

BOOK REVIEWS

A Hermeneutic Critique of Structuralist Exegesis, with Specific Reference to Lk 10.29-37.
By Sandra Wackman Perpich. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984, ix + 253 pp., paper.

Perpich's book attempts to bring together structuralism and phenomenological hermeneutics and to apply the synthesis to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37). She finds deficiencies in classic French literary structuralism (Bremond, Greimas, Todorov) and therefore undertakes to supplement structural analysis with phenomenological reflection on a text's references to the world, reader involvement, and application. P. Ricoeur's hermeneutics provides a philosophical and hermeneutical framework, and K. Rahner's view of divine mystery provides a theological framework for the task.

Perpich rightly criticizes classic structuralism on several grounds: its reductionistic philosophical assumptions, the assumption of the closed character of linguistic systems, the lack of attention to a discourse's reference to the world, the ambiguity and sometimes falsity of some of the claims about universal principles of discourse (pp. 27-72, 90). Her criticisms as well as her supplementary phenomenological reflections on the parable of the Good Samaritan are full of useful insights. But Perpich herself, relying on Ricoeur, falls into reductions and sloppy overgeneralizations, so that the positive theoretical potential of her work is vitiated.

First of all, a number of fairly obvious distinctions appear to be simply slid over or blurred over throughout most of the work. Denying that a text refers to the world (in the narrowest forms of French structuralism) is not the same as denying (in a particular case) multiple reference, ambiguous reference, or indirect reference (as in a parable's reference to the kingdom of God). Allusions or significant connections are not the same as direct reference. Reference using a metaphor is not the same as reference to a fictional world (though both can occur together). Application to oneself as a reader is not the same (in every sense) as reflection on a text's reference to the real world. People are capable of talking about God and other matters of religion directly as well as indirectly, both by fictional and nonfictional, metaphorical and (relatively) nonmetaphorical language.

In addition, fictional and nonfictional works are both capable of altering our convictions (1) about parts of the real world, (2) about the real world as a whole, (3) about ourselves, and (4) about God. To be sure, these four are involved in one another, but it is needlessly befogging not to keep in mind the ability of texts to do primarily one of these.

Next, Perpich has some more technical assumptions about parables that are sloppy overgeneralizations. Perpich knows that there is a difference between readers imaginatively completing an omitted event of a plot and readers applying the story to their own lives. But she nevertheless makes unjustifiably strong statements about the former being a spur to the latter (p. 205). Sometimes this is the case (Luke 13:6-9), but other times it is not (e.g. Luke 10:35). Conversely, parables with relatively complete plots may have strong impact (Matt 13:47-48). It is ridiculous for Perpich to claim that in the parable of the Good Samaritan the omission of mention of recovery of the wounded traveler has a vital function in stimulating reader involvement. The obvious primary reason for omission is that it can easily be inferred, and therefore its inclusion would distractingly prolong a story that has already made all its main points.

Again, relying on Ricoeur, Perpich claims that all parables have an element of extrava-

gance in the story line (pp. 174-175, 199). This is sometimes true (Luke 15:20-24), sometimes not (Mark 4:26-29). Moreover, whether or not there is extravagance says very little about whether the parable teaches that the kingdom of God overthrows all traditional reckoning in an extravagant reversal. Some of Jesus' parables do this (Luke 14:12-13), but an element of extravagance in the story-line may have many functions, depending on the way in which the total situation invites the reader to set up a metaphorical correspondence.

Moreover, Perpich wrongly agrees with J. D. Crossan that Luke 10:25-29 must not have been the original setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan. Supposedly the parable was originally a metaphorical statement about the kingdom of God, resting on the worldview-shattering effects of the juxtaposition of "good" and "Samaritan" (p. 198). Luke 10:25-29 has toned this down by turning it into an exemplary story. Perpich here assumes an out-of-date reductionistic view of literary genre. Why may not Jesus do something subtle? Why may the story not be an exemplary story with an additional "kick"?

One assumes that somewhere in the back of her mind Perpich knows the obvious. But this book, for all its appearance of philosophical depth, neglects to pay attention to the obvious. The villain may be the tendency to think of everything as either a matter of structural analysis or multiple phenomenological application. Ricoeur seems to be behind this, inasmuch as many of the nondistinctions in Perpich are backed up by quotations or references from Ricoeur.

If Perpich intended to construct a rich hermeneutic she chose her starting points poorly. Classic French literary structuralism is an impoverished linguistic starting point in comparison with contemporary text linguistics, discourse analysis, tagmemic theory, or systemic grammar. Likewise continental phenomenology, including Ricoeur, is a poorer starting point for reader involvement than the evangelical Wittgensteinianism of A. Thiselton and the presuppositionalism of C. Van Til. Structuralism leaves out reference, and continental phenomenology minimizes the role of propositional statements. Inadequate as these approaches are, they are still attractive to mainline scholarship because they allow a pure reductive view of God's immanence and a pure nonpropositional view of his transcendence. That is one more reason for declaring the intellectual bankruptcy of Kantian and neo-orthodox views of transcendence.

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The Resurrection Narratives: A Redactional Study. By Grant R. Osborne. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, 344 pp., \$11.95 paper.

This well-written revision of a doctoral dissertation completed under the supervision of I. H. Marshall at the University of Aberdeen attempts to employ tradition criticism and redaction criticism constructively in the interpretation of the resurrection accounts of the four gospels. Marshall writes a brief foreword in which he expresses his appreciation of redaction criticism as a congenial method for scholars who take the authority of Scripture seriously. He commends Osborne's study as a work of high-quality scholarship characterized by genuine reverence for the Bible as the Word of God and as an important contribution to a better understanding of how each evangelist tells the story of the resurrection from his own distinctive theology. Thus the depth and richness of each account can be more fully appreciated.

The author begins his redactional study by claiming the two principal tools of the method. He defines tradition criticism as (1) the separation of tradition from redaction, revealing how the evangelist shapes his message by omissions from and additions to the historical tradition and therefore (2) as the identification of the tradition behind a given passage. Redaction criticism takes over at this point and attempts to (1) isolate the theological purpose of the evangelist and his intended meaning and (2) describe how the evangelist wove tradition into his message and made it a unified whole. Three methods are accord-

ingly assumed in the process of determining the message of a particular gospel: (1) tradition study, which helps determine the particular emphasis of the writer and his special interests; (2) the external method, which compares Matthew or Luke with Mark to identify expansions or abbreviations; and (3) the internal method, which indicates the special emphasis of a passage in view of the thematic development of the work as a whole (thus redaction methodology in this sense can be applied to any book of the Bible).

Finally—and most controversial, as the author allows—redaction criticism can be used to isolate the historical core of a passage and thus pass judgment on its overall historical reliability, as history and theological interpretation are separated in the process of historical reconstruction. Since this is a hot item in the present debate over the meaning of the gospels, it is of interest to see how well the book avoids the negative associations of the term “redaction” in the above sense. The author claims the method as a positive tool by disclaiming its skeptical component: “I believe both the original traditions and later interpretations were the product of eyewitness testimony [here he refers to his articles in *JETS* 19 (1976) and 21 (1978)] . . . The method properly applied is thus not a threat to a high view of Scripture but instead supports such a position” (p. 11).

This of course is a presupposition with which nonevangelical interpreters will not agree, though most scholars by now concur with Bultmann on principle at least that presuppositionless exegesis is not possible. Osborne is wise in putting his cards on the table, and indeed he alludes to Bultmann’s famous article on the subject in *Existence and Faith*. The reader will detect some tension in the study, however, as to the claimed objectivity of the critical method on the one hand and his commitment to a high view of Scripture on the other. At the conclusion of chap. 1, which surveys the state of the study of the resurrection narratives to date, he avers that a new approach to the question (1) must be committed to a historical approach to Biblical evidence, (2) must include a balanced combination of tradition and redaction, (3) must be an unbiased, objective search for the historical possibilities of the Easter event, and (4) must judiciously apply critical principles to identify tradition and redaction in order to form conclusions about the development of an author’s interpretation (p. 38). Side by side with these historicist criteria (which presuppositionally operate apart from the logic of the supernatural since they assume a secular approach to historical data) are two additional criteria offered by the author: (1) The interpretation of each evangelist must be seen to be based on the original words and meaning imparted by Jesus; (2) the early Church did not engage in wholesale creation of stories but maintained a continuity between history and theology (p. 39).

One finds this tension appearing at numerous points in the analysis of the resurrection narratives. Concluding his discussion of the distinctive perspectives of each of the four evangelists, which offers many helpful insights and good control of the literature with numerous affirmations of the historical basis of the accounts (e.g. pp. 198, 211), the author seems to slip into the habit of implying that the core tradition is historical while the theological redaction may be unhistorical. Commenting on the role of the “true witness” in John 19:35; 21:24, he remarks that John’s intent includes “a theme which may or may not refer specifically to historically ‘authentic’ material, but one which in context combines redaction and historically authentic tradition without tension or disharmony” (p. 198). In a footnote on this passage he observes that in regard to John 21 “we believe that the context plus the Gospel itself combines redaction and history.” The logic of this kind of language implies that redactional comment on the part of the evangelist can be unhistorical—that is, theological fiction, however pious.

That Osborne does not really believe this in practice is evidenced by such statements as one finds on p. 293, where he melds faith and history, redaction and tradition, by referring the accounts to Jesus’ own historical evaluation of himself: “If he himself provided the basis for interpretive categories they probably are appropriate. He did, of course; thus soteriology in the later church is a reflection of Jesus’ own teachings on the suffering servant Messiah.” The book toys with but never really practices the methodology that most charac-

terizes the typical redaction critic in the marketplace. Whenever the reader thinks a resurrection narrative or portion thereof is about to be called unhistorical, the author backs off and claims that not only the tradition but the theological redaction has an historical referent, principally Jesus himself.

Why then the word "redaction" throughout the volume and in the title if the theory behind the term as generally understood is seldom put into practice in this study? That is a hard question to answer. Is it an entrée to dialogue with critics generally (the sort of language game one finds in the British university)? Whatever the reason, the practical application of "redaction" criticism in this book indicates that it is not a critical tool by which one attempts to show how the evangelists create sayings of Jesus and episodes surrounding the resurrection to meet current needs in the Church but how they adapt the essential meaning of an historical event by describing its levels of significance for their audiences. Perhaps the terms "adaptational" or "aspectional" would be more accurate and less volatile in view of the present debate within evangelicalism. In this regard, the reader may want to compare a rather different "case study" approach to the resurrection narratives in *Easter Enigma* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984) by J. Wenham, which also deals with the presupposition question.

In any event, Osborne has written a stimulating volume that will provoke the reader to respond to a new setting in Biblical studies. Perhaps he will feel some satisfaction, in spite of the risks he has taken, if teachers and preachers come to appreciate better the ring of the changes one finds in the four gospels on the fundamental and historical theme of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That, after all, is what every believer needs to see and appreciate in the providential provision of the four complementary portraits that comprise our four gospels.

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The Ascension of Our Lord. By Peter Tbon. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984, 153 pp., \$5.95 paper.

The ascension is a significant yet neglected event of Jesus' life. So argues Tbon in his introduction to his study of the NT presentation of the ascension (p. xii). Tbon treats this theme from a systematic theological perspective and seeks to focus the discussion at a popular, lay level. He largely succeeds in his attempt to address this audience with clarity and devotional emphasis.

The first two chapters of Tbon's study lay out the NT texts and OT passages that touch on the theme of Jesus' exaltation and ascension. The fact, time and meaning of the ascension are all dealt with, although descriptions of Jesus are applied to him without sensitivity to the emphasis of a given author's portrait of him. Thus he speaks of Jesus in Luke-Acts as a resurrected high priest of the new covenant (p. 4), which describes Jesus in terminology that is not at all Lucan. He isolates key OT texts used in the NT to portray ascension (Pss 68:18; 110:1, 4; 8:6; 2:7-9; Dan 7:13-14) and texts used in Church liturgy (Pss 24:7-10; 47:5-9; 2 Kgs 2:11; Gen 5:24). Tbon also surveys how through the presentation of the NT these texts teach ascension. As a popular survey this treatment is clear, though brief.

The bulk of the work expounds Jesus as King (chap. 3), as Priest (chap. 4) and as Prophet (chap. 5). Jesus as King is presented in light of the kingdom theme of Scripture and in light of the teaching of the Westminster Confession. Jesus as Priest is treated in terms of his priesthood, sacrifice and intercession. Jesus' role as the intercessor is highlighted. This chapter is the best one of the book. It stresses Jesus as the seated regent-priest, who can appeal to God in light of his completed work. Jesus as Prophet has a continued prophetic ministry through his Spirit. This work by the Spirit reinforces the Word and does not give new revelation, but it can still be spoken of as a "revealing" at the level of a person's moral and spiritual sensitivity (pp. 95-97). The reader will want to thoughtfully proceed through

this latter discussion. Is the use of the term "reveal" with a nonrevelatory qualification a helpful way to proceed through the concept of illumination (pp. 92-97)?

The final chapter, "Lift Up Your Hearts," is a good reflective chapter on themes of ascension in Church worship and Christian hymns. It is followed by six appendices of varying lengths on various issues ranging from the language of ascension and modern cosmology, to the time of Jesus' ascension (at his resurrection on Easter morn, with Acts 2 being a picture of that ascension), to the ascension in the creeds, and finally to a discussion of what the ascension meant to Jesus. One wishes that these would have been included in the body of the work since some of the topics are relevant to chapter topics. Most probably a decision not to break the flow of the chapters with more technical discussions produced the appendices as a distinct section. Such a decision would fit the choice of audience but does fragment the presentation.

