

BOOK REVIEWS

The Leisure Crisis: A Biblical Perspective on Guilt-Free Leisure. By John Oswalt. Wheaton: Victor, 1987, 167 pp., n.p. paper.

This book has as its subtitle on the cover (though curiously not on the title page) "A Biblical Perspective on Guilt-Free Leisure," which constitutes a fair summary of the book's intent. In it Oswalt attempts to address the question, which he finds unique to this generation, "What do I do with my leisure time?" The issue at hand, he says, is not whether we fill our leisure hours but how we fill them.

The first thing he asserts is that leisure does not equal idleness but rather represents time in which we can do as we wish. In other words work may be seen as a means to an end (= living?), but leisure is what is done as an end in itself (= living?). The problem, he says, is that "most people have neither the training nor the inclination to use leisure in a civilizing way" (p. 23). Citing a study by S. B. Linder, Oswalt notes with some approbation Linder's finding that time may be divided into five areas: (1) "specialized production time, the time when you are producing goods or services" (p. 27); (2) "personal work time," devoted to time spent in the "maintenance of our bodies and possessions" (p. 28); (3) "consumption time," in which "we are actually using goods and services"; (4) "time for the cultivation of the mind and spirit," in which we develop our sense of aesthetics or devotional piety (p. 29); and (5) "idleness—doing absolutely nothing."

The first thing Oswalt addresses is consumption. While consumption of goods gives a marked increase in pleasure up to a point, for most of us that point is reached rather quickly, and further expenditure results in a diminished degree of gain (p. 31). The second disquieting observation is that the high cost of service means that production time is cheaper than decision time, so less and less time is devoted to decisions (p. 33). But if our attitudes toward leisure time are not determined by consumption or reflective thinking, this leads to the question: Where do our attitudes come from? Oswalt has several suggestions: (1) "racial memory"—i.e., the information transmitted through the genes and chromosomes of the human race; (2) the influence of Scripture, in which work is extolled while idleness is rebuked; (3) the "Protestant work ethic," wherein productive work acquires a nuance of duty; and (4) the "lack of ability to capitalize on leisure" because "we've not been taught . . . to become creative" (p. 46). Strangely (to me at least) Oswalt omits here something I have always seen as the primary factor in any feelings of guilt I have ever experienced over leisure: the extremely competitive nature of a capitalistic western society, where one either sinks or swims, and the insecurity that this type of environment breeds if one is not always moving forward.

Now that the problem has been surveyed, the logical question suggests itself: "What can we do about it?" Oswalt first addresses the Biblical command to "subdue the earth" and concludes that this command furnishes the answer: "We work in order to make the earth more nearly all that it can be" (p. 54). Why has this not succeeded? Because of a second Biblical statement: Mankind and the efforts he puts forth are contaminated by sin. But a third Biblical statement must also be accounted for: the Sabbath rest, which speaks of a release from the labors of the week, a time of rejoicing in that we as Christians belong to God and are not slaves but free (pp. 57 ff.).

But what if my freedom is bought at the price of another's? Or as Oswalt puts it: "Am I an oppressor?" Here the author tries to walk that narrow line between an ascetic denial of virtue to "any sort of superfluity" and the theology of Christian hedonism, which says

that obedience to God will inevitably bring wealth. He advocates that "we all take a careful look at our lifestyles . . . to see whether our leisure is growing out of our taking advantage of people" (p. 63)—a timely exhortation to today's Christian leaders.

Oswalt adds to this list a fifth Biblical statement that the refusal to work is a sin (Prov 6:6-11; 2 Thess 3:6-12). Then he concludes that if work in and of itself is not necessarily a virtue true wisdom is, and thus it constitutes a legitimate end for which to strive. Thus, he reasons, work must be balanced by a proportionate amount of time that may be used creatively to the betterment of the person and the community. It is interesting to see the way Oswalt arrives at this conclusion without citing, so far as I could detect, the book of Ecclesiastes, the place in Scripture where the notion of moderation in all things (including human wisdom) is set forth most clearly (e.g. 2:12-17, the fallacy of human wisdom; 2:18-23, the fallacy of labor; cf. e.g. 2:24; 4:6, 8; 5:10-20; 6:1-7; 7:15-18; 9:10-18; 11:9).

Oswalt's discussion on work now moves to what he will call a seventh Biblical statement, in which he argues that one's worth as a person does not reside in one's utility to society but rather in the *imago Dei* in mankind. Allowing one's utility to determine one's self-worth, he says, is a "trap" because it "does not give us a sense of self-worth independent of circumstances" (p. 73). Here Oswalt's reasoning becomes a bit fuzzy, for he does not distinguish clearly between the absolute value of a human being and his relative—be it called utilitarian, functional or something else—value. If we did not make this distinction automatically we would have no friends other than the human race in general.

Oswalt concludes this list of eight Biblical statements with the observation that covetousness (the tenth commandment) directly negates the first: "Have no other gods" (pp. 75-76). He concludes that self-reliance, independence, the desire to determine who we are by our own efforts, lies at the bottom of much of our problems with work: "Any attempt to find ultimate significance in anything other than Him is to find ourselves frustrated and, if we persist in trying . . . , enslaved" (p. 78). Once again I find it interesting that he arrives at this conclusion without recourse to Eccl 12:13.

Oswalt next launches into a discussion of "God's [by which he means "the Bible's"] view of leisure." He derives his ideas from the Biblical doctrine of creation, which he calls "the fundamental doctrine of the Bible" (p. 83). He concludes that if God has created everything, then everything has a purpose (again without reference to Eccl 3:1-8), a design appropriate to it, a meaning to the various ups and downs in life, and God's freedom to accomplish his own ends. If humans are made in the image of God, and if creativity is a part of the divine nature, it follows that humans, too, should enjoy creative labor. "When we create something, we are becoming more human" (p. 92).

Following this he turns to an examination of grace, which he calls a "key word" that can sum up all of Christianity (p. 93), and the difficulty we have in accepting God's grace because of our pride (p. 95). We would much rather "earn our own way" (pp. 96 ff.) than rely on the grace of God, or of anyone for that matter. But grace means that we must learn to accept what we have not earned (pp. 101 ff.). Indeed Oswalt might just as well have said "learn to accept what we cannot earn." He ties grace with leisure by three means: (1) Working "to justify ourselves in the sight of God and of human beings" collides with the doctrine of grace; (2) grace "is the gift of receiving" what we do not deserve, and that includes leisure time; (3) grace "is laughter, and without grace, laughter is a luxury which can ill be afforded" (p. 103).

Freedom is the gift of God, says Oswalt, and with it comes the freedom to play and so to use leisure time (p. 109). Likewise worship enters here because worship, too, is a worthwhile use of leisure time (p. 122). True worship affirms the worth-ship of God and frequently does this in a community setting, such as church. Oswalt cites with approbation Pieper's idea that "worship is essential to leisure" (p. 122). Finally, Oswalt explores our calling in Christ: We should use our leisure time to become what God wants us to

become in terms of the reason that he called us (p. 123). Oswalt closes with an application to the Church together with an exhortation to use its leisure time properly and wisely.

