israel never made the mistake of thinking that God must save the people if he was to save himself . . . They knew that being in covenant with God did not bind God to come to their aid no matter what . . . The concept of covenant gave a moral emphasis to the religion of the Hebrews that was most important for the future of all mankind" (p. 27).

Included in the study of covenant is a fine exposition of the NT term *diathēkē*, showing that it frequently functions as the NT counterpart of *bērit* (pp. 31-42). He ably refutes Deissmann who argues that every occurrence of *diathēkē* in the NT must be understood in terms of a "will."

Unfortunately he asserts that the lexical nature of his study forbade him to discuss what "some scholars speak of as a covenant with Adam" (p. 15). This is not only a tragic omission in regard to a full-orbed covenantal theology, but in light of Hos 6:7 his justification based on lexical considerations for its omission is tenuous (cf. e.g. Warfield, "Hosea 6:7: Adam or Man?", in *Selected Shorter Writings*, vol. 2).

Reformed students, though profiting greatly from his work, will be somewhat disappointed to find references to unlimited atonement (p. 129) and his apparently anti-Van Tillian analysis of the psychology of sin when he states: "In this connection it is not always taken into account that man has no conscious hostility to God" (p. 137). Romans 1 seems to teach the opposite. Likewise Morris' allusion to Isa 45:7 in demonstration that "God is supreme in the affairs of man" (p. 155) could have been greatly enhanced by a strong exposition of the passage such as given by C. F. H. Henry in *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6. 292-293.

Other interesting and enlightening studies for laymen will doubtless be his treatment of the use of blood in Scripture (pp. 54-62), his treatment of the question "To whom was the ransom price paid?" (p. 129), and the positive nature of God's peace (p. 132). He well argues that the significance of blood in Scripture speaks of death rather than life, contrary to popular opinion. He shows that the analogy of ransom cannot be pushed to imply that the ransom was, in fact, paid to anyone. And peace must be seen as a positive condition rather than as the absence of negative turmoil.

Interestingly, Morris employs the *NIV* as his basic text even while expressing frequent disagreement with it (e.g. pp. 22, 52, 63, 88, 102, 136, 166, 168, 170-171, 184).

The Atonement is an excellent lay-oriented study that is refreshingly down-to-earth while being both theologically substantial and Biblically coherent. It should be well received by thoughtful Christians.

Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr.

Divine Revelation and the Limits of Historical Criticism. William J. Abraham. Oxford: University Press, 1982, 222 pp., \$27.50.

Can traditional Christian views of revelation stand up to the onslaught of modern skepticism? William Abraham, professor of philosophy and religion at Seattle Pacific University, believes that they can and that they must, but only if salvaged from the distortions of modern fundamentalism. This book builds on the author's earlier work, *The Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture*, incisively critiqued by D. A. Carson in an earlier volume of this *Journal* (*JETS* 26 [1983] 337-347). Abraham argues nevertheless that inspiration and revelation raise fundamentally separate issues, so that the thesis of his first work does not unduly influence that of the second.

The eight chapters of *Divine Revelation* divide into two sections of equal length. Chapters 1-4 offer Abraham's formulation of that doctrine and its importance for Christian theology. Chapters 5-8 defend the intellectual viability of belief in revelation against modern historical and scientific criticism. Abraham admits at once that he presupposes theism and is concerned primarily to deal with the role of revelation within that world view. The audience he most consistently woos is the "myth of God incarnate" school (especially John Hick and Maurice Wiles) as he seeks to contribute "to the renewal of the evangelical tradition as expressed in the Reformers, and more especially in the thought of John Wesley" (p. 5). In his opening pages, however, he resoundingly rejects "conservative" evangelicalism, so the interests of this *Journal's* readers require a somewhat more detailed discussion of his first chapter than of the rest.

Abraham begins by interacting with the concept of propositional revelation. This term poses three problems: (a) It confuses divine inspiration and divine speaking, (b) it "constantly uses an inferred doctrine of inerrancy to call a halt to proper study of the Bible" (p. 10), and (c) it easily deflects discussion toward peripheral questions of linguistic philosophy. Nevertheless Abraham confesses a basic sympathy for such a doctrine but prefers to focus on divine speaking more broadly conceived (whether in propositions, performatives, or imperatives). Of all the forms of revelation—including creation, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the coming *eschaton*—divine speaking holds pride of place since God is (now) incorporeal. Unless he directly communicates with his creation, all other forms of alleged revelation will remain susceptible to equally plausible nontheistic explanations. Divine speaking is not nonsensical since "people can send messages without voices" (p. 17), and to abandon this doctrine is to leave Christian theology bereft of a God who can forgive, command, or make promises. The avalanche of modern ridicule of revelation stems not from any problems inherent in the doctrine but from its abuse by fundamentalists who equate divine speaking, propositional revelation, and the text of Scripture.

These are serious charges. Undoubtedly there have been a few fundamentalist scholars,

and a larger number of laymen, who have been guilty of them. But Abraham has greatly overstated himself, and perhaps he realizes it. For example, after charging that identification of the Bible with propositional revelation "rules out any genuine historical criticism," since God "does not get things wrong," he immediately backs down and admits a "minimal" hermeneutical role whereby historical criticism can determine the intentions of the authors of Scripture. Only "radical criticism of its historical content" is "ruled out *ab initio*" (p. 23). Yet this is no minor concession; evangelicals are rapidly recognizing how few hermeneutical guidelines are dictated *a priori* by their inerrancy confession (although the tragic ousting of Robert Gundry from the ETS shows that too many of us remain very confused on this issue). Moreover, not even radical criticism is precluded if sufficient evidence warrants it; thoughtful defenders of inerrancy regularly require their views to be falsifiable in principle, even if in practice they argue that past failures to overthrow their beliefs make them understandably reluctant to envision abandoning them in the future. Despite these criticisms, however, Abraham's basic thesis stands: "If God does not speak, then it is not clear how we can know in any substantial way His intentions and purposes" (p. 25). The inerrantist would warmly welcome this conclusion, but would claim that his belief in all of Scripture as revelation, rather than just the earliest traditio-historical stages of its formation, actually enhances rather than detracts from this knowledge of God's intent.

The rest of Abraham's work primarily addresses those less conservative than he. In his second chapter he defends a limited use of miracles as one among several corroborations of claims to revelation, granted a theistic world view. He rejects the notion that belief in Biblical miracles logically requires belief in other ancient narratives of prodigious wonders, since key differences emerge via an application of criteria of coherence and morality. He concludes by rightly stressing that "any general argument about the untrustworthiness of reports should be regarded with the utmost suspicion for the simple reason that they [*sic*] undermine the possibility of any genuine historical study" (p. 41).