The evaluation of this book is mixed and is in fairness related to the choice of audience. Tbon is aware of exegetical, historical issues (like the Luke 24-Acts 2 ascension issue, the ending of Mark 16, etc.). But the discussion of these issues is minimal, and sometimes the significance of such issues is minimized (e.g. p. 4). Also the mixing of theological categories is done on occasion with some lack of discrimination. Tbon can see his discussion fitting in with, among others, "historic premillennialism" but not with "dispensational premillennialism" (p. 38). But his reasoning for this distinction is not clear since dispensationalists see the thousand-year period with much the same earthly focus as premillennialists. The quest for brevity and simplicity often obscures his reasoning or at least leaves the careful reader feeling that more discussion and substantiation is needed. Tbon's more controversial positions are covered too briefly to commend a response.

On the other hand, many discussions are excellent overviews. Tbon's defense of the nature of the resurrected body as a real spiritual body (pp. 13-15) is well done. His lists of what Jesus does as King (pp. 46-50) and of how believers look back, up and forward (pp. 104-109) are nice summaries of Biblical teaching. The appendix on Church creeds and the ascension is an informative introduction to the Church's view of the ascension.

The ascension is a neglected truth in today's Church, not receiving the reflection it deserves in our churches (how many Easter messages are given on Acts 2 or Hebrews 7-10 where the significance of the resurrection is Biblically set forth, alongside the reality of ascension?). Tbon has done Christians a service in turning our attention back to the great truths centered in a living and exalted Lord. The book may leave us wanting to search for more about the ascension than Tbon has given us. Nonetheless it orients us to the discussion and reminds us of the ascension's importance for the Church. This work is a good starting point in thinking about the ascension, especially for Christian laymen.

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A Lay Guide to Romans. By J. C. Wenger. Scottsdale: Herald, 1983, 160 pp.

A book as well as a briefer lesson ought to have a clearly implied if not stated purpose. Wenger stated that his goal in writing this commentary was "to give the meaning of the *Romans* text in crisp and clear English" (p. 7). One does not have to read far before he is satisfied that this objective is reached.

The book has several useful features that enhance its benefit to lay readers. The introductory chapter provides a brief biographical statement about the apostle Paul, speaks of the origin of the church in Rome, and outlines *Romans* in general terms. His ideas correspond with those commonly presented in evangelical introductory NT surveys.

The strength of this commentary rests in its extreme readability. It is laced with appropriate linguistic insight, makes beneficial allusions to Church history to make its points, and uses references to contemporary archaeological findings. Wenger ignores critical questions of primary concern to professionals in deference to the lay reader. Whoever reads this

commentary, however, will appreciate Wenger's forthright interpretations of such basic portions of Scripture as the "sin" passages (e.g. p. 29) and his regular cross-references to other pertinent Scripture to establish the interpretations of such verses as Rom 5:12-21.

Following a highly complimentary foreword by W. Elwell and his own preface and introduction, Wenger develops his commentary in ten chapters averaging about ten pages each. Chapter one covers Rom 1:1-3:20, whereas the second chapter concentrates on the "good news" Paul articulated in Rom 3:21-31. Chapters three through seven each cover a chapter in Paul's work, and the last three chapters deal with two to three chapters each, following the natural topics of Paul's presentation.

Wenger's use of Greek and other sources is wholesome for this type of work. He shies away from Calvinistic interpretations of texts such as Rom 5:18, preferring the eclectic views typical of Anabaptists (cf. pp. 62-64, 99). Covenant theologians and sacramentalists will take exception to Wenger's treatment of the spiritual state of children in Rom 7:9, but there are not many points at which evangelicals will differ with his overall interpretations. His Mennonite theology does appear, however, when he discusses the Christian's relationship to government and his appropriate response to persecution (chap. 9).

Wenger wrote this brief commentary from the United Bible Societies' Greek text but has quoted freely from the *NIV*. A unique feature of the commentary is his regular inclusions of comments from the sixteenth-century reformer Menno Simons. The commentary concludes with a nineteen-page appendix of quotations from Simons, which are keyed to each chapter of the commentary. He also sprinkled the main text with insights from Simons.

Mechanically the book is adequately done, although a few "typos" were evident. Also, as one who stresses proper documentation in the classroom, this reviewer is troubled that some direct quotations from P. Schaff (p. 118), J. Wesley (p. 86) and J. Lange (p. 106), for example, lack reference to their sources, which is inconsistent with procedures Wenger has followed elsewhere. The cover of the book lacks color and is not too inviting even though the subject is.

Pastors, students, and leaders of Bible-study classes will find this brief commentary a welcome resource. It is a beneficial text to put into the hands of laymen because it is doctrinally orthodox and spiritually uplifting. Elwell was correct when he said, "Reading *A Lay Guide to Romans* by J. C. Wenger will deepen a person's Christian life, challenge one's theological understanding, and increase one's biblical knowledge" (p. 6).

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II Corinthians. Anchor Bible 32A. By Victor Paul Furnish. Garden City: Doubleday, 1984, 619 pp., \$18.00.

The first thing that needs to be said about Furnish's commentary on 2 Corinthians is that it is outstanding, perhaps the definitive commentary on the letter in English, which no serious student of 2 Corinthians can ignore. In addition Furnish writes clearly and logically, and thus reading the commentary is a pleasant experience. The commentary contains a major introduction, some interesting photographs and an extensive bibliography. Indeed, Furnish constantly interacts with both primary and secondary sources in the work, and his citation of the former is particularly impressive and helpful. The heart of the commentary follows the general format of the Anchor series, including the author's fresh translation of the Biblical text, a discussion of technical matters in the notes, and a comment section in which the general flow of the text is set forth. On the whole a clear distinction between the notes and comments is maintained, although there is inevitably some overlap. In the notes alone there is a veritable wealth of information on Greek grammar.

The comment section is split into two subsections: general comment and detailed comment. In the former, Furnish explains the overall thrust of the pericope under consider-

ation and how it relates to the development of Paul's argument in 2 Corinthians. This section of the commentary is consistently excellent, and the author continually points out the coherency of Paul's argument. For example, he maintains *contra* many scholars that chaps. 8-9 are a unity. Furnish's detailed exposition is thorough, balanced and sane. One who merely has a yen for novelty will not find it here. For example, scholars have attempted to identify precisely the Christology of the opponents (11:4), but Furnish rightly remarks that the evidence is too slim to reconstruct the Christology of the adversaries. In fact the context of 2 Corinthians as a whole suggests that "Christology" with a capital "C" was not a major problem in Corinth.

The integrity of 2 Corinthians is a matter of some dispute, and so one naturally looks with some interest at the conclusions of a major new commentary on this issue. Furnish argues, in agreement with F. F. Bruce and C. K. Barrett, that 2 Corinthians includes two letters: The first nine chapters contain the fourth letter Paul wrote to the Corinthians, and chaps. 10-13 are the fifth. He rejects the view, therefore, that chaps. 1-9 were compiled from several Pauline fragments, arguing that these chapters contain one letter. In addition he disagrees with the idea that chaps. 10-13 are the "tearful" letter (see 2:3-4), giving decisive reasons why they could not have been written before chaps. 1-9.

The relationship of chaps. 1-9 to 10-13 is admittedly a difficult problem, and it is possible that the latter were written subsequently as a separate letter. But, in my opinion, good reasons still exist to see the letter as a unity. Furnish points out that the lack of MS evidence for the partition of chaps. 1-9 and 10-13 is not a decisive argument (p. 36). Granted, but the presumption is that the letter is a unity unless compelling reasons are presented for abandoning that option. With all the emphasis on partition today one should not forget that there is no textual evidence for such a theory. Furnish admits that in both chaps. 1-9 and 10-13 "there is an underlying thematic coherence" (p. 37)—viz., the nature of Paul's apostleship. But he says that the way Paul develops and addresses the problem of his apostleship suggests two different situations and two different letters. I would suggest, on the other hand, that the situation in Corinth was sufficiently complex to account for varying nuances and emphases on Paul's apostleship in one letter. Indeed, P. Hughes in his commentary on 2 Corinthians shows how the argument in chaps. 1-9 prepares the Corinthians for Paul's full-scale attack in 10-13.

Some of the objections that Furnish levels against unity are not very convincing. For example, he suggests it is impossible to believe that Titus was accompanied by another brother (12:17-18) when he visited Corinth the first time—the visit reported in 7:5 ff. But why he thinks such a linkage is farfetched is unclear, for it makes sense that Titus was accompanied by others, and since Titus was the main character in the story there is no compelling reason why Paul should mention in chap. 7 others who traveled with Titus. Furnish also says that it is hard to believe that the offender in 2 Corinthians 2 and 7 should be identified with the immoral brother in 1 Corinthians 5, and that the evidence of 2 Corinthians makes it clear that there were at least two prior visits to Corinth by Paul. But one could agree with Furnish on these matters and still subscribe to the unity of 2 Corinthians, for the unity of the latter does not preclude an interim "painful visit," nor does it demand the identification of the offender in 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Corinthians 2. Furnish is obviously right in perceiving significant differences between chaps. 1-9 and 10-13, but what is really remarkable is that he sees so much coherence between the two different letters, although this may suggest that the supposed "letters" should not be separated.

The origin and significance of 2 Cor 6:14-7:1 is also a matter of some dispute today. Furnish discusses the problem with characteristic thoroughness. He thinks the problem is so intractable that no certain conclusion can be reached about whether the passage is authentically Pauline, nor can one explain the meaning of the passage in its present context. One can only admire Furnish's objectivity, but the effect of Furnish's conclusion is somewhat disappointing, for his uncertainty on this issue simply leaves the passage suspended in the air, and thus his commentary does not pretend to solve this old problem. If the letter is a

unity, however, then a good case can be made for the hypothesis that the opponents in 6:14-7:1 are Paul's opponents who are described in more detail in chaps. 10-13. Furnish says this is improbable because Paul never describes his Christian opponents as unbelievers, but Paul's harsh words about the opponents in 11:4-6, 13-15 suggest that Paul did not think his opponents were authentic believers.

Furnish's interpretation of 5:1-10 stands out because he rejects the notion that the passage has anything to do with thanatology—i.e., Paul is not discussing in this passage the interim state or "the fate of the body at death" (p. 292). The author affirms that the passage is drawing on apocalyptic tradition, and Paul is referring to the longing for the new age or the new Jerusalem—i.e., to the unseen world for which all believers long. This is an intriguing suggestion, but whether it is fully convincing remains to be seen.

One of the great strengths of the commentary is the way the author handles the question of the identity of the opponents. He has some sound advice on the methodology of determining the opposition (p. 50) and identifies the adversaries as Hellenistic-Jewish Christians. Furnish applies his methodology effectively in the commentary. He refuses to read into the text too much specificity regarding the identity of the opponents, consistently showing the weaknesses of those who abstract from the text a detailed picture of the agitators. This careful methodological approach with reference to the opposition that Paul faced is crucial to the commentary, for 2 Corinthians is clearly a letter in which Paul is responding to his critics. Indeed, Furnish's sanity and balance on this issue is typical of his exegesis throughout, and such careful and nuanced scholarship makes this work a very valuable one.

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1, 2 Thessalonians, 1, 2 Timothy, Titus. The Communicator's Commentary, Vol. 9. By Gary W. Demarest. Waco: Word, 1984, 333 pp., \$14.95.

This new work is a welcome addition to the rapidly expanding Communicator's Commentary series. The stated goal of the series is to provide the pastor with scholarly, well-illustrated, well-outlined and practical commentaries. The series seeks to reflect a "quadrilateral Gospel" of commitment to Christ, a Biblical self-esteem, personal evangelism and social justice. The English text used throughout is the *NKJV*.

Demarest is the senior pastor of the La Canada Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles. His lucid style and pastoral sensitivity are well suited to the aims of the series.

The book has several weaknesses that detract but little from its worth. A refreshing compulsion to work out the implications of the gospel for social justice prompts Demarest to draw out applications that are not supported by the text. Do Paul's instructions to enlist and care for widows in the Ephesian congregations suggest that the Church adopt the same practice toward all the needy in the world (p. 208)? Is the imbalance between poverty and wealth in this world solely a problem of distribution (pp. 196, 222, 228)? Should personal ethics be exalted to national policy? Demarest comments, for example: "The last two admonitions [1 Thess 5:15] may well express how that patience comes into play. It begins by the adamant refusal to render evil for evil to anyone. Rendering evil for evil creates the classic lose-lose situation. You insult me. I insult you. We both lose. On the global scale, the two superpowers have now developed the ultimate model of the tragedy of evil for evil. You fire your nuclear warhead; I fire mine. We all lose. How do you break the cycle? One party has to risk a new approach" (p. 94). Demarest's political observations are devoid of the cautious realism that he exhibits in his pastoral observations.

A further weakness (though one appreciates the author's honesty) is a reticence to interpret the difficult texts. Paul's discussion of sexual morality (1 Thess 4:3-8) is handled in a cursory fashion that ignores the tough interpretive questions. Demarest too easily dismisses Paul's argument for the subordinate role of women in the ministry of the Word (2 Tim 2:13-15), stating: "Paul reflected the view of the fall which prevailed in his time" (p.

181). He further circumvents the text with this suggestion: "Why not place this passage in the category of those remarkably few statements of Paul which best be admitted to be beyond our grasp?"

The publishers may wish to make note of the mistaken label of *ad hominem* placed on Jesus' reasoning recorded in Matt 6:25-34 (p. 221). The argument should properly be labeled *a fortiori*.

These weaknesses are offset by the special aspects of the commentary. Demarest discloses something of himself to the reader with a rare candor (e.g. his acknowledgment of his conflicting emotions regarding the coming of the Lord, pp. 83-84). He speaks to life, not to the classroom. He is judicious in his judgments and avoids extremes. He adds an extra dimension to his discussions with his insights from his experiences in East Africa, which challenge us to thinking that transcends our own cultural heritage.