Book reviews as a whole, including this one, have many flaws, including a tendency to be picky. And indeed Oswalt's book has a number of places that could be picked on: Its disjointedness reveals its origins as a lecture series only too well, and its lack of a clear hierarchy in its headings adds to that feeling. In addition there are the oversights that Oswalt has made in developing his arguments that have been mentioned already. But it would be most unfair to dwell on these. This is no scholarly, reasoned treatise that pretends to be the final word. It is a stimulating, sometimes provocative, jab in the ribs that any Christian could profit from by reading. Seen in that light the book succeeds most admirably.

William C. Williams

Southern California College, Costa Mesa, CA

Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry From New Testament Times to the Present. By Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987, 552 pp., \$15.95.

Marx observed in his *German Ideology* that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas." That dictum proves itself not only in economy but in history, where nearly all the histories of the Church have been written by and about men, the result being that the considerable contributions of at least half the Church have vanished from our collective memory. Writing from an "open centrist perspective" (p. 440) that is neither traditionalist nor feminist, the authors seek to redress this "flagrant neglect" (p. 13).

The volume is comprehensive in at least three ways. Chronologically, it spans the period from NT times to the contemporary period. Except for three chapters on foreign missions, the nonwestern Church, and contemporary issues, each of the other eight chapters focuses on a period of the Church: medieval, Reformation, etc. One lacuna, which makes for a slight disappointment, is the absence of a chapter on the Renaissance period, especially in light of the fact that "Renaissance humanists were the originators of modern egalitarian ideas" (p. 217; see pp. 171-172). Geographically the book moves beyond the borders of western Christianity to include the role of women in missions and the "Bible women" of nonwestern churches. Finally, the book covers a wide diversity of theological and denominational perspectives. Virtually no one is left out.

Tucker and Liefeld also deserve credit for maintaining an objective and judicious perspective. *Daughters* avoids hagiography. Nor do the authors have any axe to grind. We read here of the brilliant and the bizarre, the inspiring and the embarrassing. While drawing attention to those who promoted the roles of women in ministry, they correct overzealous feminist readings of texts (pp. 389-390) and avoid the temptation of making their subjects say more than they did.

Mention should also be made of the book's supplemental materials. Nearly 70 photographs and illustrations complement the text. A 30-page bibliography is divided according to chapter subjects. Two indices cover Scripture and subject references. Most tantalizing and helpful, readers will have to resist turning directly to the three appendices on hermeneutics and theology, exegetical issues, and ordination and authority, where the authors move beyond historical narrative to theological construction.

In trying to review this volume I would like to suggest three ways in which it moves forward discussion about the role of women in ministry. First, the book helps us with the negative but necessary task of coming to grips with the blatant, sustained history of

misogyny that has stigmatized the orthodox Church for 1900 years. Again, the authors bear no grudge, and this is hardly a main purpose of the book, but there are the facts: Tertullian's venomous attack that women are the perpetrators of sin (p. 103), Aquinas suggesting that women are misbegotten males (p. 164), Luther offering that women are "weaker in body and intellect [than men] . . . inferior to the man both in honor and dignity" (p. 174), the Southern Baptists' *Biblical Recorder* of 1868 correcting "the erroneous opinion that the mental powers of the sexes are equal" (p. 284), and the *Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1913 declaring that "the female sex is in some respects inferior to the male sex, both as regards body and soul" (p. 377, italics mine). At the very least, traditionalists need to beware of (1) how others, in light of this sad history, might view their position, (2) convincingly distance themselves by their practices from this distortion of their otherwise legitimate interpretation of Scripture, and (3) be careful that they do not reinforce this cultural status quo that all agree is heinous.

A second contribution the book makes involves the correction of popular misconceptions. It documents a handful of historical surprises and what the authors call recurring patterns, both of which correct misreadings of Church history. Two examples stand out. One widespread idea stereotypes women as aggressive usurpers of the male domain. Not so, we learn. In fact the opposite is often true. We see the recurring pattern in which women took the initiative to begin ministries, only to be displaced by men who co-opted their efforts. My favorite example is the Female Union for the Promotion of Sunday Schools, established by Joanna Bethune, which consisted of some 250 teachers and 3,000 pupils. One week after its organization the men formed the New York Sunday School Union, "of which the Female Society soon became an auxiliary" (p. 250).

Another recurring pattern has to do with "conservative" and "liberal" labels, popular history seeing the latter as preeminently feminist. Not so. A case can be made that conservative evangelicals have been more progressive in affirming women in ministry while "liberals" were more traditionalist (see pp. 15, 252, 389). The Salvation Army, Freewill Baptists, Church of God (both Anderson and Cleveland), holiness/pentecostal groups, Free Methodist founder B. T. Roberts, A. B. Simpson, C. Finney, and others, all to greater or lesser degrees promoted women in ministry, while mainline denominations like the United Methodists, Presbyterians ("probably the strictest," p. 283), Lutherans, Unitarians, and Congregationalists like Gladden and Abbott (p. 375) remained starchy traditionalists on the issue. Thus current discussion must avoid making the issue yet another test of personal orthodoxy. History simply refutes the misconception that this is a conservative-liberal issue, and the authors suggest that those labels should be discontinued in future dialogue.

A third major contribution consists in the way that the authors document the far greater involvement of women in ministry than previously known or admitted. Women in missions exemplifies this. "By 1894 there were thirty-three foreign mission boards from which some one thousand women had been sponsored as teachers, doctors, evangelists and relief workers" (p. 301). Or, quoting Hill: "By 1915 there were more than three million women on the membership rolls of some forty denominational missionary societies" (pp. 291, 494). In light of such faithful involvement in ministry across the centuries, current discussion must address such questions as why we both allow and promote on the mission field what we steadfastly prohibit in our home churches, or why we require men to recount their "call" to the ministry to validate their work while we deny women that same experience of an inner conviction that God has called them to a task.

In their "Conclusion" (pp. 435-441) Tucker and Liefeld draw together their panorama with historical and practical observations, raising questions for further discussion like the nature of teaching, authority, ministry and ordination, and the importance of perspective. All in all they have made a superb contribution both to the Church and to

current discussions within the Church on this contemporary issue. Current debate must include this exceptional historical perspective, which documents the long heritage of women in ministry (pp. 16-17).

Daniel B. Clendenin

William Tyndale College, Farmington Hills, MI

Neither Slave nor Free. By Patricia Gundry. San Francisco: Harper, 1987, 150 pp., \$13.95.

In the foreword Gundry tells us that the first question that should be asked is "Who are we?" The answer should be "If we are the church we do not need permission to minister." Ordination and Church hierarchy are human events, so "why not . . . re-invent the church along . . . more biblical lines?" After giving us a short overview of the past and of where we now are in the battle for equality she finishes this first chapter with some successes in the movement (p. 6). This is not a book on the hermeneutical arguments, theological or otherwise, on the equality of women and men. In fact there is only one Scripture quotation (Eph 5:18, 22—on mutual submission) in the book. Yet I would very definitely call this a Christian book. It is a how-to book, a book on the methodology of achieving equality.