In chaps. 3 and 4 Abraham turns to revelation via incarnation and disputes the adequacy of the mythological view to account for the rise of traditional Christology. An incarnation may be a paradox, but it is precisely how we might expect the God of theism to reveal himself if he chose to do so. Excising this doctrine is a "momentous step" that deprives Christianity of all unique truth claims and "will destroy the Christian tradition as it is generally known" (p. 91).

In the second half of his book Abraham presents one chapter each on Ernst Troeltsch, Van Austin Harvey and T. A. Roberts. The overriding question guiding this discussion is whether critical-historical investigation requires the rejection of the traditional concept of revelation, despite the heavy price that he has argued that would entail. His conclusion in each instance is that it does not. Troeltsch's three criteria of criticism, analogy and correlation cannot stand without modification. Even in the realm of naturalistic historical inquiry, causation by free agents precludes uniformitarianism. The theist only logically includes divine causation with no additional difficulty. Harvey accepts the possibility of Biblical exceptions to Troeltsch's closed universe, but in good Humean tradition he denies once and for all their probability, due to the mythological mindset of antiquity and the history-of-religions parallels. Abraham underscores the weakness of Harvey's position, pointing out essential differences between Biblical and extra-Biblical miracle stories and alleging that belief in divine intervention does not require the wholesale acceptance or rejection of either corpus (!). Finally he examines Roberts' claim that the ultimate problem "is a philosophical one about the nature of religious discourse" (p. 148). Abraham again dissents. The problem with even the most incredible miracle-stories is not the intelligibility of their claims. Historical inquiry may be defined so as to exclude investigation of claims for divine intervention, but the truth or falsity of those claims is not thereby determined.

In closing, Abraham turns to natural science and again refuses any charge of incompatibility with supernatural causation. As with his critique of Troeltsch, he rightly rejects an

apologetic that would require any widespread modification of scientific laws, preferring instead to see revelation as a temporary and rare suspension of those otherwise reliable laws.

Abraham's study merits much more substantial scrutiny than is possible here. Each chapter is reasonably self-contained and outlines proposals worthy of book-length treatment. The criteria for separating true from false miracle-stories and his appeal to free-agent causation especially cry out for elaboration, as they target crucial but often neglected lines of inquiry. The evangelical can be grateful for such a forthright and creative restatement of a doctrine unpopular in the current theological climate. To the extent that Abraham's disavowal of fundamentalism gains him a wider or more sympathetic audience, his strategy (whether or not conscious) should be commended. To the extent that it encourages other "contemporary evangelical theologians who have broken with the fundamentalist orthodoxy of the recent past" to "make a lasting contribution to the Church in our day" (p. 189) without sliding any further to the "left" (and Abraham is not that far "left," when one considers his harsh words for neo-orthodoxy [pp. 5, 9, 19-21]), his goals are to be praised. But one is left with certain nagging doubts as to how convincing Abraham will be. Since roughly nine-tenths of his work coheres with traditional Christian belief that his even more conservative colleagues should endorse, has he really gained anything by cutting himself off from them in the other ten percent? Is divine revelation more credible when relegated to an earlier stage in the production of an errant Scripture? Or does Abraham's position not rather raise the question of errors at the earliest stage of tradition as well? But to pursue this further is to return to a critique of his first book. Perhaps inspiration and revelation are not quite as separable as Abraham wishes they were.

Craig Blomberg

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Evangelicals and Development: Toward a Theology of Social Change. Edited by Ronald J. Sider. Westminster, 1981, 123 pp., n. p. paper.

This book comes out of a Consultation on the Theology of Development held at High Leigh in England under the sponsorship of the Unit on Ethics and Society of the World Evangelical Fellowship's Theological Commission. It defines development as "a process by which people gain greater control over themselves, their environment and their future, in order to realize the full potential of life that God has made possible" (p. 19).

That Christians should be involved in works of mercy and justice flows from our Lord's command concerning love to neighbor. How God works in society, however, is the subject of vigorous debate. While some see God's preservation of life in the general course of his providence, the contributors to this volume believe that God operates "in all human history within and beyond the church to apply the redemption summed up in Christ. God is at work to apply the results of the atonement and resurrection to the whole of creation" (p. 20). We are exhorted "to see the work of struggle for social change and for justice as part of the means of applying the work of redemption which has been won in Christ, whether or not the work is carried on by Christians" (p. 59).

In seeking to avoid any dichotomy between creation and redemption, physical and spiritual, temporal and eschatological, body and soul, the authors of this stimulating volume come close to advocating a monism that confuses these useful and valid distinctions.

The poverty of many regions of the world is blamed on oppressor groups supported by "international structures of injustice . . . multinational companies, capitalism," and the "social Darwinism behind capitalism" (pp. 23, 42). While Marxism may be faulted for advocating violence to attain liberation, socialist regimes are commended for having sought "to demonstrate another pathway of planned economics that elevates the common good above private gain" (p. 80). While the mania of our acquisitive, consumptive and status-seeking society needs to be exposed as morally evil, is it not also true that personal freedoms are at

risk when people become dependent on an all-controlling state for their guarantee of subsistence?

The concluding chapter, by an Asian Christian, deals with the implications of western theologies of development for third-world countries and churches. Through the use of case studies he points up the need to "develop self-reliance along with justice and economic growth" rather than propagate a paternalism that denies equality and dignity to those we would assist (p. 89). On the other hand, we are reminded that "poor stewardship and losses occur when well-meaning missionaries help selected individuals who build up private empires, or little known church groups who later prove to be spurious" (p. 100). It requires discernment as well as compassion if "the church is to incarnate the gospel of Christ in word and deed, so that men and women become faithful disciples" (p. 101).

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Lifestyles in the Eighties: An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle. Edited by Ronald J. Sider. Westminster, 1982, 256 pp., \$10.95.

This book is a compilation of addresses at High Leigh Conference Center in England where the International Consultation on Simple Lifestyle met in 1980. It is a most intriguing collection of essays. Books of this nature are difficult to review for several reasons. They contain much good along with much not-so-good insight. How do you evaluate the whole? This is also a book that can arouse emotional rather than rational response. Besides, one who would take any exception to the principles expounded on these pages runs the risk of being labeled part of the wealthy, fat, comfortable, unconcerned target that the book wishes to hit. However, I will plunge on anyway.