The reader who is interested in precise interpretations or fresh approaches will be disappointed by this volume. Furthermore this is not the type of commentary that will become a standard reference tool. Rather, it challenges us with the contemporary message of these epistles. It appeals to us from a pastoral perspective. It is replete with compassionate and reasoned insights into the questions pastors face. Though the commentary certainly will not be timeless, it is indeed timely.

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Stand Bold in Grace: An Exposition of Hebrews. By Robert G. Gromacki. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, 228 pp., \$8.95 paper.

Gromacki, professor of Bible and Greek at Cedarville College, has added a seventh to his series of NT commentaries. After a nine-page introduction (Paul or a close associate was the author), he writes thirteen chapters basically following the chapter divisions of the epistle. Each chapter is followed by seven discussion questions for use in group Bible studies or Sunday-school classes.

The old adage that says something about not being able to see the forest because of the trees applies to this commentary. The author leads us on a path through the epistle, stopping to examine each tree without spending adequate time telling us about the forest. If a future edition of the commentary is issued it is hoped that the author will expand his synthetic paragraphs and include a section on the epistle's outline and argument in the introduction.

Gromacki deals in an orderly fashion with just about every phrase of Hebrews. He includes an abundance of cross-references. Many transliterated Greek words are needlessly included in the text, although most of the grammatical terms are relegated to footnotes. A beginning Greek student with an open NT could benefit from this commentary by seeing the way one man applies various points of grammar to the exegetical process. But the student must beware of following etymological definitions offered of some Greek words (e.g. *katanoë* means to "mind down," p. 56; *analogidzomai* means to "reason up," p. 200). Meaning is determined by usage, not etymology. The author makes the questionable application of the Granville Sharp rule to plurals (pp. 89, 107; cf. Eph 2:20). He also seems to see time in the aorist participle (p. 75).

These criticisms and the lack of adequate synthesis do not mean the commentary is not helpful. Gromacki does offer an interesting interpretation of the warning passages, giving them weight for genuine believers while seeking to avoid the Arminian position. "There is an apostasy of practice which results in the forfeiture of earthly blessing, and there is doctrinal apostasy which marks the unsaved" (p. 66). He sees the warnings as addressed to believers who, by virtue of their spiritual timidity and lethargy, are in danger of losing "future earthly blessings through a critical decision of falling away" (p. 112). One's interpretation of the warning passages in Hebrews is usually governed by one's understanding

of perseverance. Gromacki does not understand perseverance in the classical sense. Someone who apostatizes in practice (cf. p. 67) does not lose his hoped-for place in heaven but only his blessings on earth (p. 68). With refinement, the author's view is plausible (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 3:15; 11:27-30; 2 Cor 5:10) although not sufficiently supported in the commentary. (E.g., there is no comment on 10:27; the interpretation of 10:38 seems inconsistent; and how can we be punished if Christ took our punishment for us?) Again, more synthesis may have helped. His argument may also have been more credible had he included more interaction with major commentaries, although this was obviously not his purpose.

David H. Johnson

First Peter. By D. Edmond Hiebert. Chicago: Moody, 1984, v + 329 pp., \$11.95 paper.

This commentary is written for diligent students and pastors who may not (yet) be proficient in Greek but who wish to delve into the riches of the original text. The exposition is based on the ASV because the author feels it is a more accurate translation of the Greek. He transliterates Greek words and phrases, then translates, and then proceeds to the exposition, which generally is rich with word studies, grammatical analyses, the author's own insights, and frequent quotations from a wide variety of sources.

The book opens with twenty pages of introduction to the epistle where the author presents and defends, sometimes with disconcerting brevity, the conservative positions on the common questions of introduction. There is a fairly comprehensive defense of Petrine authorship, of the unity and epistolary form of the book. The recipients were predominantly Gentile Christians living in Asia Minor. The date was sometime in the mid-60s, probably A.D. 64. Peter wrote from "Babylon," his cryptic term for Rome.

Hiebert then gives us a six-page outline that carefully traces the epistle's development of thought. While the outline organizes the commentary, the book is divided into twenty chapters to facilitate use in group Bible studies. A rather extensive bibliography is limited to English-language materials. The work would have been strengthened by attention to European scholarship.

Hiebert, however, has composed a good, basic "word and phrase" commentary. It is like a bread-and-butter lunch. Often commentaries fail to be more than merely definitional of the text language, rehashing what is fairly obvious to most readers without truly wrestling to grasp the spirit of the writing and to expound the dynamic thought patterns and unique expressions used by the inspired author. The handling of the unique and rich expression "a living hope" is like that. The author produces definitional material like "a living hope [is] . . . the energizing principle of the new life . . . not an objective prospect . . . but the subjective attitude of expectancy that grips the newborn soul" (p. 48). The exposition of this term should develop the vibrant, dynamic character of this hope informed by "inheritance incorruptible . . . undefiled . . . reserved in heaven" (v 4), it should allude to the great joy (v 6) of this ancient (v 10) and contemporary salvation (v 12). Writers of "word and phrase" commentaries need to concentrate more on exposition of the powerful, beautiful thought-patterns of NT writers. We need to identify the trees, but we also need inspiring descriptions of the beautiful forest.

A major portion of the commentary (pp. 151-195) is blemished by the failure to put in proper perspective Peter's teaching on law and grace, obedience and freedom (2:16). A common fallacy is presented that our freedom is in the spiritual realm, a freedom from sin and guilt, but that in the political and social spheres we are under law, duty and requirement (pp. 152, 158). While it is true that Scripture presents practical ethical imperatives to command our everyday obedience, it should be made clear that this obedience is to be practiced in the context of freedom, the new freedom we have as sons of the kingdom of God. Indeed we must pay taxes to Caesar, but we must choose to do so as free sons of the kingdom, not be forced to do so as slaves of the state. Kingdom freedom is a new, total life situation. We are free in every conceivable sphere of activity and relationship. Mysteri-

ously, we are slaves of God and absolutely subject to his will as was Christ, but precisely this slavery sets us free to do our rightful duty for king, master, wife, husband. Peter's ethic is not talmudic. At times the author does come through on this nicely, as in the following: "Wives, like husbands, believe in the same Savior, are redeemed by the same ransom, live by the same grace, and look forward to the same eternal destiny. Recognition of that reality will end domestic tyranny" (p. 194).

On the famous "spirits in prison" passage (3:18-21) the author does a fine job of presenting a very acceptable view where there is no community of opinion. "Put to death in the flesh, and made alive in the spirit" simply contrasts the "two modes of our Lord's existence, before and after the resurrection" (p. 226). So, as the resurrected Christ, Jesus "went and preached unto the spirits in prison." This text still poses four baffling problems that Hiebert discusses to careful solution: (1) Who are "spirits in prison"? They are the fallen angels of Genesis 6 who rebelled against God in the time of Noah or perhaps the people of Noah's day (pp. 229 ff.). (2) Where is the prison? It is "Tartarus . . . a place of punishment lower than Hades" (p. 230). (3) When did Jesus preach to them? Here the author expresses uncertainty, but from his discussion it may be concluded that this occurred between Jesus' resurrection and ascension. (4) What was his message? The subject was not gospel salvation offered as a second chance. Rather, "Christ announced His triumph over evil, which was bad news for them" (p. 230).

Alternative answers are also considered. This is an excellent discussion of a most difficult passage. It alone is worth the cost of the book.

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The Johannine Epistles. The New Century Bible Commentary. By Kenneth Grayston. Grand Rapids/London: Eerdmans/Marshall, Morgan, and Scott, 1984, xviii + 174 pp., \$5.95 paper.

In his preface Grayston acknowledges his debt to other Johannine scholars but announces that his exegesis has reformulated some traditional views. His avowed aim is not to address any of the religious issues regarding faith and morals that come from these epistles but to involve his readers in an attempt to understand the epistles in their cultural setting. In his effort to avoid being a preacher or a moralist Grayston has succeeded. However, this is both the strength and the weakness of his commentary. According to the back cover of the book, the New Century Bible Commentary (NCBC) is supposed to be "balanced and up-to-date in terms of both its scholarship and its reflections of the contemporary relevance of the biblical text." No doubt Grayston's scholarship is up-to-date, but he is admittedly unconcerned with contemporary relevance. He believes that his readers can handle such implications for themselves. But here he is evidently at cross-purposes with the NCBC series.

The format of the commentary, in keeping with its aim, emphasizes introduction and the handling of specific problems at the expense of theology and synthesis. After eighteen pages of front matter (which are not numbered), about twenty-five pages are given to a concise yet comprehensive introduction. The commentary proper devotes around 115 pages to 1 John but is disappointingly brief on 2 and 3 John (six and four pages respectively). On a more positive note, the book includes four helpful indexes: (1) Biblical passages, apocrypha, and Jewish writings, (2) ancient writings, (3) modern writers, and (4) subjects. Throughout the comments there are frequent references to extra-Biblical writings and occasional references to other Johannine scholars such as R. Brown, R. Bultmann, C. H. Dodd, I. H. Marshall and R. Schnackenburg. Thus Grayston carries out his aim to emphasize his own exegesis in the cultural setting.

Traditionally many have believed that the gospel of John preceded the first epistle. Grayston views this as a "feeble" conclusion based on "frail" argument (p. 11). He posits

nearly the opposite relationship, with 1 John contributing to the composition of the gospel of John (pp. 14-16). While this approach is unconvincing, the treatment of the beliefs of the dissidents of 1 John is much more satisfying (pp. 14-22). Grayston shows from 1 John that the dissidents did not hold all of Cerinthus' views, yet he believes they could be described as Cerinthus' forerunners. In Grayston's view the dissidents claimed inspiration of the Spirit and diminished the redemption and moral example of Jesus. The author of 1 John responds to this by mere authoritarian assertion regarding the primacy of Jesus and the need for brotherly love and obedient living. There is a measure of truth in this reconstruction, but it is marred by overconfidence and weak argumentation from silence. For example, Grayston takes 1 John's sparse mention of the Spirit as evidence that the author is ignorant of John 14-16 (pp. 13-14) and that the Spirit plays a very minor role in his theology (pp. 134-135, 140). It seems more likely that the lack of emphasis on the Spirit is due to the situation being addressed and the subject matter of 1 John. This calls into question a major element in Grayston's reconstruction. There are other instances where similar arguments from silence occur (pp. 27, 104).

Grayston demonstrates his prowess as an exegete throughout the volume. In keeping with NCBC format he makes only passing references to the Greek text. These are usually helpful, but sometimes the references are pointless (pp. 92, 110, 111, 118, 142) or inadequate (pp. 37, 76, 115, 126). The summary of conditional clauses in 1 John (pp. 95-97) is very helpful, as is the contextual analysis of 4:1-6 (p. 118). It was refreshing to see Grayston argue that 3:20 is a solemn warning, not a comforting reassurance (pp. 115-116). Nearly all commentators take the opposite view, but I believe Grayston (with Calvin, Alford and Findlay) is correct.

Despite these and other helpful insights there are places where the approach leaves something to be desired. Grayston frequently views the author of 1 John as a rather inept and clumsy writer who fears an emphasis on the Spirit and who does little more than hold the party line with authoritarian decrees (pp. 9, 13, 18, 33, 35, 36, 37, 50, 52, 77, 104, 105, 112, 113, 140). The author of 2 John is also inept (pp. 6, 151, 153); 3 John is "theologically barren" (pp. 6, 161). One might turn this last charge back against Grayston in view of his own questionable assertions on the person and work of Christ (pp. 38, 51, 60, 95, 97, 121, 130), the nature of sin (pp. 56, 93) and the believer's lifestyle (pp. 76, 94, 105, 134).

Overall the commentary accomplishes its stated purpose: It attempts to interpret the Johannine epistles in their cultural context. The commentary's reformulations of traditional views will no doubt stimulate thought. The fact remains, however, that Grayston's views are sometimes weak exegetically and theologically. The absence of reflections of contemporary relevance also limits the usefulness of the book.

I noted typographical errors on p. 18 (where the marginal note "5:9f." is typeset over "the") and p. 111 (where *charis* should be *charin*).

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Crisis and Catharsis. The Power of the Apocalypse. By Adela Yarbro Collins. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984, 179 pp.

This book is not another verse-by-verse commentary on John's Apocalypse but an attempt to understand its broad message primarily against the social and psychological background of the apocalyptic author.

The first two chapters do not cover any substantially new ground but provide good discussions reviewing the alternative positions concerning authorship and date. There is a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of positions concerning authorship. Collins concludes that attempts at historical identifications of authorship are vain. She asserts merely that the author was an unknown figure named John. She then turns to what she considers a more beneficial approach, a consideration of various proposals concerning

the social background of the author.

Although historical identifications are uncertain, she sees a more productive endeavor through investigating the author's relationship to first-century prophetic phenomena. One of the key questions here is whether John was part of a settled community of prophets or part of a group of trans-local leaders who were wandering prophets. In this regard there is a survey of various views of the social situation of the Apocalypse (e.g. of C. Clemen, G. Bornkamm, A. Satake, G. Kretschmar, A. Nikolanen, D. Hill, E. Schüssler-Fiorenza, D. Aune).

Collins' own conclusion about social background is that the unknown "John" was an early Christian itinerant prophet whose thought was shaped by the OT prophetic tradition and who had grown up in a Palestinian Jewish milieu. Collins' conclusions about the author at this point do not reveal anything essentially new about the issue of authorship.

The discussion of date is somewhat helpful. Irenaeus' testimony of a Domitianic dating is seen as corroborated by (1) John's use of the name "Babylon," which Jewish sources of the same general period apply to Rome in her role as destroyer of Jerusalem, and (2) a nonphysical understanding of the temple (Revelation 11). The most cogent proposal is that there is no evidence supporting the traditional idea that Revelation was written primarily as a response to Christians undergoing religious persecution during Domitian's reign. Indeed, John is viewed as trying to make his readership aware of an unperceived crisis.