After having very capably written three other works on the equality of women in marriage (*Heirs Together*), in the Church (*Women Be Free*) and in contemporary society (*Complete Women*), Gundry at this point writes in a very clear, concise way concerning how to implement Biblical equality. Let it be understood that she would not identify with the world's "women's lib" movement or with the ERA, nor they with her. She advocates a Biblical equality of the sexes.

Chap. 2, on "Meeting Needs," is important for women to read. It is amazing how the simple things in life become obvious needs to be met, whereas in many situations in a woman's life they are not. While Gundry does not theorize, she has some practical means of dealing with frustration, for example, in coping with incompatible associations. The chapter on "Meeting Needs Together" gives fundamental ways of working together in the struggle for equality. In fact, some of her suggestions would bring us back to yesteryear.

The next two chapters, "Methodologies" and "Changemaking Strategies," are so well written that they could apply to situations outside the feminist realm with no difficulty at all. Although the change-making processes that Gundry advocates are simple, they may prove to be the most effective suggestions yet advanced.

The last chapter, entitled "The View from Halfway up the Aisle," is a soft but firm challenge to both men and women to prepare for the future, a future in which change toward equality in the Christian community is inevitable. This book is not theology, but it is must reading for all Christians striving for equality among God's people.

Arnold Boulianne

Eganville Baptist Church, Eganville, Ontario

Christian Faith and Public Policy. By Arthur Simon. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 120 pp., \$6.95 paper.

Christian involvement in public policy concerns has risen sharply in the last ten years, and Simon approves of that trend. In this volume the author attempts to provide guidance for effective Christian involvement in shaping policy and action at all levels of government.

Simon's book is short and concise. He writes "a practical guide for people who want their lives to make a difference, not a book of theory for armchair analysts." Six of the eight chapters focus on practical guidelines for Christian involvement in public-policy issues. Biblical, ethical and theological concepts are treated briefly in the first two chapters.

The heart of this book is found in chap. 4, where the author explores how Christians can find "the right policies." Simon articulates a three-step process: (1) Start with "fundamental principles, drawn from the Bible, that express the core teachings of faith." Original sin and the value of human life are examples of principles that for the author "emerge from the central Biblical themes of creation, redemption, and sanctification." (2) Develop "derived moral principles" that "stand between revealed [fundamental] principles and public policy positions." Simon wants his readers to ask how Biblical principles apply morally and ethically to contemporary society. (3) Once we understand the moral significance of Biblical teaching, we are ready to craft "public policy positions" on specific issues.

The author cautions readers to use this process in a spirit of humility and flexibility. "We have to offer specific prescriptions that require . . . not only fidelity to Christian moral principles but sound analysis of policy issues. But Christians have no inside track on sound analysis, no special revelation that gives them quick solutions to tangled social problems" (p. 55).

Simon spends a subsequent chapter taking the Liberty Foundation and other "religious-right" groups to task for not following this process. He accuses them of offering simplistic solutions to complex problems and attempting to jump from fundamental principles to specifics without adequate moral reflection.

While this book will prove helpful to individuals and congregations involved with public-policy concerns, two glaring weaknesses stand out. First, Simon locates the focal point of OT theology in the exodus, not in the creation and fall of man. Therefore his justification for Christian social concern becomes more rooted in liberation theology than in historic Christian orthodoxy.

Second, Simon astounded me with the following in his critique of the Liberty Foundation: "Christians captive to a left-wing ideology would deserve equal criticism, but *there is no comparable religious oriented left-wing policy group or movement in the United States*" (italics mine). A cursory look at the agenda of organizations like the National Council of Churches reveals captivity to a left-wing political agenda and extreme intolerance of those who disagree with them.

These two weaknesses detract from what otherwise is a helpful, practical work.

Robert Mayer

Advent Christian Witness, Charlotte, NC

Kol ha-Miqra'ot še-be-Talmud Bavli (All the Biblical Quotations in the Babylonian Talmud). By M. D. Rubin. Jerusalem: Koren, 1985, 568 + 88 pp., n.p.

This reference work contains three major parts. The first is the MT of all the Bible verses quoted in the Babylonian Talmud. The verses are neatly arranged, following the order of the Hebrew Bible. Brief commentaries are given on each page for most passages and are taken mainly from the works of Rashi and occasionally of Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Ramban, Sforno and others. It is designed to provide Talmudic students a convenient Bible text and commentary.

The other two major parts are the two detailed indices. The first is an index of Scriptural references to the Talmud, a help for readers to locate where a Bible verse is quoted or discussed in the Talmud. The index also indicates whether the verse is also cited in the annotations of either Rashi or Tosafot on the Talmud. The other index,

somewhat a reverse of the first, is to help to identify the references of Bible passages cited or discussed in the annotations of Tosapot, Rashi, Rashbam and others.

Though the book is in Hebrew and is designed to help students of the Talmud, students of the OT or NT with some knowledge of Hebrew may still find it useful in locating the Talmudic use of the Bible with a Scriptural index and the Biblical text in one volume. But if one wants to know whether a certain Bible verse is quoted in full or in part in the Talmud, this work is not helpful. The book presents every verse in full even if the Talmud quotes only part of it (e.g. the use of Gen 36:12 in *b. Sanh.* 99b). This format benefits the Talmudic students who already have the Talmud before them to compare what is quoted with what is in the Bible.

The book has one map, several charts and chronological tables but no general table of abbreviations, the addition of which would have enhanced its usefulness. There are three pages of addenda of Biblical texts omitted in its first part, but where these verses are quoted in the Talmud is not noted in any way in the book.

Alex Luc

Columbia Biblical Seminary, Columbia, SC

Isaiah 1-33. Word Biblical Commentary 24. By John D. W. Watts. Waco: Word, 1985, 449 pp., n.p.

This is the first of a two-part work for the Word Biblical Commentary series, a series that according to its editors is based on the Biblical languages and written from an "evangelical" stance. The format of each volume of the series is identical: Following an introduction, each section contains a bibliography, translation and textual notes, form/structure/setting, comment and explanation. My review will follow the same general format.

In the introduction Watts sets forth his contention that the book (or "Vision," as he continually refers to the work) was composed in c. 435 B.C., with the eighth-century prophet's words (2:2-4; 7:1-8:18; chap. 13; chap. 20; chaps. 36-39) presented as "the core and inspiration of the Vision that has been composed around them" (p. xxvii). According to Watts the purpose of the book is "not historical" but rather "develops and presents fifth-century issues by presenting materials from eighth-, seventh-, sixth-, and fifth-century settings" (p. xliii). Thus Watts does not divide the book up into First, Second and Third Isaiah as do most modern scholars. Instead he sees the book as a "unified" fifth-century composition based upon an existing body of "Isaiah tradition." Watts arrives at the 435 B.C. date because Isa 63:1-6 mentions the destruction of Edom but Ezra/Nehemiah do not mention Edom, suggesting that by the mid-fifth century Edom had disappeared. One would have wished for more solid evidence on which to base a case for the 435 B.C. date. Especially disappointing is that the role Watts assigns for the eighth-century prophet in the formation of the book is even less than most modern nonevangelical scholars presuppose.