The first problem I found with the book is its repeated wresting of Scripture from its context. There is a poor use of hermeneutical principles by many of the writers. Scriptures such as 2 Cor 8:9 (p. 31), though given a sidehanded allowance that they refer to "more than economics," are not used in accordance with the true meaning of the apostle Paul, in which economics is not in view at all. Heaven's riches, left behind by Christ in his incarnational identification with the human race, are not measured by this world's scale of wealth versus poverty. Though many of the arguments are legitimate, the conclusions do not follow. For example, citing 2 Cor 8:9, if we take Christ's self-induced "poorness" (poverty is not a synonym) as economical, would it not follow that the "richness" that naturally follows and accrues to the account of the believer should also be economic? Such is not reconcilable with the remainder of Scripture. Matt 2:14 is cited (p. 55), making Jesus a refugee. The question with which I am left is twofold. First, is being a refugee a direct result of being poor? Second, was Jesus a refugee because he was poor or because he was the King of the Jews? Obviously, wresting such Scriptures from the moorings of context does not serve the final purposes of the authors. Numerous other examples of this kind of wresting occur.

The second problem with the book is manifest when the various authors are read side by side. There is an oft-repeated inconsistency among the authors themselves. Noting in the preface that the "Unit (on Ethics and Society of the World Evangelical Fellowship, sponsors of the Consultation) does not necessarily endorse every viewpoint expressed," it seems detrimental to the overall thrust to "edit" a work that carries within it such a great deal of difference of opinion. Space prohibits a long listing of examples. Two will serve our purpose. C. René Padilla in his article "New Testament Perspectives on Simple Lifestyle" states: "If it is clear that Jesus did at times demand literal poverty as a condition of discipleship, why should we take it for granted that in our case his demand to renounce all possessions should be interpreted figuratively?" (p. 62). Several pages hence we have presented David Watson's article "Simple Lifestyle and Evangelism" recording these words: "Jesus is not forbidding the ownership of property . . . Further, Jesus is not against some wise provision for the future" (p. 73). Other inconsistencies at this point abound. A second

case is the statement on p. 61: "Jesus regarded poverty as essential to Christian discipleship." It is obvious from the authors' intent that physical, material poverty was meant. Page 74 records the words of another author and offers us this contradictory advice: "What Jesus looks for first and foremost is not poverty but obedience. Obedience could lead to poverty, if that is what Jesus requires of us; but choosing poverty in itself could be choosing my own way of life, or even some religious ideal, which is not the command of Jesus."

Several other concerns surface in this compilation. There is a tendency toward overt subjectivity of material based on emotive rather than on objective exegetical work. Time and time again, any personal responsibility on the part of those who are in poverty is totally removed, ignoring the many Scriptures that deal at length with those who, by their apathy, sin, indifference, sloth, etc., find themselves without the riches of the world. Sociological factors are never addressed, and the overall causes of poverty remain unexamined. I am not convinced by this book that we can rectify the situation until we have first diagnosed the disease, having gone beyond describing the symptoms.

The differentiation Scripture often makes between the poor (in general) and the needy members of the "household of faith" is never clearly dealt with, and the resulting difference in the believer's responsibility to these two groups remains unclear. This difference is a key to understanding the limit and intensity of the simple lifestyle. NT examples abound wherein we can see the self-induced limiting of one's lifestyle for the benefit of the Christian community. Such was to serve as a catalyst to cause others to covet a part in this loving and caring and sharing community. The element of justice is not examined and there is an obvious lack of investigation of the supernatural plan, purpose and intervention, both positively and negatively, in this entire call to a simple lifestyle philosophy. We have, I fear, replaced one naturalistic philosophy (materialism) with another philosophy just as naturalistic (the gnostic notion that matter is intrinsically evil).

These are the major weaknesses of the book. Its theme, however, is legitimate and necessary for the evangelical community. But that theme needs correct research, a Scriptural basis, impeccable exegesis, and loving application if it is to be God-ordained. So study this book alongside such other works as Schaeffer's *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, Ryrie's *What You Should Know About Social Responsibility*, and Schlossberg's *Idols for Destruction*. Each of them comes at the important issues more through reason than through feeling.

Jeffrey Allen Mackey

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From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations: A General Introduction to the Bible. By David Ewert. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983, 284 pp.

Where can one find brief but clearly-written, balanced and up-to-date introductions to the languages of the Bible, the canon, textual criticism, and the history of English translations, as well as a guide to contemporary versions, between two covers—the kind of volume that can be recommended to the curious layperson who is interested in such questions? The list is not a long one—and in any case one need look no further than this general introduction by the president of Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Ewert is interested in showing how our Bible got to be what it is today—not when the books found in the Bible were produced, but how the collection of books arose and was transmitted and translated. He accomplishes this task with authority and style. His discussions of such things as the textual history of the MT, the nature of NT Greek, and the process of canonization are admirable syntheses of contemporary scholarship. Each major section is followed by a short bibliography of (generally) lay-level discussions of the same issue.

It goes without saying that Ewert's introduction breaks no new ground, and of course it

does not intend to. One could also quarrel with this opinion or that (for instance, his evaluation of the *NASB* is unnecessarily negative), but I found the conclusions generally to be standard evangelical views. The volume is thus one that I will often refer laypeople to when they begin to probe in these general areas.

Douglas Moo

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The Bible—As If for the First Time. By H. A. Nielsen. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984, 112 pp., \$7.95 paper.

This requires setting aside all critical issues and interest in literary forms so one can read the text humanly (Kierkegaard: "primitively")—i.e., "with our natural organ of sight, the naked eye," because it "is a primary spotter of texts that bear upon the personal needs" of the readers as private individuals. Unacceptable as a textbook by evangelicals, it is usable for some irregular purposes.

Nielsen is often quite correct (and corrective of careless tradition and reckless criticism): The Bible intends to baffle, to be argued with; revelation is often biographical; implications count; Biblical language accomplishes more than human authorship; reading does not require faith; culture of language does not mute the eternal.

Essentially right: The Bible can and should be read in and of itself, and it can do its own work.

Accidentally wrong, because noncritical reading does not appear usually sufficient for salvation, and the Bible is not subsequently subject to man's acceptance/rejection as the result of criticism.

Basically wrong, because the Bible does more than "house a revelation," and inspiration is a good deal more than superhuman capability with "the mind of God behind it."

Nielsen's description of the Bible's revealing a man to himself is very nearly exciting and a marvelous exposition of Heb 4:12-13. He speaks so highly of the Bible's power as Scripture that he, perhaps, betrays himself by demonstrating the fact of inerrancy and infallibility. He embarrasses, surely, those who idolize a doctrine of inspiration above obedience to it.

I could assign here collateral reading for assessment of current nuances in bibliology or in hermeneutics as a warning about invalidly predisposing people's reading.

I should be agreeable to this as a preface to public-school reading of the Bible and eager to use it in a liberal church to give the Spirit a chance in print. I just must use it with those conservatives who have theologically constructed a private hermeneutical system by which I am enjoined to read the Bible their way so as to "know what it means before you can read what it says."