In chap. 3 there is an attempt to develop the nature of this subtle crisis in terms of a widespread social tribulation. First, there was Jewish hostility toward Christians so that they could no longer enjoy the social security (economic, political, etc.) of being identified with the Jewish religious community (cf. Rev 2:9-10). There was also Gentile religious antipathy toward Christians, which likewise led to social ostracism. John's intent was to prevent social acceptance at the price of religious compromise (e.g. the tension with the Nicolaitans and with followers of Balaam and Jezebel, and the religious nature of trade guilds). This social problem should also be understood against the background of attitudes toward wealth in the Roman empire. Collins discusses a generally critical attitude toward Roman wealth and taxes on the part of many in the east, especially among Jews. This attitude is demonstrated repeatedly from the Sibylline Oracles, where hopes of Rome's destruction are expressed because of its social and economic injustices. John is seen as drawing from these Sibylline motifs, although there is probably not evidence of direct borrowing but only of a shared community of ideas (*contra* Collins) since there are no verbal allusions or distinct ideas that could not be traceable elsewhere.

Collins is too psychologically speculative in concluding that John expresses these ideas of economic criticism because he "feels" that he is a victim of injustice. Although this is possible, the more probable reason lies in John's disgust with the *hybris* that is associated with Rome's injustice in general. But she is likely right to observe that there were "severe strains" between wealthy and poor in Asia Minor. If correct, this would enhance the idea that part of John's purpose is to be understood against the background of a Christian readership becoming increasingly identified with an attitude of the economically disenfranchised. In particular, Christians were experiencing a "relative deprivation" in socio-economic terms and especially religiously, in the sense that a conflict was perceived between the expectations of messianic Christianity and the actual social situation. But Collins too quickly assumes that one of John's purposes was to reinforce and awaken any anti-Roman feelings of hostility so that his readers would not be open to compromise with Roman culture (p. 111). Rather the emphasis is probably to be seen more in the direction of making the readers aware of the evil and seductive religious nature of Rome and its various apparently neutral institutions (e.g. Rome [Babylon] is portrayed as a "harlot"). In fact John probably depicts such vividly horrific portrayals of Rome to cause his readership to be aware of its evil nature (e.g. beast, whore, etc.). Collins also does not have much basis to argue that John primarily has a social and political perspective on "wealth" and not a spiritual viewpoint, which links wealth with an attitude of arrogance (p. 122).

Collins seems inconsistent in her assessment of the nature and scope of the "crisis" that Christians were enduring. On the one hand, she says that Revelation was not written in response to a mass social crisis, since Roman persecution was selective because Roman authorities may have differed over their understanding and application of the law (pp. 98, 103). On the other hand, she asserts that by the time of Pliny (ca. 112 C.E.) Roman persecution of Christians was formal and quite widespread (p. 100). Would the situation have been that different only a decade or so earlier? Or perhaps it can be said that John was expecting an imminent persecution on a larger scale.

Nevertheless Collins is surely correct when she asserts that what motivated John to write was "the tension between John's vision of the kingdom of God and his environment" (p. 107). She has well emphasized the social background, especially the various factors tempting Christians to compromise with Roman-Jewish culture. But she has underemphasized the element of overt persecution, or at least the threat of it. Indeed the former was the subtle crisis and the latter the overt crisis. That the latter is just as prominent is apparent from the book itself (cf. Rev 1:9; 2:10, 13; 6:9-11, 14, 16; 11:7-10; 12:6, 11, 13, 15, 17; 13:7, 15, 17; 16:6; 17:7; 20:4). Therefore the former was likely a present reality and the latter was understood as imminent. Collins' observation of widespread attempts to pay divine honor to Domitian would fit into a developing pattern that would have easily led eventually to persecution of Christians on a large scale. Collins recognizes the relevance of the above-mentioned references in Revelation but does not give them enough prominence in her interpretation (cf. pp. 111-120).

In chap. 4 the argument is developed that John's intent is to inspire Christians not to compromise with Roman culture by separating from it. This "Christian exclusivism" she refers to as "social radicalism"—"a social, political and economic withdrawal from life" (pp. 124 ff.). But again Collins appears to overstate herself, since the evidence does not warrant the kind of absolute withdrawal she envisages (e.g. Revelation 2-3 does not support this on such a large scale) but primarily a separation from those facets of culture that necessarily would involve religious compromise. Rev 18:4-5 would certainly intensify this exhortation against compromise. Furthermore John's numerous references to Daniel throughout Revelation would indicate a background for his thought that, indeed, favored the believer's involvement in pagan cultural institutions while still avoiding compromise, since this is one of the themes of Daniel 1-6 (of course this is true if we understand John's Danielic references to connote a contextual awareness of Daniel; in this regard, see my *Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* [Lanham: University Press of America, 1984] and my journal articles cited therein). The use of Dan 1:12 in Rev 2:10 is a good case in point.

The internal evidence that Collins adduces to demonstrate in part John's "social radicalism" is fourfold. First, the reference to buying and selling with the "mark of the beast" in Rev 13:16-17 is John's attempt to exhort his readers not to use the Roman coin in economic transactions. In the light of her discussion this is certainly possible, but not the most likely identification for the following reasons: (1) The equation of the mark with the name of the beast or the number indicates that vv 16-17 are metaphorical; (2) the metaphorical nature of vv 16-17 is further enhanced through the probable observation that the "mark" is a parody of the "seal" in chap. 7, which is clearly metaphorical; (3) although there was probably no economic ban against Christians during Domitian's reign, John may have been anticipating one in the light of sporadic social and economic ostracism of Christians (cf. J. P. M. Sweet, *Revelation* [London: SCM, 1979] 217 for [1] and [3]).

Second, Collins understands the 144,000 in Rev 14:1-5 to refer to an exclusive group of Christians who are exhorted to continence as the ideal Christian life. That this is an exclusive group is improbable since the 144,000 is likely a reference to the Church as the new Israel and a further development of the same reference in Revelation 7. Many commentators have acknowledged the "new Israel" reference in chap. 7, and some have even seen that the multitude of 7:9-17 is intended to be an equation of the Church multitude with the

new Israel (e.g. G. B. Caird and J. P. M. Sweet). Collins' appeal to 20:4 in support of such an exclusive reference does not stand on its own, since it can have a wider reference than that which she proposes for chap. 14 (i.e., all those who have died while maintaining their faith). Furthermore, as significant commentators have observed, that the exhortation to continence is not to be understood literally is apparent from the observation that *porneia* (and related forms) in Revelation is used metaphorically without exception, as Collins acknowledges elsewhere (pp. 87-88, 10; although a dual nuance could be included in chap. 2). One such acknowledged metaphorical usage of *porneia* is applied to "Babylon" in 14:8, which in all likelihood has some contextual link with 14:4. This metaphorical view would be enhanced if our figurative understanding of the 144,000 as the new Israel is correct. Unfortunately Collins does not even interact with these alternative viewpoints on 14:1-4.

A third aspect of John's "social radicalism" is seen in his admonition against "wealth." Collins is unclear in her discussion, since predominantly she appears to view the admonition as a qualified prohibition against wealth, and yet the drift of her argument seems to point in the direction of a more absolute prohibition for all Christians (e.g. "detachment from wealth and property was demanded," p. 137), especially in the light of her emphasis on John's role as an itinerant prophet (see below). If this is her view, it would represent another overstatement without adequate textual support.

She concludes chap. 4 by discussing John's role as an itinerant prophet and assumes that this meant that John was ascetic and had given up most of the ties of ordinary life. She adduces some scattered synoptic traditions and *Did.* 11:1 to support her assumption. The hypothesis that John was an "ascetic wandering prophet" is also supported by the observation that his rivals in the various towns also seem to be wandering leaders, but this says nothing about the ascetic aspect nor do the references to the synoptics and *Didache* necessarily shed light on John's specific situation. According to Collins, this hypothesis also best explains the following internal features: (1) John does not identify himself in any special way with the seven communities, although he is familiar with them; (2) admonitions against wealth; (3) admonitions against using Roman coinage; (4) admonitions about continence. In her view John wants Christians to withdraw from Greco-Roman society and form eschatological monastic communities awaiting the final judgment and their salvation (cf. p. 137). If one for the sake of argument were to grant the validity of the last three points, perhaps the hypothesis would be viable, although even then more evidence would need to be gathered to demonstrate the probability of it. But her theory falters, since she has not presented enough trenchant exegesis to demonstrate the probability of the last three points. She has taken a particular understanding of the wandering prophet role and foisted it upon the text and has tried to make the internal phenomena fit the hypothesis. Her argument remains unconvincing.

In chap. 5 there is an excellent discussion of the various ways in which the language of the Apocalypse creates its desired effect (cf. p. 144). But Collins subsequently confuses John's use of the OT by equating allegorical use with typological (for the distinction see especially L. Goppelt, *Typos*, as well as R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament*; E. E. Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*). The greater part of the chapter is taken up with a psychological explanation of the origin of Revelation, which Collins terms "the process of catharsis." The terrible symbols of evil are seen as a way of venting fearful feelings, and the scenes of judgment are a means of releasing tension related to aggressive feelings resulting from social oppression. Through projecting their fears into a cosmic framework, John provided a way for the readers to be distanced from their suffering in order that they would become more detached and obtain greater psychological and emotional control of themselves.

Her discussion here is not exegetically rooted but seems to arise from a particular psychological presupposition through which she is attempting to interpret many of the symbols. Given the presupposition, her explanation makes sense—that is, she assumes that John was a somewhat inadequate psychologist (p. 161) and that the divine authority of

John's message is only an "impression" necessary for its effectiveness for first-century hearers and important today only for "fundamentalist readers." Collins classifies herself as a "critical reader" who apparently cannot accept such a presupposition of divine authority because of her objective investigation. Contrary to the impression she gives, she also operates with a set of presuppositions that color her study throughout. However, I find no convincing exegetical evidence in her work against the divine authority of John's message.

Collins concludes with a discussion of whether John's scathing juridical indictments of Rome can be considered humane and loving. She concludes negatively, insisting that not only is "the Apocalypse . . . a failure in love" (p. 170) but also that it "is a book that expresses anger and resentment and . . . may elicit violence" (p. 171). Consequently the text is often "flawed by the darker side of the author's human nature" (p. 172). And a "postcritical" reading of the book does not ignore such phenomena but uses them as an occasion "to discover one's own hostile, aggressive feelings" (p. 173). In other words, the readers become conscious of their own sin by first becoming aware of John's sinful attitudes. This is a conclusion not reached by exegetical methodology but shaped by a particular twentieth-century psychological approach to the Apocalypse. True enough, there are some theological problems with some of these "judgment texts," although many can be explained as just judgments on those who remain immovable in their sinful stance toward God. Nevertheless there are some texts like Rev 6:10 that are similar to the imprecations of the Psalms, having the same theological problems and needing to be approached likewise. Consequently, the approach would be to look at these judgmental statements as expressions of a desire not for personal vengeance but for the vindication of God's name—i.e., his righteousness and honor. They are probably also to be seen as expressing hatred of sin on the part of those in ultimate opposition to God.

Having said this, we note that part of her psychological analysis is correspondent with the text. She sees John imparting to the readership a psychology that envisions a presently existing, invisible heavenly kingdom, which in reality is in control of the evil world kingdoms and will eventually judge them. Such information would have been a tremendous psychological encouragement to believers undergoing suffering (p. 154).

Collins' book has much helpful background data, but many of her exegetical conclusions are colored by psychologizing presuppositions and are the result of speculative thought.

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From Triumphalism to Maturity. By Donald A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, 189 pp., \$12.95.

In this work Carson shows his typical drive and energy, and again we receive a worthwhile book from his hands.

The subtitle explains it well: "An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13." That is just what this work is. This section of 2 Corinthians is so self-contained that many have believed it to be a separate work. Carson argues that it was part of 2 Corinthians but composed later, after the dictating of the first part had been laid aside for some time. But its unified nature makes it a lovely text for a separate study. Carson in expounding it shows that he has the full range of scholarly tools at his disposal, but as this is an exposition there is no extensive bibliography or citation of sources or Greek or Hebrew terms. But the results of such study are definitely and authoritatively presented. The style is condensed and fast-paced, clear but solid. The exposition is aimed at the false triumphalism of today—e.g., the "law of reciprocity" and other forms of selfish service—certainly a needed corrective in this narcissistic age.

There is little to say by way of critique if one is not to pick at individual exegetical points, which is not the task of a review. Two items could perhaps be mentioned. The application is condensed. I would have liked a little more space devoted to it with more

examples and a clearer spinning out of the practical demands. What is here is good and concrete. It just goes by too fast. Likewise I sometimes found the text a bit fast-paced. I do not think in Carson's condensed style and sometimes found myself breathless. Literary embellishment would help the book flow more. As it is, it reads more like Tübingen than Cambridge. Finally, while I appreciated the call to avoid false triumphalism, one can go too far and neglect a true triumph in Christ. Some folk seem to take pride in their failures and gloom rather than letting God's surpassing power be seen in their weakness. I did not hear this note quite as strongly as I would have liked. Perhaps it remains for another book.

This is a good book. I will proudly place it on my shelf and read it again when I work with 2 Corinthians. If Carson keeps up at this quality, he will give a major contribution to those who need to expound Scripture.

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The Present-Day Christological Debate. By Klaas Runia. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984, 120 pp., \$5.95 paper.