A second distinctive feature of this commentary set forth in the introduction and then followed throughout the work is the treatment of the book as "drama," with acts, scenes, episodes and various speakers. Watts spends over four pages arguing for drama in Israel and in the OT and concludes that Isaiah was written in the mold of a Greek drama. While he is to be commended for his creativity in this regard, the breakdown of every section into four, five, or more different speakers simply does not work, and little evidence is given for the various "speakers" who are introduced (so for example the speakers in 2:5-22 are "A Speaker [to Israel]," "Second Speaker [to the court]," "Chorus," "Heavens and Earth [to the jailer]," "Heavens," "Earth," "Prophet" and "Yahweh"). Significant in the division of the prophecy into various speakers is that the prophet's role is severely diminished as his words become much fewer (in the preceding example

the prophet speaks only one line [2:18]). The result is that the authority of the prophecy as a whole is seriously undermined since some portions may be only the speaker's opinions and not the prophet's. So for example Shebna, not the prophet, is the speaker in 21:2a, 3-4, 6a, 10, 16-17; 22:4, 14. 22:15 "is the first genuinely prophetic word in the chapter" (p. 290). But what is the contextual evidence for such a statement? Two traditionally messianic passages are handled similarly. Isa 9:5-6 is "voiced by monarchists in the crowd" (p. 134) but "is not, however, a part of Isaiah's word for Israel or Judah in the eighth century or of the Vision of Isaiah for Jerusalem in the fifth century" (pp. 135-136). Likewise Isa 11:10 is spoken by a "Monarchist" who thinks that "God will rule the nations through the Davidic king" (p. 175), but "the view of the Vision does not generally support this position for the monarchy of the eighth and fifth centuries" (p. 176). There is no evidence given for such nameless speakers who are supposedly making statements that are contrary to the Vision as a whole.

The two most beneficial portions of the book are the bibliography and the translation and textual notes for each section. The bibliography for each section is very helpful, though there seems to be an overabundance of non-English works cited and an avoidance of evangelical scholars as well. The textual notes may well be the most helpful part of the work, as Watts compares the MT with the LXX and 1QIsa^a (though he should use the now standard sigla rather than the older DSS^{1sa}). In addition, both in the notes and in the comment section there are helpful references to Watts' *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament* and other standard grammars such as those of Gesenius and Jouon. The form/structure/setting section provides some helpful structural analyses of the prophecy and occasionally points out some of Isaiah's wordplay (for example pp. 120, 126). The comment section contains much that is helpful, especially in discussion of individual Hebrew words and certain grammatical points (see for example the comment section on 5:1-7). It is very uneven, however, with many verses not discussed at all (and several sections, including 2:1-4; 3:1-12, receive no verse-by-verse comment at all).

Easily the weakest section of all is the "Explanation." Of the 71 sections in the commentary, 6 sections have no explanation whatever and in 27 sections the "Explanation" is 15 lines or less. If this section is designed "to show what a passage as a whole is about" (p. xxiii), then it fails miserably. Often the interpretations offered are quite subjective with little supporting evidence given. For example, according to Watts, while Kings and Chronicles considered Ahaz and Manasseh bad kings, "the Vision of Isaiah takes a very different stance" in which Isaiah supported Ahaz over against Hezekiah (pp. 114-115). Similarly while "both the Chronicler and the Deuteronomist thought of Hezekiah and Josiah as 'bright spots' in Judah's history, the Vision sees them rather as two more steps to ultimate doom" (pp. 221-222). Furthermore Watts views the setting of chaps. 23-27 as c. 700-640 B.C. (most would see chaps. 24-27 as apocalyptic, but Watts denies this; in fact, he equates Leviathan in 27:1 with Tyre, again with no supporting evidence) and chaps. 28-33 as referring to 640-605 B.C. in the reigns of Josiah and Jehoiakim (despite the fact that chap. 28 begins with a woe to Ephraim, lamenting the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C.). But there is virtually no evidence offered to support such unusual positions.

The most disappointing aspect of the commentary is its consistent avoidance of any prophetic or messianic interpretations in Isaiah and an accompanying de-emphasis of the NT understanding of Isaiah's message. As explained earlier, Watts views two key messianic passages (9:5-6; 11:10) as spoken by "monarchists" who do not represent the message of the book as a whole. Similarly, according to Watts the only sense in which 7:14 is messianic is that the royal house of Judah survived the Assyrian threat in 733 B.C. (p. 102). Matthew simply used a common hermeneutical method "which allowed verses to be separated from their contexts" in applying the LXX translation of Isa 7:14 to the birth of Jesus. Watts wryly remarks that "if one supposes a divine intention in this connection, part of God's work was done through the Greek translator" and concludes that "christological implications may more profitably be discussed in the commentary

on Matthew than in the one on Isaiah" (pp. 103-104). Watts' discussion of the names given in 9:6 is similarly weak with only a three-sentence excursus devoted to them and no explanation of the names either in the notes or comments. He denies any futuristic prophetic outlook to the book, explaining that "historical fulfillment" of prophecies such as that of Egypt worshipping Yahweh in Isa 19:18-25 "did not occur." Instead, as in chaps. 11-12, it was a vision of what God hoped would occur but did not because man ruined it (p. 258). Likewise chaps. 24-27 are not eschatological in nature but reflect "a literary portrayal" of the reign of Manasseh (p. 310).

Finally, Watts' failure to mention numerous NT citations and allusions to Isaiah is almost incomprehensible in an "evangelical" commentary on the book. Not only is the NT not normative for Watts in the interpretation of the OT; apparently it is not even relevant. There is no mention of the NT quotation of Isa 6:9-10 (cited in all four gospels and Acts); no mention of the NT fulfillment of Isa 8:14 in Christ except briefly later in discussing 28:16; no mention of Heb 2:13 in connection with Isa 8:17-18; no mention of the citation of Isa 11:10 in Rom 15:12; no mention of the NT reference to Isa 25:8 in Rev 7:17; 21:4 (and 1 Cor 15:54 is only discussed in terms of the textual notes on translation); no reference to Paul's use of Isa 28:11-12 in 1 Cor 14:21. In the entire commentary there are only 41 references to the NT in any connection. By contrast there are 209 references to the NT in the first volume of E. J. Young's commentary (covering chaps. 1-18) and 504 references to the NT in J. N. Oswalt's new commentary (covering chaps. 1-39). I might also add that Watts avoids citing conservative scholars with a similar regularity: Apparently it is more fashionable to cite Wildberger (182 times) rather than Young (8 times) or Delitzsch (17 times).

In summary, Watts' commentary may be of some help for the scholar in the bibliographies, translation notes, and selected comments. The rest is of little value for the evangelical who desires to understand this rich prophetic OT book.

Todd S. Beall

Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, MD

The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. By John N. Oswalt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, 746 pp., n.p.

This is the first of a two-volume work on Isaiah in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament series. For reasons unknown to me, the editor of the series decided to replace E. J. Young's masterful three-volume work on Isaiah, originally written for NICOT, with a new work. The result is that we now have a second excellent conservative commentary on the book of Isaiah.