The book would be more adaptable if the habitual fare of its publisher did not say ahead what would be the final word, or its author did not keep reminding that, after all is said and done, he is really quite properly modern.

Scripture is not a locked estate with the magic key of faith, but "the gate is not padlocked, but the latch is positioned for people on foot. . . . Anyone on a high horse has to dismount."

Wallace Alcorn

Austin, MN

Essays on Biblical Interpretation. Edited by W. Swartley. Elkhart: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1984, 334 pp., \$9.00 paper.

Hermeneutics courses seem to be tolerated by some students as but customary exercises obeisant to ancient curricular demands since—such have assumed from early Sunday school—all good men (at least those safe within the known tradition) treat the Bible by

rather much the same methodology and, regardless, systematic theology has been finalized by the patriarchs in such orthodox dogmata—institutional articles of faith seem to assure—that all exegeses are obliged to clone reliable tautologies, despite how preacher or scholar get there.

This anthology for seminarians quite properly takes care of that—if read discerningly. That may be its problem, since the specific end skill is not entirely clear.

Quite an amazing tool, this. How productive it will be with the Mennonite seminarians for whom the essays have been collected is not as predictable as its value as a resource for scholarly study of the history of hermeneutics, comparative hermeneutics, and the interaction of hermeneutics with theology and ecclesiology. For this it possesses singular worth. Seminarians of different orientations would find less usable information, except as collateral reading or for details in specific research.

Seventeen Mennonite scholars have contributed twenty essays, all but four emerging from eight conferences on hermeneutics during the past two decades. W. M. Swartley, NT professor and director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies in Elkhart, edited the volume—largely by his pivotal article “Beyond the Historical-Critical Method” and the volume’s afterword, “Continuity and Change in Anabaptist-Mennonite Biblical Interpretation.” Individual writers appear independently responsible for their articles since no one person could have full agreement with the great variations expressed, wherein is much of the Mennonite story.

The Elkhart schools are most heavily represented, but there is significant input by Eastern Mennonite and Goshen men. Some, away from home at Princeton, Notre Dame and Waterloo, also have their say but write with the same accents.

The initial eight essays interpret the historic Anabaptist sources. After W. Klassen identifies the presuppositions, principles and practice of Anabaptist hermeneutics and J. H. Yoder specifically describes the practice that forms the background for contemporary Mennonites, the most distinctive features are thoroughly discussed. C. J. Dyck treats the relation of hermeneutics to discipleship, as B. C. Ollenburger does to obedience and Klassen does for “the letter and the spirit.” Klassen (again) shows the relation of the two covenants in Marpeck’s theology, and Klassen (again) reports the Christocentric debate of 1538 in Bern.

The historical origins having been identified, two essays describe their development. F. Kuiper stresses the pre-eminence of the Bible in Mennonite history, and N. Kraus surveys the varying attitudes of American Mennonites to the Bible.

The third section offers evaluative responses and proposals as the task of contemporary hermeneutics. These seven essays promise greatest controversy among the Mennonites, it can be suspected, as well as offering greatest interest to others. M. Lind reflects on hermeneutics, and J. J. Enz discusses the canon to be a creative Biblicism as a hermeneutical principle. W. Jansen’s outline of modes of appropriating the Bible increases the interest, while G. Brunk III offers a case study in critical methodology by use of the Emmaus story (more disturbing of some than interesting to them). M. E. Miller assesses criticism and analogy in historical-critical interpretation, and it is here that Swartley inserts his hopeful conciliation. Yoder closes the section with a quite necessary discussion of the canon’s authority.

The final section, “The Bible in the Congregation,” will be assumed to be a final sop to preachers in the real world only by those who do not believe what the earlier writers have laid down about the unique place of the Mennonite congregation as the interpreting community. The chapters on Bible teaching by R. T. Bender and R. C. Detweiler, however, are crucial, as is that on preaching by E. Waltner.

A better format (this is largely photographically reduced typescript) would of course improve the book’s effectiveness as a text. For now, we are grateful it has been produced at all. Happily for students, the reading difficulty tends (13.5) to be (by my application of Gunning’s fog index) on the college freshman level—although some essays explode through

the top of the scale (e.g. 29.4).

Many discussions, although within the Mennonite environment, interest the reader not only for comparative hermeneutics but also as constructive exercises for the same conceptual battles in other settings. What they have worked through—or, in more than a few cases, failed to accomplish—persists as instructive. Consider: hesitation to rely on technical scholarship but appropriation of modern critical methods; the role of extracanonical revelation (spirit against the letter) or the congregation as an extension of canon; the theology of experience (obedience, discipleship) as either implementation of Scripture or denigration of propositional truth; commitment to tradition as well as responsibility for theological development. While Anabaptists are felt to have won the victory over Reformation theology at the outset, Mennonites confess to having fallen victim to fundamentalism (especially dispensationalism) in the early part of this century. More conservative and evangelical Mennonites (not represented here, this being largely Elkhart *et al.*) will note this being claimed overcome by 1959.

The editor prefaces the essays with a nervous acknowledgment of the chicken-or-the-egg question. He does well since one wonders still if valid hermeneutics actually constrains Mennonite theology to what it in fact is, or whether contra-Reformation positions predisposed what Anabaptist hermeneutics would become. Are they pacifist, for instance, because the NT disallows OT precedents, or do they discount the older covenant because of its example of righteous warfare?

The book is effective in raising other questions. Is rationalism rejected as a hermeneutical principle only because it is inimical to the epistemology of obedience, or does the Bible itself defy rationalistic interpretations but also stand the test of reason? Have some Mennonite theologians allowed themselves to be sucked into an uncautious openness to the more liberal criticism by a reaction to dispensational fundamentalism? Are the presentations of contemporary hermeneutical practices factually descriptive as a basis for self-examination, or are they intended to be normative for these Mennonites, if not Elkhart's polemic to the rest of them?

As we said earlier, it is an amazing book. Its writers are thoughtful, honest, courageous and helpful. They are worth reading with respect.

Wallace Alcorn

Austin, MN

James Barr and the Beginnings of Biblical Semantics. By Richard J. Erickson. Notre Dame: Foundations, 1984, 75 pp., \$6.00 paper.

This work is a slight revision of the first chapter of the author's 1980 Fuller Seminary dissertation entitled "Biblical Semantics, Semantic Structure, and Biblical Lexicology: A Study of Methods, with Special Reference to the Pauline Lexical Field of 'Cognition'." With only 75 pages this work is more a booklet than a book, half of which consists of an appendix, footnotes and bibliography (pp. 39-75). It is very much overpriced: For six dollars one expects much more than 38 pages of body and far fewer spelling errors. These criticisms aside, however, Erickson must be commended for his helpful contribution to the increasing flow of recent publications on the integration of the science of modern linguistics with Biblical studies.