Runia's slender volume comprises the sixth book in IVP's "Issues in Contemporary Theology" series, whose purpose, according to series editor I. H. Marshall, is "to trace a path through the tangled undergrowth of theological discussion so that the student may have some idea of the route and the destination, the alluring sidepaths and the recommended road" (p. 5). Runia, professor of practical theology at the Reformed Theological Seminary in Kampen, Netherlands, carries on the fine quality of IVP's think-for-yourself style that readers have come to expect and appreciate. By actively engaging those with whom we disagree, evangelicals humbly denounce any monopolization of God's truth in order to test, refine and strengthen their own views (pp. 6, 88).

While Runia's scope is large (he examines thirteen Christologies in nine short chapters), his purpose is narrow and well-defined. Focusing primarily on continental developments, he intends to provide his readers with "a bird's-eye view of the debate that is still going on" (p. 9). For this reason it is hard to criticize him for omissions or sketchy treatments of some important subjects like the nineteenth-century "historical Jesus" movement (two pages) or process thought (a page and a half).

The book begins and ends with Jesus' question from the gospels, "Who do you say that I am?", after which Runia divides his material into three broad, chronological groups. Before 1960 Barth, Bultmann and J. A. T. Robinson loomed large on the Christological scene. From the mid-1960s onward, Runia examines two broad groups: those who, continuing primarily in the Barthian tradition, seek to go beyond and to improve Chalcedonian orthodoxy, and those who, seeing Jesus as "no more than a man" (p. 47), "abandon Chalcedonian orthodoxy altogether" (p. 32). Pannenberg and Moltmann comprise the former group, while three Catholics (Schoonenberg, Schillebeeckx and Küng) and three Protestants (E. Flesseman, J. A. T. Robinson and H. Berkhof) make up the latter, more radical group. As representative of the late 1970s, Runia surveys the debate surrounding *The Myth of God Incarnate*.

Chapters 8 and 9 focus on Runia's own constructive interaction with the above material. Here he expounds more directly on what he has implicitly affirmed throughout the entire book: the historical reliability and authority of Scripture ("the real crux of the matter," p. 109), the parameters of classic, creedal orthodoxy, especially of the first five centuries, within which viable Christologies must be hammered out, the inseparability and complementary relation of "functional" and "ontological" categories, which when separated entail a "false dilemma," and the need to combine methodologies from "above" and "below."

A modest bibliography of ninety entries and ample footnotes add to the book's strengths. Without pretending to act as a substitute for broader and more in-depth reading of the sources, *The Present-Day Christological Debate* serves its stated purpose well. It

maps out the terrain of contemporary Christology and provides the reader with the major contours of the landscape. I recommend it highly, especially for seminary use, where—like it or not—large amounts of material from diverse perspectives sometimes must be presented and digested in condensed form.

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The Social Context of the New Testament. A Sociological Analysis. By Derek Tidball. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984, 160 pp., n.p. paper.

A "sociological" approach to the NT has become influential in recent years, especially through the work of such scholars as Theissen, Gager, Malherbe, Kee and Meeks. Tidball's book, originally published in Britain under the title *An Introduction to the Sociology of the New Testament* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), is therefore timely. The author, who is director of studies at London Bible College, holds degrees both in sociology and in theology and is admirably qualified for his task.

The world of the NT was exceedingly complex, and the American title aroused expectations of a rather different and more ambitious book, only partly dispelled by the qualification of its subtitle. Between the two editions I was rather uncertain what kind of book to expect and predisposed to approach it with ideas of what kind of book it ought to be.

In the event, I found it a useful contribution, helpful in its thoughtful affirmation of an area of study that has often made "imperialist" anti-Christian claims and so been accorded less than its due of sympathetic consideration, helpful too in its Biblical approach and warm pastoral and missionary concern. Tidball makes no claim to technical originality. This is essentially an introduction, which introduces the reader to thinkers like Troeltsch, Durkheim and Berger along the way and offers a sensitive Christian assessment.

It strikes me, however, that there is still a book that needs to be written that subjects the sociological trend in current NT study in particular to a much more searching criticism than is offered here. The concern to see the text in its full and representative background is most important. To stress the social context is likewise an essential corrective to the practice of seeing the text as a mere quarry for disembodied theological data. But it may be helpful here to commend a concept of "social history" rather than "sociology," if "sociology" is seen in terms of applying a theoretical model derived from a remotely different time and place. The "social context" of a body of Scripture embedded in so complex a cultural plurality can only be effectively written out of the rigorous assessment of specific but fragmentary evidence. It is just my problem with a book like J. H. Elliott's "sociological" exegesis of 1 Peter, *A Home for the Homeless* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), that he proceeds upon a tenuous theoretical and lexical base rather than sifting hard evidence. To extrapolate from the concept of a "conversionist sect," forged in a different modern setting, is precarious.

It may not be fair to ask too much of a popular introduction, and we can be warmly appreciative of what Tidball has provided. He has avoided the pitfalls by his careful use of the textual evidence itself, and he makes many illuminating points. Yet there are inequalities, a sketch of the Roman environment in four pages (66-70), followed by much fuller and very interesting discussions of social institutions and of the current debate over the social status of the first Christians. In these latter sections he owes much to the seminal work of E. A. Judge, significantly a "social historian," not a "sociologist." I should have liked to see more guidance in handling the sociological trend in NT criticism, and there later articles of Judge could have been of focal significance. It is a pity that both his "St. Paul and Classical Society," JAC 15 (1972) 19-36, and "The Social Identity of the First Christians: A Question of Method in Religious History," JRH 11 (1980) 201-217, are in relatively inaccessible sources. Both would be very helpful in strengthening this discussion and may be commended for reading with the present book to complement and extend its usefulness.

A few slips (like the wrong dating of the death of Claudius, p. 68), misprints and infelicities have been reproduced unchanged from the British edition.

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Heresies: The Image of Christ in the Mirror of Heresy and Orthodoxy from the Apostles to the Present. By Harold O. J. Brown. Garden City: Doubleday, 1984, 477 pp., \$17.95.

Heresy as a valid religious concept has, as it were, fallen from grace. It has not so much fallen into disrepute as it has fallen into irrelevance. Once a highly vaunted tool of the orthodox, the very notion of heresy today has become hopelessly out of fashion as too crass for the refined and genteel religious tastes of our gilded age. Brown, however, remains undaunted. He revives the concept of heresy in his historical study to remind us all of the Hegelian proverb: "The only lesson one learns of history is that men never learn from history."

Holding the lamp of Chalcedonian orthodoxy to guide him through the winding corridors of Church history, Brown chronicles what amounts to the rise and fall of Christian orthodoxy. Ostensibly Brown leads the way through the historical maze of Christological heresies (although he does occasionally wander into other areas such as soteriology). It becomes readily apparent early on, however, that he has other more contemporary concerns on his mind. Heresies of the past become his foil to demonstrate how the orthodoxy of the present is waning. The great heresies are held up like a mirror to the face of modern Christianity, only to behold a reflection of itself.

Having scanned the historical horizons Brown has some good news and some bad news for modern Christianity. The good news is that from the smoldering ashes of persecution and doctrinal confusion of the early centuries of the Church "there emerged a figure of Jesus Christ substantial, compelling, and believable; indeed, not only believable, but sufficiently clear and coherent so that one can truly say, believed by Christians through the centuries" (p. xxv). The high point of Christian orthodoxy was the Council of Chalcedon in 451, which marked the culmination of a series of creedal formulations—beginning with the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasian Creed and the Nicene Creed. As Brown acknowledges, the successful quest of the ancient Church paralleled his own personal quest for the Christ of orthodox Christianity. Thus Chalcedon became the standard (for Brown as well as the Church) by which orthodoxy was measured.

Along came the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, and with it the dissolution of the external unity of Christendom—a portent of bad news for Christian orthodoxy. Although it was never the intent of the Reformers to fragment Christianity it was, according to Brown, "the inevitable result." However, Brown places the blame for the shattered unity of the Church squarely on the shoulders of Roman Catholicism, which he concludes "had moved away from the [orthodox] center" (p. 297). Unflinchingly he judges that Rome was culpable on two counts. Culpability in the first place rests with Rome because of the inculcation of Radbertian transubstantiation into Catholic dogma at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215. It is just at this point that Brown finds the beginning of Rome's downward slide away from its own doctrinal orthodoxy. Transubstantiation thus "was the innovation that made the orthodoxy of the past into the heresy of the present" (p. 306). Another reason for the breakup of Christendom is observed by Brown—namely, that Roman Catholicism "trivialized heresy" (p. 303). Increasingly the charge of heresy had less to do with the preservation of orthodoxy than with retaining ecclesiastical and political power. Brown has obviously followed a rather traditional Protestant interpretation of the Reformation, but his analysis results from an objective historical stance and not from religious bias.

In Brown's assessment, neither are the Reformers immune from criticism. He mentions Luther's own tendency toward Monophysitism and Calvin's tendency toward Nestorianism, which might provoke protests from specialists of either of these Reformers. Moreover

Brown places a degree of culpability on the Reformation, and Calvinism particularly, in the emergence of anti-Trinitarianism and Unitarianism. Speaking of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy, Brown reaches the rather perplexing conclusion that "Calvinism . . . spawned varieties of theological liberalism, including Unitarianism" (p. 341). To be sure, the Reformation opened a door through which not only orthodox Chalcedonians but also the theologically idiosyncratic radicals passed. To suggest anything more, however, especially that a theological connection exists between Calvinism and Unitarianism as if the Calvinists politely held the door open as the Unitarians walked through, is certainly wide of the mark.

Having made the Council of Chalcedon his measuring stick for orthodoxy, Brown finds himself in an interesting dilemma. In terms of Chalcedonian Christology neither Rome nor the Reformers were strictly heretical. So Brown is forced to introduce a new and broader category of heresy "that is not really heretical . . . and yet is sufficiently serious to justify the Reformation" (p. 310). Brown seems to have painted himself into a corner by defining orthodoxy exclusively in Christological terms. Of course Christ is at the very core of Christian orthodoxy, yet it is somewhat broader. Just as a human being is more than a heart, orthodoxy is more than Christology. A too-narrow definition is an incomplete definition. Still, one is inclined to excuse Brown on this count, because it was for the purpose of theological coherence and historical convenience that he settled on Christology as an organizational principle.

Another step in the downward spiral away from Chalcedonian orthodoxy, according to Brown, was the emergence of pietism in the late seventeenth century. He acknowledges many commendable features of pietism, especially in the sense that pietism saw itself as completing the aspirations of the Reformation by including personal concerns along with the doctrinal. Still, in Brown's view pietism eventually proved itself to be a further aberration from orthodoxy. Reacting against the constant polemics of the previous century and a half, pietism rejected scholastic orthodoxy and "stressed life rather than truth, [and] its adherents gradually lost sight of the doctrinal basis underlying the pious life" (p. 391).

What is perhaps the most illuminating and relevant part of Brown's study is the theological development of modern evangelicalism from pietism. Indeed, this alone is worth the price of the book. As he makes abundantly clear, the modern-day offspring of pietism is American evangelicalism, and it seems to have inherited all the bad genes and few of the good genes. He describes modern Protestantism as "a kind of spiritually illiterate moralism" (p. 393). Brown hardly could have chosen stronger language when he says that "without Pietism, Protestantism might never have survived the eighteenth century, but with Pietism, it may ultimately cease to be Protestantism" (p. 393). Borrowing a phrase from the late Yale historian Roland Bainton, Brown's analysis of the course of Christian orthodoxy since the Reformation may be described as a "failure of success." The success of Chalcedonian orthodoxy has now become the failure of modern evangelicalism.

In his epilogue Brown laments the end of the Chalcedonian era, but in a curious way. He places a great deal of prophetic significance upon the nationhood of Israel and the reconquest of Jerusalem. He asks, "Is it a sign of the imminent return of Christ?" (p. 449). At this juncture Brown seems to have cast off the robes of the historian and exchanged them for the mantle of the prophet. Has Brown's own brand of evangelicalism surfaced in the epilogue? Perhaps. But even with this peculiarity, my enthusiasm for Brown's study is not dampened. His contributions far outweigh this slip of the pen.

Brown deserves to be commended not only for his insightful scholarship and his readable style but also and more importantly for providing a sorely-needed jab to the soft underbelly of modern evangelicalism. Have the struggles of the past between orthodoxy and heresy finally been settled in favor of indifference? Brown's book is a sober warning of just such a possibility, and it ought to make evangelicals shake in their theological boots.

Frank A. James III

The Rapture: Pre-, Mid-, or Post-Tribulational? By Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Paul D. Feinberg, Douglas J. Moo and Richard R. Reiter. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984, 268 pp., \$7.95 paper.

If your first reaction to the title of this volume is "Oh, no! Another book arguing about the rapture!", you may be pleasantly surprised. Not only is the quality of exegetical and theological "debate" (responses to each of the positions are included) exceptionally high, but the tone of the contributors' interchange is irenic and friendly without sacrificing precise scholarship. Add to this the helpful preliminary essay tracing the development of these prominent positions on the rapture in premillennial circles over the last century, and we find a truly worthwhile addition to the mass of recent evangelical literature in the field of eschatology.

An initial word on the background of the book is in order. Its format (each presentation followed by two dissenting replies) is like that used in the helpful volume edited by R. Clouse, *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (InterVarsity, 1977). However, this work began as presentations of their distinctive positions on the rapture by Feinberg, Archer and Moo, who are colleagues at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, at the 1981 annual ministerial conference of the Evangelical Free Church, sponsors of the school. Subsequently their papers and responses have been revised and expanded into their present form. Reiter, who is completing a related doctoral dissertation, brings to bear the historical data needed to gain proper perspective on the interaction of the three positions since the beginning of the Niagara Bible Conference in 1878 (pp. 11-44).