Since I recently finished working through J. Watts' new commentary on Isaiah for the Word Biblical Commentary series, comparisons between the two works are inevitable. Unlike Watts' work, Oswalt's commentary is solidly evangelical with a clear understanding of such passages of Isa 9:5-6; 11:1-10 as messianic and with ample references to the NT throughout the work. Oswalt's position on authorship is that the "essential content" of the book is the work of Isaiah, though there may have been brief editorial work on the book either by Isaiah or people working with him (p. 25). Throughout the commentary Oswalt interacts well with modern scholarship, carefully discussing the various opinions on authorship and unity for each passage. One of the most refreshing aspects of the book is that instead of dissecting Isaiah into various loosely related parts Oswalt explains the message of each passage as it relates to the context of the entire section. As Oswalt notes: "To analyze the physical components of a human being is not to understand humanity. Nor can the message of Isaiah be understood by means of such analysis. . . . At the least it is incumbent upon the interpreter to give as much attention

to the whole as he or she has given to the parts" (pp. 45-46). The result is that the reader is left with a clear understanding of the message of the book as a whole.

The 75-page introduction provides the usual discussion of background, date, authorship, unity, occasion and text, as well as a helpful section on the theology of the book. In addition a section entitled "Problems in Interpretation" contains excellent discussions of the importance of interpreting the book as a whole, the significance of prediction in prophecy, the "Servant," and the book's function in the canon. The introduction concludes with an outline of chaps. 1-39 and an excellent 12-page bibliography containing works from all critical perspectives.

Oswalt's translations are generally very good (though in the translation of Isa 11:11 several words ["from Egypt, from Pathros"] were apparently left out, and the translation of the oath formula in Isa 22:14 with "if" is misleading—why not use "surely"?). He also shows proper caution in only occasionally emending the text when both the versions and the context support such a change (as for example in Isa 5:17; 8:2). Oswalt's treatment of the poetry in Isaiah is very good: He frequently mentions paronomasia and other poetic devices. A helpful index indicates that over 900 Hebrew words are discussed in all. This reviewer wishes, however, that the Hebrew script were used (as in the Word Biblical Commentary series) rather than transliteration, especially since with the advent of multi-font typesetting computers unusual character sets are no longer a major problem.

Two problems mar the helpfulness of this work. First, the documentation is often incomplete. In footnotes, page numbers of works are often not given (for example, see nn. 1, 2, 7, 9, 11, 14 on pp. 79-83). Similarly a scholar's name will be mentioned in the text but with no footnote or page number ("According to Smith . . ." [p. 85]; similar references on pp. 92, 105, 108, 132, etc.). Perhaps for many readers such inadequate documentation will be of little importance, but for those who wish to check the sources given it is inexcusable not to provide proper documentation. A second problem lies in the interpretation of the prophetic sections of the book, where many prophecies are interpreted figuratively rather than literally. Aside from these difficulties, Oswalt's work is a treasure. It provides solid help in understanding the text and message of this OT book.

Todd S. Beall

Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, MD

Irony in the Fourth Gospel. By Paul D. Duke. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985, vi + 222 pp., \$11.95 paper.

In a climactic statement that seems to summarize Jesus' public ministry as portrayed in John 2:12, John 12:37 says: "Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him" (NIV). Here and in many other places in the fourth gospel, such as 3:1, irony is quite apparent. Duke's lucid volume builds upon the work of R. A. Culpepper by clarifying the substance and method of irony in John. It also delineates the various forms of irony in John, seeks to understand its function, and probes the reasons for its use (pp. 1-2).

Two preliminary chapters provide a survey of the meaning, types and functions of irony. Chaps. 3-4 discuss "local irony," by which Duke describes smaller, punctual ironies that occur at given points in the text (p. 43). Chaps. 5-6 are concerned with "extended irony" and "sustained narrative irony," by which Duke refers to longer ironies that relate to ongoing situational themes. According to Duke, these may even reveal the basic structure of the fourth gospel. A final chapter explores the use of irony in the fourth gospel in terms of the Johannine milieu, duality and community. There is also a forty-page endnote section as well as a twenty-page bibliography and indices of authors and Scripture references.

Duke's literary-critical study has much to commend it. He is a talented and lucid writer. The book is organized clearly. His work is well documented, not only from traditional exegetical sources but also from literary-critical studies of irony in general. Thus the book avoids the either/or pitfall sometimes noted in literary-critical approaches. Duke believes that recognizing the ironic element in John is not tantamount to dismissing its factuality (p. 185 n. 39). This is important in handling such statements as "and it was night" (John 13:30; pp. 108-109). Throughout the book one also notes commendable caution and humility as the author frankly admits that the subject is complex and even mysterious.

Conservatives will not necessarily agree with Duke's theological position on all points. He is not averse to viewing the fourth gospel as a multi-author work (pp. 157-158 n. 6). At one point he believes that the "narrator" weakens the ironic force of Jesus' words (p. 50). This sort of problem is infrequent, however. Another controversial issue that should be noted is Duke's somewhat ambivalent stance on authorial intent. Though he does wish to distinguish between "irony communicated and irony perceived" (p. 19) he does not wish to deny the validity of seeing ironies not intended by the author. The question here is quite relevant for preachers and teachers. How can we preach authoritatively about ironies that we admit are our own, not the author's? Surely we should attempt to make some sort of functional distinction here, since it is only the author's text that is God-breathed Scripture. Subjective perceptions of irony will inevitably and spontaneously arise as we read Scripture, but we should attempt to determine whether these arise from the author's mind or our own situations. In his discussion Duke portrays W. C. Kaiser as wrongly drawing an "easy equation between intention and meaning" (p. 19), evidently due to a "mechanistic" understanding of inspiration (p. 160 n. 33). Two clarifications should be made. First, it is hardly fair to charge Kaiser with holding a mechanistic view of inspiration. Second, many who hold this so-called mechanistic view strongly disagree with Kaiser on the matter of authorial intent.

These matters aside, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* is a fine volume, and serious students will find it helpful in clarifying the message of the fourth gospel.

David L. Turner

Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

A Synoptic Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. By James D. Newsome Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986, 275 pp.

Newsome has produced an excellent synoptic harmony that will replace W. Crockett's dated *A Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles* (Baker, 1951). Newsome's work, based on the RSV and referenced to the MT, contains the complete texts of 1 Samuel 31, 2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, and 1-2 Chronicles. A key is provided on p. 18 showing the symbols used to denote which verses have been adjusted to reflect the Hebrew text, or where the Hebrew text is uncertain or has been disturbed.

The Biblical text (RSV) is printed in attractive type and is divided into short pericopes placed in parallel columns, with Samuel/Kings on the left and Chronicles on the right. An added feature is the inclusion of related passages from Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezra placed in a center column. The text is arranged in the order in which it appears in Samuel-Kings, and decisions of chronology are thus left to the reader. Two indices are also included: (1) the contents, which gives section headings to the narrative of Samuel/Kings, the parallel passages, and page numbers; (2) the index of passages in Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezra, which cites the respective passages together with their parallels, section numbers and page numbers.