The book is divided into three parts. Chapter 1 consists of a helpful summary of the major issues raised by Barr in his first two books, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961) and *Biblical Words for Time* (1969). Barr's objection to the tendency of Biblical theologians to draw a fundamental contrast between Hebrew and Greek modes of thought is noted first. Another issue is the tacit assumption of Biblical theologians that the structure of a language reflects the mental structures of the people to whom the language belongs. This in turn leads to a tendency to confuse theological and psychological facts with linguistic ones. For Barr, of course, the most influential offender in this regard is Kittel's

TWNT. The objection Barr raises in particular against *TWNT* is that it fails to maintain a clear distinction between words as linguistic data and the concepts associated with them. It is in connection with inability to distinguish between word and concept that two of Barr's best-known phrases were coined: "illegitimate identity transfer" and "illegitimate totality transfer."

Other methods Barr repudiates are those of "etymologizing" (confusing a word's history with its meaning) and "root fallacy" (the opinion that in Hebrew there is a "root meaning" that forms part of the semantic value of any variation on an abstracted root). Above all, however, there is Barr's oft-repeated complaint that Biblical-theological linguistic studies all too frequently neglect to study their data in the contexts in which they are found, thus leading Biblical theologians to impose their own preconceived structures of interpretation on them.

Chapter 2 is the most interesting and helpful part of the book. In it Erickson gives an excellent overview of the response—both positive and negative—to Barr's writings. The impact of *Semantics* was much like that of Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus* in that both signaled the end of one phase of research and ushered in a newer one. By and large the community of Biblical scholarship has recognized the validity of Barr's criticisms. Only a handful of scholars do not either take the work of Barr as a starting point or make a special effort of directing comments to the issues he raised. Some indeed stand vigilant over even the current practice of Biblical semantics, out-Barring Barr.

On the negative side, numerous critics have pointed out that Barr has not given sufficient recognition to the fact that there are other approaches to semantics than the one he follows. Another criticism is that Barr has been unnecessarily negative in his criticisms. A major issue that some have raised concerns the adequacy of context for determining meaning. For example David Hill, while not denying the importance of context, believes nevertheless that Barr has overstated his case here. Hill asserts that words do indeed have semantic value independently of sentences, and he even cites places where Barr himself concedes the fact.

Finally, some of the results of the discussion of Barr's writings are presented in chap. 3, such as (1) the consensus on the importance of the integration of Biblical linguistics and semantics with the several other methods commonly in use in the study of the Bible and (2) the recognition that words need to be studied in groups characterized by a common element of meaning. All of this has reinforced the suspicion of many Bible scholars that, while the *TWNT* articles are helpful, what is really needed is a new approach to lexicography altogether.

Erickson's study of Barr has been organized and executed with clarity and expertise and has much to offer those interested in Biblical semantics (by now that should mean nearly all of us). I have already used it profitably both in my own studies and in my teaching. One could only wish that the author's entire dissertation had been published and made available to students of the Biblical languages.

David Alan Black

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Hebrew Exercises—A Programmed Approach. By Robert I. Vasholz. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981, 277 pp., \$10.95 paper.

This book consists of written drills and exercises that are to be filled in and torn out for classroom use and for inspection by the instructor. It contains no grammatical instruction as such, for it is designed to be used in connection with any standard first-year grammar. In this regard it might be wise to restrict its use to those situations where the instructor has chosen a type of grammar that sets forth the morphology and syntax of Hebrew with only a few typical examples or very brief exercises, such as the now discontinued Marks and Rogers grammar-and-handbook combination formerly put out by Abingdon Press. That too

included an exercise book with lists of new vocabulary for each lesson and consisting of tear-out exercise sheets.

In the case of Marks and Rogers, however, the workbook was keyed in with the grammar, which was a slim hardcover volume. In the present work, on the other hand, there is no such tie-in, and so the instructor would have to consult the index of the Vasholz workbook to discover which of the 69 lessons deals with the teaching matter of his next lesson. This would not be difficult to do, certainly, but it might seem a bit more cumbersome than a grammar-workbook combination published as a unit. The advantage of using Vasholz as a supplement would be that the student would become somewhat more proficient in composition and even in sight reading than the product of a normal Hebrew introductory course. The disadvantage of the "programmed approach" is that it involves a good deal of "busy work" and guarantees that the training in elementary Hebrew would take a somewhat lengthier period than either Weingreen or Lambdin.

There is hardly a graduate seminary today that assigns as many required hours in Hebrew as used to be the case fifty years ago. This means that a school allowing only a minimum of class hours for attaining a working knowledge of Biblical Hebrew as preparation for OT exegesis will scarcely permit the luxury of such a thorough training at the elementary level. Even Weingreen's grammar hardly permits much involvement in *BHS* within eight quarter-hours of introductory Hebrew. A thorough use of Vasholz's approach would make such a goal virtually impossible, in the judgment of this reviewer after thirty-five years of classroom experience. The \$10.95 price-tag may provide an additional discouragement for the seminarian who is on a tight book-budget, although it seems reasonable enough in the light of today's publication costs.

Like other workbooks, this Vasholz production has let a few boners slip by the proof-reader, such as the failure to spirantize *begadhkephath* consonants after a preceding vowel, such as the *waw*-connection preceding *kōhēn* on p. 22 and *kēlī* on p. 24, and apparently also *ūpeh* on p. 23 (although the character in question is not quite clear). The failure to use a *metheg* for *qal* perfect third feminine singular and third common plural forms makes the *gameš* appear to be *hatup* instead of *gadol* on pp. 26-27 and elsewhere. This is bound to be misleading to the beginner at a time when he needs to learn how to distinguish these two quite distinct vocalic phonemes. It is also regrettable that no accent marks are used to distinguish words accented on the penult, and the student is therefore very apt to pronounce them on the ultima. Since most verb forms with consonant-vowel sufformatives and virtually all segolates in the absolute and the construct are stressed on the penult, this failure to indicate them properly does the student a real disservice. The same is true where pronominal suffixes are appended to verb forms. While it is true that well-trained second-year students would automatically avoid mispronunciations in all these cases, the beginner for whom this book is intended would be led sadly astray by this complete neglect of *methegs* and other stress-accents. In these respects, therefore, the "programmed approach" needs very careful proofreading before it is republished.

Gleason L. Archer

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indexes to All Editions of Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon and Thayer's Greek Lexicon. By Maurice A. Robinson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981, \$5.95.