The book's structure is simple, forceful and thoroughly successful. The first chapter, by Reiter, moves from the latter 1800s to the present day, concluding with the state of affairs in the Evangelical Free Church since the 1960s. Then Feinberg leads off by presenting the pre-tribulational position. In the shortest of the main presentations, Archer presents a "mid-seventieth week" position. He disavows the "mid-trib" title, holding that his is a variant pre-trib view in which the rapture occurs midway in Daniel's seventieth week, before the outpouring of "divine wrath." Finally, Moo lays out his nuanced post-tribulational understanding. Copiously documented endnotes and three helpful indices conclude this significant volume.

It is difficult to assess a book of this type as to strengths and weaknesses in content. For example, Reiter's essay, somewhat artificial in structure and selective, is nonetheless an excellent piece of bibliographic craftsmanship. Unfortunately most readers will make their judgments of the primary presentations on theological loyalties. Still, Zondervan and the contributors to *The Rapture* are to be commended for their service to the evangelical community, particularly the premillennial sector. Regardless of position held, thinking students of the rapture will find sharpened, even innovative, historical, exegetical and theological reasoning with which to profitably interact.

In closing this review, it might further surprise some readers to know of several of the (surface) agreements between Feinberg, Archer and Moo, as well as some significant assertions/admissions that are made along the way. As to "agreements," all three, who are pre-millennial and futurist in position, believe that not only will believers be spared from God's wrath but also that the rapture will be "pre-wrath." All believe in "imminency," as they define it. All hold that there will be an interval between the rapture and second coming (though Moo only divides them pre- and post-Armageddon).

The admissions/assertions could make a difference in future discussions. Feinberg concedes (cf. R. Gundry, *The Church and the Tribulation*) that "there is no necessary or logical connection between dispensationalism and pretribulationism" (p. 48). Further, for the sake of argument Feinberg asserts that "an any-moment imminency could be wrong and pretribulationism could still be right" (p. 152). Archer (p. 107) calls attention to Feinberg's concession (p. 61) that the "day of the Lord" does not begin until the middle of Daniel's seventieth week. Finally, Moo postulates that "a posttribulational Rapture is not necessarily

excluded by a view that keeps Israel and the church separate" (p. 171).

Obviously, whether the statements are valid or not, they do not represent conventional thinking. They, along with other distinctive positions found in this book, should influence the premillennial theological agenda in the time ahead. There needs to be deeper investigation of such key items as the meaning of "imminency," the scope of God's tribulational "wrath," the exegesis of Rev 3:10, the relationship between ecclesiology and eschatology, and the similarities and differences between rapture and second-coming passages (if such passages can be agreed upon).

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Relatedness: Essays in Metaphysics and Theology. By Harold H. Oliver. Macon: Mercer University, 1984, xvi + 178 pp., \$14.00.

Western philosophy after Descartes can be understood as a constant struggle to dig oneself out of a series of craters. First of all we must establish our subjectivity. Then we have to show that a world around us exists as well. Now we need to discover whether this world is populated by other subjects. Finally we have to prove that these beings can communicate. Thus we have the modern problems of subjectivity-objectivity, metaphysics, intersubjectivity, and hermeneutics, to name a few.

Oliver, professor of NT and theology at Boston University, attempts to reverse this whole process with a metaphysics of relatedness. The underlying principle is very simple. Traditionally philosophy begins with the assumption of objects that stand in various relationships to each other. The objects have priority over the accidental relationships. Oliver claims that a better analysis would be to say that the relations are prior; the resultant "relata" are mere derivatives of the relations. Thus if "a" is related to "b"—aRb—the relationship "R" has priority and "a" and "b" are derived from "R."

This theory forms the background to the ten essays collected in this volume. As a follow-up to an earlier work (*A Relational Metaphysic*, 1981), these articles develop an application to various issues of concern to the contemporary theologian. Treated are theology and cosmology (essay 1), hermeneutics (2, 4, 7, 8, 9), selfhood (3, 5, 10) and the future (6).

An evaluation of the metaphysics needs to be done on a scope beyond that possible in a review. A few remarks concerning the theological application need to suffice. It is in hermeneutics that the distinctiveness of Oliver's contribution becomes most apparent. In his view, religious language is myth. Myth must be understood not as a story that may be true or false but as a symbol of an immediate experience of relatedness. This is the intentionality of a religious text, and it is in this way that we ought to let the text speak for itself. As a consequence, if we look away from the particulars we find that for example Judaism and Christianity have the same intentionality of declaring the relatedness of God and humanity. Fine textual distinctions are obliterated in the overall message that invariably turns out to be the message of relatedness.

Although these ideas are worked out in a philosophically and theologically competent way, one cannot but get the feeling of reductionism at work. It seems that all issues are reduced and then—unsurprisingly—solved with the metaphysics of relatedness. Even the most basic issue of human despair and hope comes down to these technical distinctions.

This impression is reinforced by the literary form of the work. Since it consists of ten essays that have previously been published in diverse places, much of the background material is repeated ten times in the book. On the plus side, this repeated clarification makes the book much easier to read than one would expect from a cursory glance at the title and the topic. A final accolade needs to go to Mercer University for continuing to publish innovative technical manuscripts.

Winfried Corduan

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The Biblical Doctrine of Man. By Gordon H. Clark. Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1984, 111 pp., \$5.95.

This compact work intends to offer a contemporary exposition and defense of Biblical anthropology for the intellectually concerned layman. Writing from within a framework governed by the Westminster Confession, Clark cites J. Laidlaw's *The Bible Doctrine of Man* (1895) as the predecessor to this book.

The first five chapters interpret the Bible as teaching that "God is truth and . . . man is rational" (p. 33). Indeed, "the image [of God] must be reason because God is truth, and fellowship with him . . . requires thinking and understanding" (p. 16). In chap. 6 Clark affirms the spiritual character of man vis-à-vis the materialistic conceptions of behaviorism. He criticizes behaviorism (and logical positivism) for logical inconsistencies and ethical inadequacy. In the chapters that follow he discusses the more traditional (Reformed) categories of anthropology, personally affirming dichotomy, traducianism, the covenant of works and federal headship, immediate imputation and total depravity. Taking his lead from Laidlaw, Clark addresses the "psychological" theme of the human heart, positing that in the Bible "the heart fundamentally means the intellect and surely not the emotions" (p. 86). He closes with "A Philosophic Appendix" in which, appealing to Augustine and Malebranche, he upholds a mind-body dualism.

The book suffers from unevenness in its attempt to address the intellectually tough-minded layman. At some points Clark leads the reader by the hand through foundational material (e.g. pp. 33, 63, 82), while at other times he uses rather abstruse vocabulary (e.g. "onomatopoeia"), delves into philosophical argumentation that is inadequately explained for most laymen (e.g. pp. 47, 74), and quotes a Latin text without providing a translation (p. 57). The book also falls short of its intended purpose of providing a response to contemporary thought regarding the nature of man. Depending heavily on nineteenth-century writers, there is essentially no interaction, positive or negative, with contemporary theological anthropologies, and the depictions of modern philosophical and theological thought are often reduced to sweeping generalizations (e.g. pp. 34, 73).

The book is simply and clearly organized, and Clark's desire for a rationally coherent and Biblically-based faith is evident. Those who have appreciated his previous volumes published by the Trinity Foundation will want to read this latest offering.

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Theological and Religious Reference Materials: General Resources and Biblical Studies. By G. E. Gorman and Lyn Gorman. Westport: Greenwood, 1984, xvi + 526 pp.

This volume is the first in a projected four-volume series that will cover the gamut of religious and theological studies. Volume 2 is to survey materials relevant to systematic/dogmatic/moral theology and Church history; volume 3 will treat practical theology, volume 4 comparative and non-Christian religions. The second and third volumes are due to be published soon; the fourth volume will not appear for some time. In undertaking such a gargantuan task the authors recognize the need for selectivity. They have therefore focused broadly on works that both the beginning student and more advanced scholar would find helpful. In distinction from other bibliographic surveys the Gormans include works pertaining to general bibliography and style, books in many different languages and showing little discernible theological bias. Their selection is truly "ecumenical," including works from radicals, Roman Catholics and conservative evangelicals.

How helpful is this volume? Very helpful indeed. Each entry (of which there are over 2,000) is furnished with a brief annotation, and the notes are usually accurate and useful in giving one an idea about the scope and nature of the volume. Particularly significant is the large amount of space given over to general reference works and bibliographies—material

not always easy to find in traditional Biblical bibliographies.

The very scope of the volume does mean, naturally, that some sacrifices have to be made. From the standpoint of the Biblical student the primary drawbacks are the failure to categorize in sufficient detail and the inevitable omission of many individual studies. With respect to the first, for instance, one finds lumped together under "Biblical Studies: Handbooks" volumes as diverse as Danby's *Mishnah*, Cullmann's *Christology* and R. Grant's *Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible*. Obviously, the student searching for bibliographic help in a specialized area will not find much help here. Second, the Gormans are forced to eliminate many specialized volumes. For instance, while they give a fairly comprehensive list of commentary series they provide no guide to commentaries on individual Biblical books.

While these drawbacks limit the value of the book for many students of the Bible, they should not be considered criticisms of the book per se. The Gormans have accomplished brilliantly what they set out to do; the fact that their purpose does not mesh with the needs of some readers is not their fault. The volume is still a great help as a more general complement to some of the other bibliographic surveys available.

Douglas Moo

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The Way the World Is. By John Polkinghorne. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 144 pp., \$4.95.

"I believe that Christianity affords a coherent insight into the strange way the world is." So Polkinghorne introduces this personal account of his pilgrimage from physicist to pastor. After serving as professor of mathematical physics at Cambridge he trained for and entered the Anglican ministry. Finding that this change drew skeptical, often-ignorant questions from his peers he set out to explain his transition. This book is the result.

Scientists, especially physicists, are in a good position to recognize the thin, at-times-invisible line between physics and metaphysics. Good physics requires a willingness to let the data speak for themselves, no matter how improbable the message may be. This has led to some startling but apparently accurate insights into the way the physical world is. Good Christian metaphysics requires the same willingness to let the data of revelation, both natural and special, to speak their message. Polkinghorne was willing to do the former as a physicist and seeks to do the same as a pastor and interpreter of Scripture.

So far, so good. But a further question remains: What is legitimate and what is spurious metaphysical data? Obviously Christianity must be based on the Biblical revelation, but Polkinghorne's theological background causes him to question the acceptability of a significant portion of the Bible. Working from a foundation of Moltmann, Pannenberg and others, he has serious doubts about the accuracy of certain sections of Scripture, especially the NT. These doubts, however, are not allowed to obscure his presentation. He identifies them, gives a brief statement of the question, and then moves on to what he considers are the more secure data and evaluates them.

A good example of his handling of the Biblical data is his evaluation of Jesus. He rejects both ends of the Christological spectrum, seeing him neither as all-divine nor all-human. Yet the middle position of Jesus as the God-man is difficult for him to accept. But accept it he does, recognizing a divine element in Jesus' character—not because it is reasonable, but because a lesser view would be "inadequate to the phenomenon." As a physicist Polkinghorne has worked with other concepts that blend two apparently contradictory ideas, such as the wave-particle duality of light. The scientists accept them not because they were reasonable but because that was the way the world was. Here the same reasoning is followed: Jesus is both human and divine because that is the explanation that best fits the data. The same approach convinces him of the empty tomb. Though not all of the accounts of the resurrection are accurate (he questions the historicity of Matthew's account

of the angelic appearance to the guards), the available evidence points to the simple (!) fact of Jesus' empty tomb.

Those who are seeking an apologetic defense of Christianity against the onslaughts of atheistic science, or a listing of Christian evidences to be used in handy refutations of scientific challenges, will be disappointed. Those who are looking for a presentation of Christianity from the framework of inerrancy will likewise come away empty-handed. But those who wish to follow the honest—indeed, humble—reasonings of one who has found in Christianity a coherent, satisfying, albeit incomplete explanation of the way the world is will find this small volume interesting reading.

William Elliot

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The Word of God in the Ethics of Jacques Ellul. By David Gill. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1984, 213 pp., \$17.50.

Few people are as qualified as David Gill to write a book about Jacques Ellul. Since his first encounter with Ellul in 1971, Gill has read and reread Ellul's forty books, provided introductions to their American editions, written a dozen articles on Ellul, and corresponded and studied with the prophet from Bordeaux. This book, a revision of his 1979 doctoral dissertation at the University of Southern California, represents both a culmination and synthesis of this personal encounter and expertise, and the payoff to the reader is great indeed. In the preface Gill sets forth three objectives: to "review, summarize, and correlate" Ellul's ethical work as a whole; to "briefly outline the discussion of Jesus Christ, Scripture, and Christian ethics as it is proceeding in the contemporary ethical guild"; and, finally, to proffer his own critical analysis of Ellul's project.

Gill addresses his second objective in chap. 1, where he creates a conceptual "map" of the ways in which American and British Protestants have construed the relationship between Christ, Scripture and ethics. J. H. Yoder and J. T. Sanders represent the extreme and opposite borders of the "map" with their respective vigorous "Yes" and critical "No." Four other works provide the "main contours" of the "map": works by R. Hiers, J. Gustafson, B. Birch and L. Rasmussen, and D. Kelsey. To conclude chap. 1 Gill suggests "an adequate methodological framework for the remainder of this study" (p. 3).

Gill's first stated objective—to review, summarize and correlate Ellul's ethics—is carried out in chaps. 2-5, where he considers, in turn, Ellul's theoretical basis for ethics (chaps. 2-3), and then the practical application of this in two case studies on technique (chap. 4) and politics (chap. 5). Gill sets forth the theoretical basis by extended overviews of the two works by Ellul that are devoted specifically to ethics (*To Will and To Do* and *The Ethics of Freedom*). The "major characteristic" of this ethic is that it "is essentially and primarily a matter of a living relationship to the Wholly Other God known through his Word" (p. 52). More particularly he brings out Ellul's nominalist position that the good is that which God wills, his emphasis that ethics is both impossible and necessary, and his charge that all human moralities are a product of the fall. Ellul's success, Gill suggests, is "profound" in its emphasis on "the distinctiveness of biblical, Christian ethics" (p. 39), but only "very modest" as "an exercise in ethical criticism" (p. 40).