When I first opened the book I was surprised to see that it contained no introduction, but rather a cursory foreword consisting of a page and a half. It would help if Newsome

had written an introduction telling us how the project was undertaken, how his book compares with Crockett's, why he used the RSV, and other matters such as the provenance and perspective of the Chronicler's narrative.

For those who want to do comparative study of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles based on the English text, this will be the book to consult. However, those pursuing serious comparative study of the Hebrew text of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles will need to consult the standard work by P. Vannutelli, *Libri Synoptici Veteris Testamenti seu Librorum Regum et Chronicorum loci paralleli* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1931, 1934).

Roger B. Helland

Okanagan Bible College, Kelowna, BC

A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah, Vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah 1-XXV. ICC. By William McKane. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1986, 658 pp. *Jeremiah: A Commentary.* OTL. By Robert P. Carroll. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986, 874 pp. *Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, Chapters 1-25.* Hermeneia. By William L. Holladay. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, 682 pp.

For a number of years John Bright's commentary on Jeremiah (AB, 1965) has served as the standard work on Jeremiah for the English-speaking world. While commendable in many respects, its relative brevity (370 pages, a significant portion of which is taken up in a new and not very remarkable translation), its mediocrity in exegetical treatment of the text and its growing age have left a need for a more definitive treatment. J. A. Thompson's more recent commentary on Jeremiah in the NICOT series (1980) provided an evangelical counterpart to Bright. It also provided a significantly more detailed treatment of the text (some 650 pages of commentary). While Thompson did little by way of literary analysis (his comments generally did more to summarize than further understanding of the text), the commentary nevertheless has served as a solid and respectable treatment of Jeremiah from an evangelical viewpoint. Yet Bright and Thompson—and all the others—have left many of the knottiest problems of Jeremiah unanswered. A definitive commentary had still not been written. For this reason it is with great delight that we welcome not one but three major new commentaries on Jeremiah, all published in 1986.

McKane's work, in conformity to the ICC series, represents a heavily linguistic approach to the book of Jeremiah. In the first 27 pages he details what he considers to be the significant textual variations (in chaps. 1-25 of Jeremiah) between MT, LXX, Peshitta, Vg and targums. Among his conclusions: The (shorter) LXX represents a more original text; the MT is an expanded version; and Peshitta, Vg and targums, while evidencing minor influences from LXX, follow MT rather faithfully.

On the composition of Jeremiah, McKane is sympathetic with the views of Mowinckel, who divided the material of the book of Jeremiah into three sources: type A, poetic sermons from Jeremiah; type B, biographical data from another person; and type C, prose sermons from later Deuteronomistic editors. McKane devotes considerable space to critiques of the views of H. Weippert (who argues that the prose portions of Jeremiah are not Deuteronomistic) and W. Thiel (who argues that they are). McKane proposes that in a sense both are right: Editors under the influence of the Deuteronomistic school expanded the original, poetic kernels of Jeremiah, developing their material out of the Jeremianic reservoir. The process of growth and aggregation was a long and complicated one. McKane sees the process as that of a "rolling corpus"—i.e. the accretion of bits of commentary on small pieces of text over a long period of time. In other words the prose expansions drew primarily from the "reservoir" of genuine Jeremianic sayings that comprised the original "kernel" of the book.

Regarding the commentary proper, an unfortunately large percentage wrestles with minor source-critical disputes with much space devoted to the issue of the primacy of the LXX *Vorlage*. Thiel's and Weippert's arguments regarding individual sections and verses are given an inordinate amount of space. At times the commentary appears to be nothing more than a continuation of the debate over the source-critical issues presented in the introduction, rather than a commentary on the text.

In keeping with the ICC tradition there is a consistent lack of concern for geographical, archeological and sociological details. For example, the location of Anathoth, Jeremiah's home town (1:1), is not even mentioned (McKane is not sure that the information about Jeremiah being from Anathoth is accurate anyway). In his treatment of the loincloth message (13:1-11) McKane does not bother to define the very symbol around which the message revolves. In fact he fails to comment on any of the particulars of these verses, devoting his entire treatment to the various historical approaches to the message as a whole.

The commentary sheds very little new light on the meanings of the Hebrew words in Jeremiah, even the difficult ones. The specific nuances of words are rarely discussed, nor are idioms. If discussion does occur it is normally restricted to quoting the opinions of several select scholars. Original word studies do not appear to be of interest to McKane.

Despite these and other considerable flaws (there is an almost total disregard of rhetorical-critical questions), McKane's commentary will be a valuable addition to the serious student's library simply because it amasses a large amount of data from the versions, secondary literature (emphasizing German sources) and medieval Jewish scholars (such as Rashi and Kimchi). It is particularly refreshing to see such frequent references to these latter, often-neglected sources.

Carroll's approach to the question of the composition of Jeremiah is somewhat similar to McKane's. Carroll, like McKane, agrees with the essentials of Mowinckel's analysis. He is convinced that the type C material represents later accretions from Deuteronomic hands. He is not at all convinced, however, that the type A material—i.e. the poetic sermons—comes from the prophet Jeremiah: "Without the instruction provided by the rubrics of redaction the poems remain anonymous. We have no *reason* to believe the poems of 1-25 to be other than anonymous utterances from a variety of sources. The editors of the book have put them into the mouth of Jeremiah" (p. 47).

Regarding the differences between MT and LXX, Carroll agrees with Tov that the LXX represents a "first edition" of the book and the MT a "second edition" (pp. 52-55)—and he refers to them as such throughout his work. But he also maintains that both MT and LXX have long and complex histories of transmission and bristle with textual difficulties of their own.

Carroll is more interested in structural/rhetorical criticism than McKane. He analyzes the book of Jeremiah as comprising four main parts (apart from a prologue [chap. 1] and an epilogue [chap. 52]): (1) poems and sermons against Judah and Jerusalem (2:1-25:14); (2) oracles against the nations (25:15-38; chaps. 46-51 [misplaced in MT]); (3) miscellaneous narratives and cycles of material (chaps. 26-36); (4) the fall of Jerusalem and aftermath (chaps. 37-45). Throughout the commentary he strives to identify editorial activity on a macro-structural level (e.g. p. 113).

In the commentary proper Carroll is much more readable than McKane. He lucidly discusses interpretative difficulties and the contributions of secondary literature on those difficulties. He is also not hesitant to make suggestions of his own and does so frequently.

The format of the commentary, pericope by pericope, is: (1) text in *RSV*; (2) brief text-critical notes; (3) discussion of the pericope as a whole. The advantage of this arrangement is that, unlike McKane's (and ICC's) microscopic approach—which analyzes the trees but not the forest—the significance, rhetorical function and theology of each section can be treated in some detail. Carroll examines the bigger picture, the larger issues.