This handy little book is designed to facilitate the location of inflected forms in the Hebrew OT and in the Greek NT. Unlike the larger and more expensive *Index to Brown, Driver and Briggs Lexicon* compiled by B. Einspahr it does not include a transcription of the Hebrew entries into roman characters, but it does supply a clue to those not versed in the Hebrew alphabet by appending a Strong's *Concordance* reference that will enable the researcher to track it down—provided he owns a Strong's. The entire work seems to be done by computer, and the type is very clear and serviceable.

The last 31 pages contain the regular dictionary entries included in Thayer's *Lexicon*, but unlike the Hebrew section it appears to have few if any of the augmented or reduplicated forms of the verbs or, indeed, any of the principal parts of irregular verbs. In other words, it simply lists the actual entries in the dictionary itself. What added value it would give to the consultant is therefore quite problematical. Nor is it altogether clear why Thayer's *Lexicon* (which is now far less used today than it was before the appearance of BAG) was paired up with BDB. But on the other hand, if no help is to be furnished the Greek student in locating irregular or augmented forms, it does not make much difference which list of dictionary entries is included, for they would be largely the same in any case.

Gleason L. Archer

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Toward Old Testament Ethics. By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.

Walter Kaiser has established himself as one of the leading, and certainly most prolific, evangelical OT scholars today, primarily through the publication in rapid succession of *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* and now *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Kaiser has served both the Church and the classroom well by making these three studies available. The most recent (the object of this review) is the most significant in at least one sense—that is, while there has been an abundance of OT theologies produced in the past decade, ethics has not fared nearly as well. As Kaiser points out, no book on OT ethics has been written in English during the entire twentieth century. These things come in waves, though, and it is interesting to note the almost simultaneous appearance of C. J. H. Wright, *Living as People of God: The Relevance of Old Testament Ethics* (InterVarsity, 1983).

The preposition "toward" starts the titles of all three monographs, and to be fair to the author its significance should be recognized by his reviewers. He does not attempt to present the reader with the final statement of OT theology, exegetical method or ethics, but simply to open up discussion. This in itself is a worthy task (which Kaiser amply fulfills), and if the present review seems at points unduly harsh or negative, let it be stated at the outset that I highly respect Kaiser's work here and elsewhere. In other words, I will try to "walk softly and carry a *small* stick" (p. xii) while also pointing out what I consider to be errors of interpretation or areas for further discussion.

The book is well structured and reads smoothly from section to section. Kaiser opens by defining ethics and explaining his method of procedure. While I believe he spends too much time in this and other sections interacting with scholarly views neither he nor anyone else (except the proponent of the view) believes, his methodological conclusion is sane and helpful. He follows "a combination approach that includes elements of the synchronic, diachronic, central theme approach along with exegetical studies of summarizing texts and apologetic analysis of key moral difficulties in the canon" (p. 21). Thus in the second part of the study the major legal sections of the Pentateuch (Decalogue, Book of the Covenant, Holiness Law, Deuteronomic Law) are briefly summarized. Part 3 then deals with major topics (family, sexuality, sanctity of life, etc.) under the overarching rubric of "holiness." The next section is apologetic in that it counters arguments leveled against God's character, his law and his people. The study concludes with a brief chapter on the all-important issue of the connection between OT law and NT people.

The rationale behind this structure is clear, yet the scope of the book as illustrated in the structure cannot but lead to a certain amount of unnecessary superficiality. The section on "Moral Difficulties," for example, while an important topic, could have been excluded from the present book and perhaps published separately. A second structural difficulty is Kaiser's decision to relate OT ethics to the NT Church in the last chapter and also to make his treatment so short. The relevance of his entire book depends on how the OT bears on the modern Church. Furthermore, even after reading the last chapter the reader will come

away with generalities and further questions about this relationship (for example, see comments on sanctions below).

Continuing now with the content of these chapters, we may point out much of great value. For example, Kaiser's choice of holiness as the overarching theme of OT law is well justified and helpful. Among many other topics, let us also single out his insights in the areas of sexual and economic ethics. He also demonstrates in a striking way that the Decalogue was in effect before Sinai.

On the other hand, I disagreed with Kaiser at a number of points or simply found him vague and confusing. Due to space considerations I will confine myself to two examples.

The first has to do with Kaiser's view of the legal sanctions, particularly the death penalty, which is the stated penalty for a number of the laws. Kaiser himself lists sixteen offenses that demanded the death penalty. He provides, however, very little substantial discussion of the sanctions. I find this perplexing for two reasons: (1) Sanctions are an important part of OT law, and (2) Kaiser depends heavily throughout his book on the writings of R. J. Rushdoony and G. Bahnsen, whose views include the belief that the sanctions are still in force today.

The only treatment of sanctions that I could find is Kaiser's assertion that Num 35:31 teaches that "all the other (than premeditated murder) capital crimes could be commuted as the judges determined" (p. 92). By no stretch of exegetical imagination, however, can Num 35:31 be read in such a way. There the law simply emphasizes that a murderer may not pay a ransom for his crime. It says nothing directly or by inference about any of the other cases.

I also have serious reservations about his "biblical" definition of lying, along with his explanations of the notorious cases of Rahab, the midwives in Egypt, etc. In one of his summarizing statements he asserts: "No one has a right to lie; but then, neither does everyone have the right to know all the facts in a case where their evil actions have forfeited that right" (p. 227). This smacks of artificiality and subjectivity. By Kaiser's definition and explanation (pp. 273-274) it is not a lie to intentionally deceive a person by withholding information from him, information that is inferred by the question and essential to the answer. By this definition the brothers do not lie to Jacob about the death of Joseph. All they do is hand him the bloodied robe and say, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe" (Gen 37:32). Perhaps this could even be "justified" by saying that Jacob lost his right to hear the full truth by his partial attitude toward Joseph.

These and other areas demonstrate that there is still much room for discussion. As a last criticism, I was surprised that Kaiser did not utilize or even discuss M. Kline's concept of "intrusion ethics." Though Kline only partially develops his ideas in "The Intrusion and the Decalogue," *WTJ* 16 (1953) 1-22, he applies them to great benefit in order to elucidate such difficult questions as holy war, imprecation, lying and so forth.

In spite of these and other difficulties, the evangelical scholarly community and Church can only thank Kaiser for this initial step toward a renewed interest in OT ethics.

Tremper Longman

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Scripture in Context II. Edited by William W. Hallo, James C. Moyer and Leo Perdue. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983, 250 pp., \$15.00.