Since for Ellul Christian ethics "must derive solely from the Word of God" (p. 59), Gill continues his theoretical discussion in chap. 3 with extended overviews of Ellul's Christology and doctrine of Scripture, the two referents to God's Word. The incarnate and inscripturated Word, though distinguishable, are "practically inseparable" and "virtually equivalent" in Ellul's thought—that is, as in Barth's thought, for Ellul "the revelation in the biblical text is equivalent to the will of God" (p. 69). With his belief in universal salvation, his radically Christocentric interpretation of the Bible, and his insistence on the absolute centrality of Christ in ethics, Ellul's Christology offers in some respects more than the normal orthodox tradition. Gill then discusses Ellul's doctrine of Scripture, which is dis-

tinct from that of both Biblical literalists and historical critics. His conclusion is that "Ellul's proposals for a biblical, Christocentric ethics would seem to deserve careful attention" (p. 84).

Next Gill turns from Ellul's theory to his practice through a case study approach of "Urban-Technological Civilization" (chap. 4) and "Politics and the Nation-State" (chap. 5). These two foci represent the "new sacred around which our existence is ordered" (p. 89). In both chapters Gill proceeds by presenting Ellul's socio-historical conclusions, his Biblical and theological counterpoints, and then a critical appraisal of the resultant ethic. Although he does not fail to criticize Ellul, Gill's conclusion is fairly glowing. Ellul's urban-technological ethic is "realistic, positive, and creative . . . a sustained and penetrating analysis" (pp. 120-121), while his political ethic is "potent and applicable," despite its weaknesses.

Chapter 6 constitutes Gill's critical summary of Ellul's project, his third major objective. He expounds six major motifs of Ellul's work that he feels contain both "promise and problems." In the words of chap. 1, there is great promise in going "through" Ellul but we must also go "beyond" him (p. 25). These six themes are Ellul's dialectical method, his focus on the intermediate level of reality, his Kierkegaardian emphasis on the individual, the centrality of Christ and Scripture for ethics, and the ethical implications of his pronouncements on technique and politics.

Four strengths stand out in Gill's book. First, he has made an excellent contribution that fills a recognized gap in critical studies on Ellul. The secondary work on Ellul is modest, at best; this is only the second book-length treatment of Ellul. Hence the work is not only comprehensive and well done but also quite timely. Next, Gill both accomplishes and goes beyond his stated objectives. He treats the reader to not only an apt summary of Ellul's ethic but also to a broader synthesis of Ellul's overall thought and its reception in the scholarly community. Third, through both the structure and content of his book Gill explains and illustrates Ellul's dialectical method. This clarification of Ellul's dialectic is particularly helpful, for it has been the source of much confusion and misinterpretation. Last, despite his positive appraisal—"My conclusion is that Jacques Ellul has made a decisive contribution in both method and application in Christian ethics" (p. 179)—Gill is not uncritical of Ellul. His verdict is mixed at points, and he finds room for improvements.

Readers will be interested to learn of two bibliographic updates even since this book was published—the appearance of two more translations of Ellul books: *Living Faith* (Harper, 1983) and *Money and Power* (InterVarsity, 1984). My only material criticism of Gill's book is a minor one that concerns the nature of the first chapter and its relation to the rest of the book. His conceptual "map" of the six thinkers is too broad and general. As he himself admits, it is an "ambitious" attempt (p. 3) that in some ways "will hardly do justice" (p. 11) to the works he surveys. True enough. Further, the "map" appears as a sort of preliminary appendage that becomes tangential to the more sustained, successful and helpful exposition of Ellul's ethic. In the end, however, as E. Long writes in the foreword, "we are indebted to him [Gill] for careful scholarship, a judiciously cautious loyalty, a clarity of exposition, and an ongoing attention to this prophetic law professor from Bordeaux whose challenge is always as unpredictable as it is insistent" (p. xi).

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Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions. By Arthur F. Holmes. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984, 132 pp., \$4.95 paper.

This book is the third in the "Contours of Christian Philosophy" series edited by C. S. Evans. It is an introductory-level textbook on philosophical ethics in the light of Christian presuppositions and Biblical teachings. Holmes rejects the assumption that ethics can be considered from a neutral perspective. He believes that philosophical ethics has a legitimate role alongside of Biblical-theological ethics and that both make valuable contributions to each other.

Chapters 2-5 contain a presentation and evaluation of four major ethical views held today: cultural relativism, emotivist ethics, ethical egoism, and utilitarianism. Holmes finds all of them wanting, not simply because they are opposed to a Christian ethic but because they fail to live up to their own standards—namely, the rules of rationality and empirical evidence. Holmes' critique of these views alone makes this book worth reading.

In chaps. 6-8 he outlines the major features of philosophical ethics, using the format of an ongoing dialogue with the various systems. A Christian ethic contains four ingredients: cases, area rules, underlying principles, and philosophical bases. It is determined by two major Christian principles: love and justice. Because it is based on a divinely-ordered creation, it will be a rule-ethic rather than an act-ethic. The basis of moral obligation can only be found in the metaphysical reality. Holmes argues that the Christian assumption of a just and loving God who reveals his will is the only adequate basis for moral obligation. In God the "is" and the "ought" unite in his divine nature.

The key chapter for understanding Holmes' view of the specific domain of philosophical ethics is chap. 7 ("Moral Knowledge"). He suggests that the concern of Christian philosophical ethics is creation, what theology calls general revelation. He rejects the assumption of modern ethics that man or society has an inherent ability (through an innate faculty) to arrive at moral truth. Christian ethics must approach creation with the Biblical assumption that God ordered this world with his ends in view. At the same time Holmes suggests that moral truth can be known in the "natural moral indicators" of creation. He is not suggesting that creation proves each ingredient in God's moral law. "The biblical direction is rather that the creation *bears witness* to the moral law, that creational indicators point to good ends God intended in making us as He did, and that God's law is the law of creation" (pp. 63-64). He further suggests that a pattern for moral reasoning can be developed through an account of the universal and essential features and purposes of human activities and social institutions.

It seems to me that Holmes is allowing philosophy, albeit informed by Biblical assumptions, to be a source of ethical principles and ends in addition to the Bible. But I would have to admit that I do not find Holmes altogether clear on this point. He states that Christians do not claim that the Bible is exhaustive, that it tells us everything we can know or can benefit ethically from knowing (p. 12). Of course modern scientific and medical developments result in new information concerning modern ethical issues. And it is clear that philosophy helps us to understand modes of moral reasoning, moral dilemmas, and the significant features of other ethical viewpoints. But in light of the history of modern philosophy, and in light of Biblical emphases on the sufficiency of the Bible for obedience to God, it is important to stress that nothing can be allowed to become a source for ethical principles in addition to the Bible. It seems to me that this needs to be stressed in an introductory-level textbook of Christian ethics.

In chaps. 9-12 Holmes demonstrates how philosophical ethics applies to four representative moral issues: human rights, criminal punishment, legislation of morality, and sex and marriage. He approaches each issue with Biblical assumptions, and he draws upon contemporary sources to contribute to a Christian position in the modern social setting.

The final chapter deals with the moral significance of motives and intentions. Holmes notes that moral actions flow out of moral dispositions. What we call virtues are the proper moral dispositions. Therefore the ultimate goal of ethics is to develop moral character motivated by love and justice. Holmes' conclusion is that "in the final analysis it is the grace of God that builds within us the virtues of godly character" (p. 123).

In conclusion, I find this book to be a very good introductory-level textbook in ethics from the Christian perspective. Philosophical ethics does have an important and distinctive role to play in contemporary ethical discussions. Although this book is merely an introductory text, it seems to me to be somewhat unclear on the exact role of philosophical ethics alongside of Biblical-theological ethics. Above all, students need to see the Bible as the absolute and sufficient source of the ethical practice of the Christian life in all its fullness. I

presume that the lack of clarity that I find in Holmes is the result of his attempt to carve out a domain for philosophical ethics that is both Christian and distinct from Biblical ethics. That attempt deserves recognition and is a challenge to other Christian philosophers to further the task.

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Biblical Concepts for Christian Counseling: A Case for Integrating Psychology and Theology. By William T. Kirwan. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984, \$9.95.

This book, by an adjunct professor of pastoral psychology and counseling at Covenant Theological Seminary and a clinical counselor, presents a solid case for integration. Some writers follow a simplistic proof-text approach, presumably on the supposition that merely quoting Scripture will solve every problem. Others baptize an essentially secular psychology with a sprinkling of evangelical terms that do not really change its nature. Kirwan's approach is well-balanced. His aim is to put together Biblical and psychological truths in a harmonious way. "Biblical Christianity and psychology, when rightly understood, do not conflict but represent functionally cooperative positions. By taking both spheres into account, a mental-health professional can help Christians avoid the inevitable results of violating psychological laws structured into human personality by God" (p. 21). After all, if God is the author of both reason and revelation, then all truth is ultimately part of a unified whole. The integrated view builds on this epistemological basis. It stresses "not only the scriptural message concerning sin and salvation, but also the cultural mandate The wise counselor will emphasize God's providence, sovereignty, and active relevance in all His creation, alongside the good news of salvation" (p. 30).

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The Brainwashing/Deprogramming Controversy: Sociological, Psychological, Legal and Historical Perspectives. Edited by David G. Bromiley and James T. Richardson. Edwin Mellen, 1984, 367 pp., \$49.95.

Here is an indispensable source of phenomenological data from the respective fields studied that no person ministering to people in the cults can afford to ignore. The approach seeks to avoid the snowball sampling techniques in favor of statistically supported studies fair to present and former members. Useful summaries of the conclusions drawn by the different writers may be found at the end of each of the twenty chapters.

Ten years of research by sociologists and social psychologists have produced an "ideal-type description of contemporary conversion." In brief, Richardson found, people today lack a commitment with a stable mooring and may actively go through a number of conversions as a series of experiments. They convert for social reasons as persons seeking appropriate lifestyles. Only subsequently will their belief system be gradually changed to become consistent with their behaviors (pp. 2-5).

The "traditional" or "cognitive orientation" to conversion that belief change precedes behavior change found to be characteristic of deprogrammers is designated "an ideological bias." The challenge becomes clear to any who hold that a cognitive belief of the gospel is prior to a gradual development of an authentic Christian lifestyle. Another "bias" of deprogrammers values individualism and democratic capitalism while condemning not only totalitarianism but also collectivism (p. 33).

Unfortunately the book discusses changes of belief systems without adequate consideration of epistemological considerations in changes of philosophical worldviews, not to mention revelation-claims involved in changes of religious belief-systems and ways of life. Truth

seems to be an irrelevant consideration for writers apparently assuming an absolute [sic] religious relativism. Consequently, like Lowell D. Streiker's *Mind Bending* (Doubleday, 1984), this book fails to deal seriously with the basic desire of young people for enduringly reliable answers to the meaning and purpose of their lives. Frustration with total relativism has been a major contributing factor in sudden personality changes as indicated by several contributors to *Understanding the New Religions* (ed. Needleman and Baker; Seabury, 1978). Hopefully it will not be long until Christian philosophers, ethicists and theologians will be included in compilations dealing with conversions to new worldviews.

Although urging caution against stereotyping cults, several of the writers stereotype nondescriptive sociological, psychological and historical approaches as "emotional" or "anti-cult" or a "witchhunt" (p. 42). The authors fail to distinguish unethical proselytizing from ethical persuasion in apologetics and evangelism. Although mention is made of manipulation and "behavior modification" techniques, more comparisons of cultic recruitment and socialization need to be made with humanist behavior modification in education.

The oversimplified upshot of the book seems to be that there are two approaches to the life-changing transformations taking place: that of the deprogrammers, and that of the relativistic sociologists and psychologists. Evangelical Christians in all departments of the universities and seminaries (not just those in ministries to cultists) need to work together to develop more fully than has been done a third alternative that can incorporate the values of descriptive sociological and psychological research, ethical norms in persuasion, and educationally sound and epistemologically valid support for Christian revelation-claims with theological integrity and wholeness. Until evangelicals do, they can hardly fault others for failing to be aware of the better way: *alētheia en agapē*.

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Salvation and Liberation: In Search of a Balance between Faith and Politics. By Leonardo and Clodovis Boff. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1984, vii + 119 pp., \$6.95 paper. *Backward, Christian Soldiers?* By Gary North. Tyler, TX: Institute For Christian Economics, 1984, xiii + 294 pp., \$4.95 paper.

Perhaps no recent debate has engaged so broad a spectrum of Christianity as that over the role of the Church in the affairs of state and society. Two recent books represent opposing ideological extremes but share a commitment to a fundamental restructuring of society in accordance with "Christian" ideals. The first book reviewed here represents the liberation theology of the radical left. The second details the agenda of the Christian Reconstruction Movement of the radical right.

The recent translation of *Salvation and Liberation* provides the English reader with a valuable introduction to liberation theology by leading exponents. Of course evangelicals will differ with the Boffs' theology, but they can profit from the book.

The first two chapters detail the foundations and theological method of liberation theology. They posit the need to "concretize" our conception of the kingdom of God. Although the kingdom ideal will only be fully realized in eternity, it is the Church's responsibility to strive for social transformation now, which anticipates, reflects ever more perfectly and culminates in the kingdom of God. Such "concretization" redefines the Church's mission. One's "personhood" and "growth in being" cannot be realized within unjust systems. Thus "the mission of evangelization is summed up in liberating nonpersons and making them persons by delivering them from injustice, advancing human beings in all their dimensions (integral advancement), and, finally, divinizing human beings by bestowing upon them the full actuality of their status as daughters and sons of God" (p. 39).