The disadvantage of this format is that the details of the text are often neglected since there is no convenient place to deal with them (although occasionally he treats them in the textual notes section). Like McKane, for example, Carroll does not even mention the location of Anathoth. He does not explain the difference between the words for destroying in 1:10, nor does he note the artistic chiasm in that verse. Does *šēpayim* really mean "bare heights" in 3:2? Carroll does not question RSV on the point. In 13:1 he simply assumes that the "waistcloth" is a "girdle," with no further discussion of either its identity or function (perhaps *ʿezōr* was a sash worn about the waist, functioning as a belt). He does not mention where "Parah" (discussion on 13:4, p. 295) is located, nor does he seem to realize that the place in question is a spring and stream nestled among the kinds of rocky cliffs perfectly suited for the story. He generally fails to see (or at least point out) occurrences of those rhetorical devices so powerful in Jeremiah—e.g. the "set-up" followed by an accusation or other surprise (2:27b, 33a, 37a; 3:2a; etc). In fact on matters of style Carroll appears completely uninterested, thereby missing much of the wit and charm of the Jeremianic sermons.

Despite these shortcomings, Carroll's commentary on Jeremiah will probably be more useful overall than McKane's for several reasons: (1) Carroll's incorporation of a great breadth of modern secondary literature into his commentary provides the reader with a far richer serving than McKane, who tends to limit his references to a few favorite German works. In fact Carroll's 29-page bibliography is in itself a valuable contribution. (2) His lucid introduction, in which various approaches to Jeremiah are well presented and in which major issues are well covered, is far more helpful than the narrow introduction of McKane. (3) Carroll's greater breadth in his commentary—his interest in significance, rhetorical issues, theological contributions and idiosyncrasies, organizational patterns, overall meanings and purposes of pericopes and larger messages, etc.—makes his work far more seminal and insightful than the highly constricted textual/linguistic/source-critical approach of McKane. (4) Carroll's writing style is much more readable than McKane's. One finds that often two or three readings of a paragraph in McKane are needed to grasp his point, while Carroll is generally quite lucid.

The first volume of the long-awaited commentary by Holladay, whom many would consider the greatest Jeremianic scholar in America, is a classic. In fact the set promises to be one of the best English commentaries ever written on a book of the OT—perhaps the best.

Enough cannot be said of the quality of the work. Perhaps its greatest strength is the masterful and thorough explanation of the Hebrew text, verse by verse, phrase by phrase, word by word—which, after all, is what a commentary should do best. Holladay's exegetical skills are of the highest caliber. His grasp of Hebrew grammar and syntax is impressive, enriching his treatment (and our understanding) of passage after passage (e.g. pp. 99; 647–650). Of even more hermeneutical value is his keen sensitivity to Hebrew idiom and word meaning, which he generously employs throughout the commentary to clarify and explain the words of Jeremiah. His treatments of words and idioms are thorough. For example, he devotes an entire column to *šāqəd / šāqad* (pp. 37–38) and nearly a page to the two terms *nāpūah* and *pānim* in 1:13 (p. 39). In fact it appears that Holladay has investigated—on his own—the meaning of every significant word or phrase in the book, often with new insights. For example he argues that the term *sōreq*, translated "choice vine" by RSV in 2:21, comes from a root associated with a bright reddish color, so that the term refers not to the vine but to "a particularly luscious variety of red grapes" (p. 98).

Nēter, the detergent mentioned in 2:22, is identified with Greek *nitron* and Latin *natrum*—i.e. mineral deposits of sodium carbonate. Holladay notes further that since there are no natural deposits in Palestine the material was probably imported from Egypt, where there were several centers of production.

Holladay's grasp of Hebrew is matched by his command of the secondary literature, which far exceeds that of Carroll. At every stage he adeptly and fairly interacts with the views of other scholars. His command of bibliographic tools from peripheral areas of study is likewise impressive. For example, when he discusses the *sir*, "cooking pot," in 1:13-14, he refers the reader to plates in R. Amiran's *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land*. When discussing the location of Anathoth he refers to A. Alt's little-known proposal, published in *PJ* 22 (1926), and to other relevant articles on this now-accepted identification. Examples could be multiplied: state-of-the-art bibliographic tools in archeology, Mesopotamian history, Akkadian, Ugaritic, etc. (cf. his footnotes on pp. 541-543).

The lucidity and common sense that characterize Holladay's discussions further enhance the usefulness of the work. He consistently succeeds in working highly technical material into a delightfully readable format. His new translation (he apologizes for its intentional woodenness) is excellent, a refreshing new voice from the prophet Jeremiah. Its woodenness does not detract from its power and refined accuracy.

Holladay is already well known for his interest in rhetorical and structural criticism (*The Architecture of Jeremiah 1-20*; etc.). He continues to break new ground in this area throughout the commentary. Each section of the text is analyzed structurally in an effort to determine the unit's (1) parameters, so that it is clear that a single literary unit is being analyzed, (2) placement within the book of Jeremiah, to determine implications for the function of the piece, and (3) internal structure, in order to understand better the function of each of the constituent parts of the unit. In my opinion the final word on some of the macro- and micro-structure issues in Jeremiah has still not been heard, but Holladay has moved forward our understanding of this aspect of Jeremiah immensely.

Holladay's sensitivity to text-critical matters is superb, and his treatment is thorough. To give an idea of his thoroughness in this area, he devotes 14 pages (columns) to text-critical issues in 2:1-4:4 alone, with the discussions of some textual problems extending over half a page. His conclusions are well supported.

Three additional sections accompany the treatment of each portion of the text: "Form," "Setting" and "Aim." In the first, form-critical considerations are treated; in the second, an attempt is made to establish the historical setting of the message; and in the third, Holladay deals with the purpose or significance of the unit and its function in the overall message of the book. In each of these endeavors he does well.

It is unfortunate that we must wait for the introduction until the publication of volume 2. If this first volume is any indication, however, the second will be worth waiting for.

For any teacher, student or layperson who wants to understand the prophecies of Jeremiah, Holladay's work is a must. It far supersedes all other studies of the book and in all likelihood will remain the definitive treatment of Jeremiah for years to come.

David A. Dorsey

Evangelical School of Theology, Myerstown, PA

Eschatology in the Old Testament. By Donald E. Gowan. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986, ix + 150 pp.

Gowan explains his approach to OT eschatology in a brief introduction, citing two "discoveries" that form the basis for his book's organization. First, he sees OT eschatology as requiring a threefold transformation of the world—transformation of the human person, transformation of the human society, and transformation of nature itself. Second, Gowan understands Jerusalem or Zion as the center of OT eschatology.

Authorship of individual texts is seldom a concern, since "the value of each text is to be found in its adoption by Israel as to some extent a legitimate expression of its hopes" (p. 2).

In chap. 1, "Zion—The Center of OT Eschatology," Gowan traces the history and development of the Zion tradition in OT eschatology. After describing the growth of this tradition through the time of David and into the days of the divided monarchy, Gowan explains how exilic Judaism (and later post-exilic Judaism) "found a way to take account of judgment and to express their hope for a divinely accomplished future that would take all they had once believed to be present-tense truth about Jerusalem and make that, and more, come true in the days that are coming" (pp. 8–9). The author also summarizes the subsequent development of the Zion tradition in later literature and includes some challenges to modern interpreters of such traditions.