The subtitle of this symposium is *More Essays on the Comparative Method*. It consists of eleven chapters on various themes in the area of history of religion during the OT period, examined in the light of archeological discovery. The approach followed by each of the contributors is that of rationalistic anthropology and the comparative religions school. There seems to be no essential difference in methodology from that pursued by W. M. L. de Wette in 1805 or by A. Kuenen or T. Nöldeke in the 1870s: the assumption that Israel's

religion developed in a purely naturalistic way without any significant input from any divine initiative, simply as an outgrowth of the same cultural process that eventuated in the polytheistic world view of the neighboring civilizations of the Fertile Crescent. Historical records in the Hebrew Bible must find confirmation in pagan documents before they can be accepted as truly factual. The canny modern analyst must sort carefully through the narratives of the books of Joshua, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles in order to weed out anything miraculous, anything that indicates fulfillment of earlier prophecy (all instances of which are to be explained as *vaticinia ex eventu* rather than the operation of divine providence), and constant attention must be given to distinguishing between the original event and its later, "reworked" form emanating from the propagandistic *Tendenz* of the "Deuteronomic" school or of the still later "Priestly" school. From the standpoint of basic presuppositions nothing has changed since 1878 (Wellhausen's *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*) or 1881 (W. R. Smith's *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*).

Perhaps the most characteristic essay in the book is found in C. D. Evans' "Naram-Sin and Jeroboam: the Archetypal *Unheilsherrscher* in Mesopotamian and Biblical Historiography." This 30-page treatment of the story of Jeroboam I—who is presented by "pre-Deuteronomic" tradition in a favorable light—as an agent of corrective judgment against Solomon and his son Rehoboam has been obviously cast by the later prophetic school in an evil light as the cause of spiritual and moral downfall in the northern kingdom simply because of his instituting the worship of the golden calf statues in Bethel and Dan. Of later fabrication is the tale of a Judahite prophet who rebuked Jeroboam while standing at his newly erected altar and predicted the coming of a Josiah who would destroy this forbidden altar and desecrate the site by burning on it the bones of the non-Levitical priests who would officiate at it. He emphasizes the spuriousness of this whole account in the following terms (p. 121): "No doubt this presentation of matters would have been regarded as strange and unwarrantable by the majority of Jeroboam's subjects, and presumably even the likes of Ahijah [the prophet who at first anointed Jeroboam and then later denounced him for apostasy] would have thought it off-base and extreme. Such is usually the case when standards that belong to another time and place are applied in the manner implied by the Deuteronomist." The assumptions implied by this judgment would seem to include the following: (1) that Jeroboam could not possibly have been raised up by God to serve a temporary purpose (like King Saul prior to David), only to be rejected later because of his deliberate transgression of the known will of God; (2) that fulfilled prophecy is *ipso facto* impossible for God since it is obviously impossible for man; (3) that a prophetic "school" of pro-Josiah propagandists unscrupulously manipulated and reworked earlier tradition so as to insert episodes and record prophecies that never occurred; (4) that these manipulators were influenced by a recently concocted book of Deuteronomy that was never composed until the late seventh century B.C. This bland acceptance of the de Wette theory assumes the worthlessness of all the compelling arguments leveled against it by R. H. Kennett (*Deuteronomy and the Decalogue*, 1920), M. Kegel (*Die Kultusreform des Josias*, 1919), A. Welch (*The Code of Deuteronomy*, 1924) and G. Hölscher (*Komposition und Ursprung des Deuteronomiums*, 1922), all of whom found the Josianic date for Deuteronomy to be untenable in the light of its complete inappropriateness to the historical, economic and societal situation prevailing in the late seventh century. It also ignores the findings of G. Mendenhall: "It is hard to conceive of a law code which could be more at variance from what we know of Canaanite culture than the Covenant Code (Exodus 21-23). . . . The Canaanite cities were predominantly commercial, rigidly stratified in social structure. . . . The Covenant Code shows no social stratification. . . . The laws of the Covenant Code reflect the customs, morality and religious obligations of the Israelite community . . . before the monarchy" (*Law and Covenant in Israel*, 1955, pp. 11-12). In his "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition" (*BA* 17/3 [1954]) he states on the basis of the conformity of Deuteronomy to the characteristic pattern of the Hittite suzerainty treaties of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. that "this covenant type is even more important as a

starting point, because it cannot be proven to have survived the downfall of the great empires of the second millennium B.C. The older form of the covenant was no longer known after the United Monarchy." It should be added that each of the authors just cited operated on the basis of rationalistic presuppositions, but they felt compelled to reject the artificial dialectic of the Wellhausen school—as did J. Pedersen of Copenhagen, I. Engnell of Uppsala and other leaders of the Scandinavian school.

Despite the datedness of viewpoint and methodology exhibited in varying degrees by these writers, there is much of informational value to be found in this symposium. The article on "Cult Statue and Divine Image" gives an interesting survey of pagan iconography in the ancient Near East and finds the asserted images of Yahweh found at Hazor and elsewhere to be rather dubious. Moyer's "Hittite and Israelite Cultic Practices" offers some fascinating contrasts between the two systems, for such practices as necromancy, bestiality (of a cultic sort performed by priests), assuming symbols and clothing of the opposite sex, the cultic use of the dog and pig—all of which are strictly forbidden in the Pentateuch—are at least partially allowable according to the Hittites. No penalty at all is meted out for copulation with horses or mules (p. 25)!

In "Ancient Amphictyonies, Sic et Non" H. E. Chambers takes on M. Noth and his interpretation of the political structure of Israel during the period of the judges, and he finds it quite unsound in the light of the objections raised by H. M. Orlinsky, H. I. Irwin, G. Fohrer, R. de Vaux and A. D. H. Mayes. The 1976 publication of *The Tribes of Israel* by C. H. J. de Geus thoroughly dismantled Noth's thesis that the amphictyonic structure of ancient Greece was anticipated by the Hebrews and argued that the correct model was Amorite seminomadism. N. K. Gottwald in *The Tribes of Yahweh* (1979) settled for a clearly decentralized agricultural tribalism united by common religious ties having little to do with the traditional amphictyonic traits.

In "An Historical Reconstruction of the Emergence of Israelite Kingship and the Reign of Saul" W. E. Evans shows much of the traditional documentary approach, speaking of 1 Samuel as characterized by "doublets, the telescoping of events, the lack of a clear chronological order, and the differing attitudes towards Saul and the monarchy" (p. 61). For example, we are first told in chap. 7 that under Samuel the Lord routed the Philistines at Ebenezer and subdued them so that they invaded Israel no longer. "That statement is patently contradicted in later chapters and must surely be seen as an attempt to elevate Samuel's status at the expense of Saul and the monarchy" (p. 66). This chapter continues with an updating of recent archeological discovery (such as the Philistine-type anthropoid burials in Deir el-Balaḥ in the late fourteenth century B.C. and at Beth Shan as well) and of the varying interpretations of G. E. Wright, T. Dothan, Z. Ben-Barak, M. C. Astour, M. Tsevat and others. Evans concludes that "the Deuteronomic stratum is suspicious of the institution of monarchy and has a vested interest in elevating David's career. Unfortunately Saul is, in a sense, caught in the middle" (p. 77).