Foundational to the Boffs' development are the three "mediations" of liberation theology: the socio-analytical, the hermeneutic, and that of pastoral practice. One must begin with a Marxist analysis of social reality: "It is Marxist science, and only science, that will

serve our purposes" (p. 50). Second, one must utilize a hermeneutic of faith to perceive the theological dimension of social reality. Third, one must develop an effective pastoral praxis.

In the third and final chapter there is an imaginative dialogue between a traditional Catholic priest, a Marxist activist, and a liberation theologian. The theologian mediates the pastoral-sacramental emphases of the priest and the exclusively political interests of the activist. He attempts to demonstrate that liberation theology is sensitive to both. This dialogue is a helpful complement to the weighty theologizing of the first chapters.

The Boff brothers present a concise apologetic that attempts to mitigate the criticism that liberation theology is guilty of a reductionism that posits that salvation be wholly equated with the deliverance of the economically and politically oppressed. They comment, for example: "In a nutshell, we could say: Liberation in Jesus Christ is not identified *with* political, economic, and social liberation, but is identified *in* political, economic, and social liberation" (p. 32). In their exploration of the relationship between liberation theology and traditional Catholic conceptions of salvation, faith and grace they contend that the two theologies are compatible products of differing theological methods. Liberation theology finds its material for theological reflection in social and political "realities" rather than in the creeds and Scripture.

One evident purpose of the book is to represent the pronouncements of John Paul II and the deliberations of the Puebla Conference (1979) as consistent with liberation theology. However, the Boffs' case is discredited by the extreme selectivity of their evidence. They fail to acknowledge, for example, that although Puebla affirmed the Church's duty to actively labor on behalf of the oppressed it rejected absolutely the Marxist model of social reconstruction fundamental to liberation theology. The "balance between faith and politics" sought in the title is a futile quest as long as such theologians bias the scales wholly in favor of politics with their Marxist "thumbs."

Gary North is a leading popular exponent of the Christian Reconstruction Movement. His mandate for socio-political activism is rooted in a Calvinistic social model and a post-millennial eschatology. Based on a theological foundation articulated by R. J. Rushdoony, as in his *Institutes of Biblical Law* (1973), the movement calls for a restructuring of all of society in accord with Biblical law.

Backward, Christian Soldiers? is a compendium of disjointed essays. Some are fervent critiques of American society. Others are "how to" manuals that set forth the means for stirring the grass-roots forces to action (e.g. church schools, newsletters, tape ministries, computers, satellite dishes). As the title and intent of the book might suggest, it is short on theological reflection and long on exhortations and blueprints for action.

Three facets of North's work seriously diminish its value. First, his application of the theology of theonomy is tainted by an excessively negative assessment of government and of higher education. He comments, for example: "The obvious conclusion is simple: conservative fundamentalists who run the handful of colleges that fundamentalist students attend must cease requiring the Ph.D. from their faculty members" (p. 63). Second, North so equates "biblical law" with the political agenda of the far right that he is reduced to providing nothing more than a religious impetus to a secular and political agenda. He offers no prophetic critique of the excesses of the right. Surely if God's law is to be normalized for America (a bounding hermeneutical leap by any estimation—cf. p. 53), the prophetic concern for the disadvantaged should find some expression in North's agenda. This observation leads to a third and fundamental weakness of the book. Whereas criticism is abundant (and occasionally insightful), neither specific objectives of Christian Reconstruction nor the precise religious, social, or political nature of the new society are delineated.

This is a book written for insiders. Only those already sympathetic to the tenets of Christian Reconstruction will find its exhortations and instructions particularly valuable.

The theology of activism of both the radical left and the radical right offers the evangelical a challenge and a caution. We are challenged to continue to define and articulate Biblical

parameters for the role of the Church in society. We are cautioned to shun the allure of the expedient. Theological axioms cannot be sacrificed in order to accommodate socio-political objectives. Evangelicals ought not assert any single political ideology as *the* Biblical one.

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Evangelicals and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter. Edited by Dean C. Curry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984, 254 pp.

This book is a significant effort by evangelical scholars to join the discussion on nuclear weapons morality. The Roman Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace," is an appropriate starting point both because of the profound analysis contained in the letter and because of the ecumenical spirit in which it was formulated. An explicitly evangelical response is a good sign of growth in ecumenical dialog. The book is important reading for those interested in evangelical social analysis and/or the nuclear issue.

In spite of several excellent essays, the book is of uneven quality and illustrates some weaknesses in evangelical thought. With the exception of an excellent chapter by R. Mouw on the theological method employed in the letter, the book is weak in the area of ethical and theological critique. The best chapters are by competent political scientists (J. E. Lawyer, S. P. Hoffman, M. Amstutz and R. L. DeVries) who analyze the policy options implied or advocated in the letter. The strong political analysis includes very little explicit ethical or theological reflection.

Since Augustine, the dominant ethical and theological framework for the evaluation of war has been the "just-war" theory. Most of the authors in this book subscribe to some form of just-war doctrine, and no pacifists are included. Thus it is surprising that the weakest section of the book is the one devoted to an analysis of the Bishops' just-war theory. The extensive and highly sophisticated recent discussion of just-war theory by Catholic writers is hardly noted.

The strength of the political analysis combined with weakness in ethical analysis illustrates an historic problem that still plagues evangelical thought. We have tended to separate a Biblical vision of peace from the political requirements of living in the real world. Political and social life are divorced from theology and spirituality. As Mouw points out, the central agenda of the Bishops' letter was the integration of theology and politics. It is striking that the best scholarship represented in this book is far more comfortable with the technical analysis of policy options than with an ethical or theological reflection on violence in a nuclear age.

The book includes a competent introduction that sets the Bishops' letter in the context of Catholic teaching on war. The editor also includes a helpful conclusion summarizing major points of agreement and disagreement in the book. He suggests that there cannot be a single evangelical perspective on nuclear weapons. The Church needs both "prophets" and "administrators." Thus he argues that diversity of perspectives reflects the diversity of gifts rather than an unbridgeable chasm between different social ethics or views of Scripture. This is questionable. Perhaps the reason the Bishops have reached consensus (in spite of tremendous political diversity) is that they have submitted to the discipline of corporately attempting to construct a document that unifies prophetic and administrative perspectives. Another unifying factor that the Bishops have and evangelicals lack is a common theological and philosophical tradition.

Most of the authors in this book accept the "security dilemma" and the "cold war" (with its view of the Soviet Union as the primary source of evil) as their primary framework for political analysis. At one extreme, S. Meyer and R. B. Kirkemo advocate a neo-Hobbsianism that considers maintenance of power against the Soviet Union as the primary, or only, moral issue. From an opposing perspective, Malloch and Skillen's chapter attacks the Bishops for failing to unequivocally condemn nuclear deterrence.

J. E. Lawyer, Jr., presents a profound challenge to the Bishops from the standpoint of realism. He argues for the political necessity of usable, discriminating tactical nuclear weapons. Lawyer denies the Bishops' assumption that the use of nuclear weapons cannot be contained. However, he ignores the linkage between tactical and strategic weapons in a way that ultimately begs the moral issue of a "firebreak" between nuclear and conventional weapons.

The essay by S. P. Hoffman is another excellent realist argument, this time in favor of a strong "no first use" policy. Hoffman agrees with the Bishops' conclusions but faults their reliance on just-war theory. In his view, just-war criteria cannot deal with the moral complexity created by nuclear deterrence. Along similar lines, a fine essay by M. Amstutz also faults the Bishops' reliance on just-war theory. Amstutz takes the position of M. Walzer that nuclear weapons have created a "supreme emergency" that "explodes" just-war theory. Amstutz believes deterrence is a necessity and suggests (à la J. B. Hehir and D. Hollenbach) that a strong distinction must be drawn between the use of nuclear weapons to deter war and their actual use in war.

The book concludes with a moderate, reformist section on peacemaking. R. L. DeVries demonstrates a competent grasp of politically realistic disarmament possibilities. DeVries is aware of the moral issues and critical of the Reagan administration. The final chapter by J. A. Bernbaum includes a good balance of "spiritual" and "political" proposals for prompt peace.

This book is to be welcomed as another evidence of the growing concern among evangelicals for Biblically-based social analysis. The book provides a thoughtful and readable overview of the political issues surrounding the possession and use of nuclear weapons. As Americans, we are responsible for the threats by which we protect our interests. As Christians, we are responsible for our neighbor and our enemy. Nuclear ethics may be the greatest challenge before the American Church today. It is high time that evangelicals joined the discussion.

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Your Wealth in God's World. By John Jefferson Davis. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1984, 128 pp., \$4.95.

When the Pilgrims first arrived in America, they spent three years trying to build an economy based on what they called the "Common Course and Condition." These were years of dreadful hunger and scarcity.

They were rescued from that suffering not by Indians or other outside sources but by a revolution in idea. They rejected the "Common Course and Condition" and declared that each person was to fend for himself and his family economically. According to Governor William Bradford, writing in his history *Of Plymouth Plantation*: "This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression."

Bradford drew a lesson from the experience of the Pilgrims. Fallen people willingly perform vigorous work when they believe it will be to their benefit, but naturally resist such work when it is aimed only at "the common good." Surprisingly, the result of leaving people free to work for their own benefit and to enjoy the fruits of their labors is the enrichment of the whole community and the growth of voluntary, compassionate action to help those who cannot care for themselves. Bradford notes also that since there are no unfallen men in this world, such a free economy apparently is the best available system for mankind.

In *Your Wealth in God's World* Davis, associate professor of theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, explains the theoretical and practical reasons for the success of economic freedom—the “free market.” He answers the question of his subtitle—“Does the Bible support the free market?”—with a resounding “Yes.” “The record of history . . . seems clear. In the competition between capitalism and socialism to provide both individual freedom and material abundance, capitalism wins hands down When the dynamism of a society of free individuals is tempered by biblical values, the resulting system would appear to be the best one attainable by imperfect individuals this side of eternity” (p. 97).

The 122 pages of the main body of text are divided into ten chapters of roughly equal length. In the first Davis sets forth Biblical presuppositional perspectives for the study of economics, focusing on the nature of man and the relationships among wealth, poverty and work. In the second he defends wealth against the charge that it is always an evil, arguing that in the Bible it often is a blessing from God in response to obedience to his laws, both moral and physical. The third, “Poverty: Justice, Compassion, and Personal Responsibility,” is especially important, for there Davis answers charges that capitalism, or the free market system, is noncompassionate, and argues that the primary responsibility for material well-being rests with the individual and his family.

In the fourth chapter Davis refutes arguments that the Bible requires economic equality. He shows that the jubilee and sabbatical years were not intended to produce economic equality, particularly because they did not affect newly-created wealth and did not provide for the cancellation of debts but for the limitation of loans to the poor to amounts guaranteed by agricultural production of land given as collateral—collateral that obviously was returned when the debt was paid. His handling of texts dealing with the jubilee year is a fine corrective to the hermeneutically fallacious handling of such texts in R. Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, W. Scott's *Bring Forth Justice*, and various other recent defenses of redistributionism by Christian authors. Davis also argues that since sharing of property in the early Jerusalem church and in the Pauline collections was voluntary these do not provide Biblical precedent for forced redistribution of wealth. He argues that the “equality” toward which Paul aimed his collections for the saints in Jerusalem was one of reciprocity: The Corinthians were to give materially to Jerusalem's saints since the Christians in Jerusalem had given spiritually to them—a conclusion that is sound exegetically and contextually.

The fifth chapter, “The Government's Role in Alleviating Poverty,” argues that the role be limited primarily to ensuring that fraud and violence do not interfere with individuals' efforts to produce, exchange and consume wealth. The sixth argues that the Church bears the primary responsibility for caring for those who cannot care for themselves and whose families fail to care for them. Included in that chapter is Davis' observation that evangelism and discipleship are integral to the Church's task of helping the poor since material prosperity results primarily from the Christian disciplines and virtues within the framework of a Christian world view.

Davis argues persuasively in the seventh chapter that the Bible favors capitalism over socialism. The eighth chapter indicates some of “The Lessons of History” from which we ought to learn that capitalism not only out-produces other systems but also does a better job of distributing wealth through all levels of society, leaving less disparity between rich and poor and making it easier for the poor to overcome poverty.

In the final two chapters Davis takes up personal and societal stewardship. Since the mind, not material resources, is the most important factor in any economy, and because the mind continually devises new and more efficient ways to produce, distribute and consume wealth of all kinds, using different material resources from what were used before, we are mistaken to adopt a “no-growth” mentality about economies or to think economics is a “zero-sum” game in which one's gain inevitably means another's loss. In the tenth chapter Davis takes up the important matters of saving, charitable giving, investment in businesses that produce wealth for society (which he says over the long haul must be more beneficial to

the poor than direct charitable gifts—something more and more statistical studies back up), and (happily) the size of one's family (he has good arguments for Christians to have large families).

Davis is one theologian who did his homework in economics before writing about economic ethics. He shows solid familiarity with important economic writers and the fundamental principles of economics, and he is familiar even with some little-known but highly-useful economic journals. This was a breath of fresh air for this reviewer, who too often has read theological approaches to economics that demonstrated woeful lack of understanding of economics itself.

This good book would make excellent supplemental reading in seminary and college courses, college and adult Sunday-school classes, and small-group studies. It is written in a friendly, compassionate style (a welcome change from Chilton's and North's *Productive Christians in an Age of Guilt Manipulators*). Unfortunately, Davis rarely gives much empirical evidence (particularly statistical) for his claims about the productivity and fairness of capitalism and the nonproductivity and unfairness of communism and socialism—though his arguments are persuasive anyway. Those wishing such statistics can find them easily enough, though, in M. Novak's *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* and some other books.

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