In chap. 2, "Peace in Zion—The Transformation of Human Society," Gowan focuses on three basic features: restoration of the promised land, the righteous King (Messiah), and the nations. The concept of exile and restoration, he argues, does not appear with any prominence before the eighth century but arises primarily from necessity as God's people in exile are forced to wrestle with the issue. The figure of Messiah must be approached with caution, since "all that is associated with him in both Jewish and Christian eschatology is to a great extent the product of the hopes of post-OT Judaism and of the Christian identification of Jesus as the fulfillment of the whole OT promise" (p. 32). Gowan finds that the Hebrew word *māšiah* predominantly refers to kings, and after discussing kingship in ancient Israel he presents a brief excursus on the suffering servant and the son of man that focuses on Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 and Daniel 7. In the excursus he argues that while a NT fulfillment of these texts in Jesus Christ may be valid, such an understanding was not part of the OT eschatological hope. The nations play a mixed role in the restoration of society, receiving judgment but also participating in the final blessing of God. Once again Gowan presents some challenging thoughts for interpreters as he closes the chapter.

Chap. 3, "The People of Zion—The Transformation of the Human Person," focuses on three themes: erasing the past (forgiveness), re-creation, and a new humanity. Essential to forgiveness is the concept of repentance, which occurs both as a condition and as a result of God's restoration. The re-creation of society involves God's giving the people a new heart, new Spirit and new covenant. This work of God brings about a new humanity that remains faithful and receives God's enduring blessing.

In chap. 4, "Highest of All the Hills—The Transformation of Nature," Gowan focuses on two aspects: the new ecology ushered in by the eschatological age, and the new heavens and new earth. The new ecology will feature increased agricultural prosperity and natural harmony, but total transformation will await the creation of new heavens and a new earth, a new world order.

Gowan closes his work with several pages of thought-provoking conclusions and questions. First, OT eschatology is a worldly hope, in contrast to gnosticism or eastern religious faiths. Second, OT eschatology understands the future to be completely in God's hands. Third, OT eschatology emphasizes human society more than personal salvation. Fourth, OT eschatology is a comprehensive hope, affecting all society in a total way. Gowan argues that OT eschatology rightly understood will naturally present us with ethical imperatives, though he cautions against forms of extremism that might focus almost totally on this aspect of the Scriptures and not display a balanced approach.

Gowan's book reflects a good attempt at dealing with the subject of OT eschatology. The author is generally thorough in his discussions, examining relevant OT texts and including information regarding their subsequent treatment in post-OT literature. His attempts to make eschatology meaningful for today are also to be commended.

Evangelicals will naturally disagree with Gowan over hermeneutical presuppositions in several places, and Gowan also errs in his discussion of Isaiah 53 in his excursus on the suffering servant and the son of man (pp. 37-39), where he flatly states that the words of Isaiah 53 "do not take the form of a prediction and they originally had nothing to do with Messiah" (p. 38). In light of Gowan's usually thorough discussions of post-OT interpretations of eschatological texts, it is surprising that he takes no account of the fact that Jewish interpreters up to Rashi overwhelmingly favor the messianic interpretation of this chapter. It seems that in his concern to avoid a "pan-messianic" view of OT eschatology, Gowan instead swings to the other extreme—a sort of "a-messianic" view—instead of reflecting a more balanced approach that allows for the concept of Messiah to play at least some role.

Readers who do not share all of Gowan's presuppositions will nevertheless benefit from interacting with his insights.

Bryan E. Beyer

Columbia Bible College and Seminary, Columbia, SC

Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies: Interpreting the Synoptics Through Their Passion Stories. By Frank J. Matera. New York: Paulist, 1986, 256 pp.

It has long been a commonplace judgment in gospel studies that the gospel genre is simply a passion narrative with an introduction. Yet until recently few have studied how the theology of a given passion narrative relates to the theology of its gospel. Matera has met this need admirably. He purposes to do a redactional and literary study of each of the synoptic gospel passion narratives, seeking to understand them in terms of the evangelist's theology. His plan of attack is threefold. He gives a brief overview of the theological and literary character of each gospel passion narrative. This includes an identification of major theological themes and a discussion of the gospel writer's literary sources. Matera adopts a moderate stance clearly within the two-document source hypothesis approach to gospel sources. He consciously desires to avoid the extremes of a gospel writer who creates events in writing his theological history and one who is a conservative editor hesitating to alter his sources. Rather, he affirms creativity for each gospel writer in the sense of editing and arranging traditions in a manner that expresses his theological convictions. The extent of creativity stops short of fabricating events but can include the shaping of material from traditions and sources. Matera contends that for Matthew nearly all, if not all, of the non-Markan material can be accounted for by Matthew's editing. For Luke it can be accounted for by his editing and reliance on non-Markan traditions.

Matera next performs a pericope-by-pericope redactional analysis of the passion narrative. Through an analysis of literary structure, word usage throughout the gospel and exegetical insights, the author inductively argues for the particular theological themes asserted to be present. The final step takes each of the theological themes and traces them through the gospel up to the point of the passion narrative. He intends to show that the themes are major for the gospel writer and how he prepares the way for their exposition in the passion narrative.

Matera's profile of the gospel writers' theologies may be summarized as follows. Mark deals in Jesus' royal sonship, the disciples' abandonment, the role of the temple, and the expectation of Jesus' future vindication. Matthew focuses on Christology (the rejected Messiah, Son of God), ethics (Jesus the model of righteousness), and ecclesiology (the passing of the kingdom from Israel to the Church). Luke sees the passion as Jesus' destiny, a model for discipleship, the rejection of Jesus the prophet, and the death of God's royal son.

A number of strengths characterize this work. The structural comments about the literary flow of each passion narrative are present from the very beginning of the discussion. Matera consistently gives helpful exegetical insights, especially ones that bring together theological themes that one would not come to associate through normal word-study methods. As part of the rejection of the Messiah theme in Matthew, Matera notes that the mockery of Jesus as prophet (Matt 26:67-68) directly follows his son-of-man prophecy (26:57-66).

Matera also displays an ability to work integratively with themes across a whole gospel. His discussion of Mark's Christological climax at the centurion's confession (Mark 15:39) reaches back to the gospel's very beginning and brings together a number of Christological titles so one can see how Mark has prepared the way for the proclamation that the crucified Messiah is indeed the Son of God.

Certain weaknesses of the work must be noted. The author's redactional-literary method consciously brackets out historical questions. But these questions constantly arise for the determination of the presence of the gospel writer's hand. Consequently the content of his theology depends on a person's judgment about the historicity of particular details. There needs to be a clarification of the relation of historical and redactional study so that the conclusions drawn about historicity or nonhistoricity do not seem arbitrary or determined by redactional conclusions already arrived at.

For all his helpful exegetical insights, Matera at points draws conclusions about background influences that are not well established. For example, is it better to derive the significance of the betrayer's kiss from OT background or Mark's description in context (p. 27)? Sometimes his concordance work does not show discrimination, as when he comments on the term "signs" in Luke 23:6-12 (p. 177). The greatest weakness, however, is the failure to deal with each gospel writer's soteriology as it finds expression in his gospel narrative.

With these items noted, this book is a useful addition to gospel studies. It provides an integrated approach to the gospel writers' theologies by focusing them in their passion narratives.

William J. Larkin

Columbia Biblical Seminary and Graduate School of Missions, Columbia, SC