Perdue discusses "The Testament of David and Egyptian Royal Instructions" in such a way as to show that there was a long and venerable set of precedents for the final charge that David is reported to have given his son Solomon in 1 Kgs 2:1-12 (he totally ignores the much longer charge contained in 1 Chronicles 28). Perdue goes on to survey the Teaching of Amenemope, the Instruction for Merikare and the Instruction of Amenemhet as genre models for this type of composition. In the case of Amenemhet's transmission of rule to Senwosret his son, Perdue points out that there was a certain analogy in that both successors faced an insecure situation as they faced their reign (p. 96).

In the interest of brevity we must simply list the remaining chapters by author and title. W. R. McFadden discusses "Micah and the Problem of Continuities and Discontinuities in Prophecy" with a most informative and discriminating survey of many recent authors dealing with this admittedly difficult collection of seven chapters dealing briefly with so many different themes. S. Stohlmann deals with "The Judean Exile after 701 B.C.E." and carefully reviews the information contained in the Sennacherib prism (with its exaggerated

statistics), the Lachish reliefs in his palace, the excavations from Lachish itself, and various brief onomastic documents. Stohlmann cites K. A. Kitchen quite extensively along with writers of the liberal establishment and comes to the conclusion that the 2 Kings 18 account is basically reliable.

W. C. Gwaltney Jr. has a most interesting and helpful discussion of "The Biblical Book of Lamentations in the Context of Near Eastern Lament Literature" in which he observes analogies to five Sumerian and Old Babylonian city-laments, of both the *balag*-type and the *ershemma*-type (of which the Old Babylonian composition *a-ab-ba lu-luh-ha* was the most widely used). He gives a detailed summary of the different subjects of complaint in the Mesopotamian lamentations, showing how they resemble or differ from those contained in the canonical work itself. R. G. Albertson treats of "Job and Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Literature" in a most stimulating and informative manner. He discusses the views of recent authors in regard to the unity or discontinuity of Job, both as to ideology and as to literary cohesion, and deals with the fashionable equation of Ezekiel's Daniel (Ezek 14:20) with the Dan'el of the Ugaritic tradition in such a way as to make that identification highly dubious (p. 215). He also surveys the suggested analogies between Job and Abraham, Joseph and Jeremiah in a very discriminating way. The views of Lambert, Van Dijk and Kramer, of G. E. Wright and G. Mendenhall, of R. N. Whybray and B. Gemser receive judicious treatment in such a way as to help the reader appreciate or discount their varying approaches.

In conclusion, this reviewer feels that for the seminary-trained conservative this symposium has much to offer, provided he takes into account the antisupernatural presuppositions of most of the contributors and (in some cases, at least) their commitment to the outmoded and discredited structure of Wellhausian documentarianism. The archeological input and the insights into the comparative literature and cultic practices of the ancient Near East are fully worth the price of the book.

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The Wings of Refuge: The Message of Ruth. By David Atkinson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1983, 128 pp., \$4.95 paper.

"O Lord God, let the shelter of your wings give us hope." This prayer of Augustine's is an encapsulization of the theme of Ruth's message, according to Atkinson, who skillfully guides the reader through the basic segments of this most "beautiful short story" in a highly readable, forceful fashion. Easily meeting the threefold ideal of the general preface—to be an accurate exposition, to be contemporary in application, to be readable—the work will be of value to all desiring an evangelical exposition of Ruth although, as is freely confessed, the book is not a close, verse-by-verse, reference-type commentary.

From a pastoral perspective Atkinson's introduction alone is worth the price of the book. Though brief, it is a clear analysis of the major challenges to faith faced in the twentieth century with a perceptive tracing of their roots back to the time of the judges. Atkinson looks at the idolatry of man, the split culture of our day (scientism versus religion) and the problem of evil (where is God in all this pain?) and demonstrates how Ruth's culture wrestled with the same issues. The applications of the book readily flow from these introductory statements.

In the exposition proper, the work is characterized by orderliness and logical argumentation and shows a good grasp of the current literature. The stance is definitely conservative-evangelical, viewing the narrative as an historical event. The devotional words to the reader are refreshing, especially in these days when some exegetical works seem to evidence little concern for the heart application of the Scriptures.

The helpful third section of the book deals closely with the concepts of the levirate customs and the *gō'el*. The discussion is clear, following Leggett to a great degree, and is

closely reasoned from the Biblical text. The NT recognition of Christ as the *Gô'el* of his people is made and supported.

Throughout Atkinson warns of the tendency "to polarize law and love" (p. 107) and warns against this error with appropriate illustrations. The final section, "The Lord be with you," beautifully draws the contemporary focus from the story.

The work could profit from an index.

Gordon M. Balfour

Proverbs: A Commentary on an Ancient Book of Timeless Advice. By Robert L. Alden. Grand Rapids: Baker, 222 pp., \$12.95.

According to the dust-jacket flap, "commentaries on the book of Proverbs are less than plentiful. Those by evangelical scholars who specialize in canonical wisdom literature are even more rare." In terms of commentaries that adequately address the crucial issues that Proverbs presents, this one does little to alleviate the problem. Hampered by space restrictions and an over-zealous editor, Alden's finished product is far below his true capabilities.

The book is for laypeople who know little or no Hebrew and is designed to be concise and to the point. Concise it is, and "to the point" depends on which point is meant. In the interests of brevity crucial terms are glossed over, whole verses merely paraphrased or restated and important matters omitted. The expression "This is a different word in Hebrew than the one in . . ." occurs many times without any explanation of what the terms are or how they differ from one another. As a basic survey of Proverbs, it could prove quite useful. The cross-references are especially helpful. But it falls far short of being a genuine commentary.

This reviewer saw the edited proofs of the book and wondered at the amount of rewrite that had been done. Every line had some kind of alteration. If all that editing had resulted in "improvement" on Alden's style it might have served a good purpose. Unfortunately the result of all those "corrections" is an abundance of grammatical and punctuation errors and awkward English constructions that make the book a bit of a chore to read.

A couple of indexes would have helped. Specifically, it needs an index of cross-references and an index to the rabbinic quotes. Present copies contain four major typographical errors: On p. 85 "seondary" should be "secondary"; on p. 98 "participle" should read "particle"; on p. 219 "the Huldah" should be "and Huldah"; and on p. 220 "graft" makes much better sense as "craft."

Perhaps the most disappointing feature of this book is the price, which is high for a book of this size and content—particularly when a reader knows that, given a free hand, Alden can do much better than this.

David L. Washburn