

BOOK REVIEWS

On the Way to Jesus: A Journey Through the Bible. By Albert H. Baylis. Portland: Multnomah, 1986, 364 pp., \$10.95 paper.

Ask the average churchgoer or beginning Bible-school student the difference between Biblical and systematic theology and you will probably draw a blank look. This is not due simply to using academic argot but because the results of the work of Biblical theologians has by and large not been communicated in an interesting and understandable form for the nonspecialist. Baylis has made a solid step toward bridging the gap in this book, an entry-level Biblical theology of the OT.

Skipping over the usual preliminaries (definition, nature, scope, methodology, etc.), he begins immediately with the creation account in Genesis 1. Through fifteen chapters he presents a diachronic, pluriform (i.e. not a unifying-theme approach) Biblical theology in such an engaging manner that most readers would be unaware that they are reading a work on theology. The chapters are grouped into four parts: "Basics for Understanding Life" (Genesis 1-11), "God's Plan for Reversal" (patriarchs, Exodus, the law, Deuteronomy), "Struggle for Consistency" (Joshua-Kings, wisdom books), "Restoration and Hope" (Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai-Zechariah, some concluding thoughts on hope). Each chapter concludes with a section entitled "On the Way" in which the OT themes encountered in that chapter are developed further in light of NT teaching, together with suggested collateral Scripture readings and several questions for personal interaction and discussion.

Unfortunately space constraints limited his coverage of the prophets (p. 290). It is also apparent that his treatment, though mostly dealing with successive time periods (diachronic analysis), sometimes focuses rather on the theology of the Biblical book (e.g. chap. 8 on Deuteronomy) or category of books (e.g. chap. 12 on wisdom) or a Biblical theme (e.g. chap. 15 on hope). Of course since all three of these areas are fair play in doing Biblical theology, such inconsistency could well be turned into an advantage in introducing the field.

The text is delightful reading for beginning students of the Scriptures as well as those well-versed in OT theology. It reads easily at the popular level, yet contains frequent original insights and perspectives with 40 pages of fine-print endnotes demonstrating the author's capable interaction with the secondary scholarly literature (e.g. Brueggemann, Childs, Kaiser, von Rad, Waltke, Westermann). Each chapter is related to its subsequent NT development, yet his dispensational leanings rarely surface and should not detract from its use by nondispensationalists.

The book would serve admirably in home Bible studies and, perhaps supplemented with a work such as Hasel's *OT Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, would be a useful text for undergraduate students. Yet the scholar should not overlook it either, for it contains stimulating ideas and exhibits creative thinking and can further serve as an excellent model for how theology can be "popularized without being trivialized." If a book's success can be measured by the reader left wishing it would continue, the author has here achieved it.

R. J. Lubeck
Trinity Bible Fellowship, Kennewick, WA

"And God Said What?" An Introduction to Biblical Literary Forms for Bible Lovers. By Margaret Nutting Ralph. Mahwah: Paulist, 1986, 255 pp., \$10.95 paper.

As its subtitle indicates, the book under review offers an introduction to the literary forms ("genres") that the reader encounters in the Scriptures. Writing from a Roman Catholic background, the author states as her basic premise that one must understand the form of a given Biblical book or passage in order to determine accurately its meaning—i.e. the intent of the author (pp. 2, 7). I concur with that premise, and I welcomed what promised to be a simple presentation of form/genre criticism for beginning Bible students. Unfortunately these high hopes soon dissipated.

Following a brief introduction the book is divided into separate chapters for each of the following forms: myth, legend, debate, fiction, gospel, parable, allegory, letters, revelation. She identifies Genesis 1-3 as myth—i.e. "an imaginative story which uses symbols to speak about reality" (p. 30), contending that "the text will simply not support a claim of historicity" (p. 44). Her discussion of legend, illustrated partly by patriarchal narratives from Genesis, is highly dependent upon the documentary hypothesis without interacting with or showing awareness of the contributions of canonical criticism or more recent, holistic literary criticism. She labels Jonah as a "humorous fictional narrative" (p. 119) and contends that the seven miraculous signs in the gospel of John are to be interpreted allegorically. Because no secondary literature is ever mentioned, it is difficult to determine whether these and many other controversial interpretive decisions were glossed over so as not to bog down the readers or because the author has failed to enter adequately into the scholarly discussion.

The work is further flawed by fundamental misunderstandings in the area of Bibliology. Rather than locating inspiration in the Scriptures (*graphē*, 2 Tim 3:16), the author consistently speaks of the "inspiration" of authors, the communicators of the oral tradition, editors, compilers, and beyond: "A reader today who reads Scripture, who finds that it speaks to his or her heart, . . . is also inspired" (p. 26). Furthermore she rejects the possibility that the Bible is itself revelation, preferring to say that the Bible is about revelation (p. 26) or contains revelation (p. 39).

I believe there exists a need for a good introductory work on form criticism. But because the profitable parts of this book need to be sifted out by readers more advanced than its intended audience, this work does not fit the bill.

R. J. Lubeck
Trinity Bible Fellowship, Kennewick, WA

Moses and the Golden Age. By Tertius Chandler. Bryn Mawr: Dorrance, 1986, 88 pp., \$9.95.

After a quick perusal of this book, the reader will demand to know the credentials of the author. Unfortunately the jacket gives very little information: He has written two or three books on ancient history and resides in Berkeley, California. It is on an occasion such as this that one recognizes the value of academic degrees and position indicated with the author's name. In the absence of such information,

however, we can only speculate that Chandler has studied ancient history under the most liberal tutelage (or reacted most vigorously against a conservative view of history).

There is an endorsement note by Jack Finegan glued to the first page ("I think what you say about Moses's meaning is specially fine"). It made me turn to the last chapter, "The Meaning of Moses," where I read among other things: "The book built around Moses is the Bible. It became the main receptacle of ancient wisdom (and quite a lot of vicious trash that slipped in). From it have arisen the Jewish, Christian, and Moslem religions and more indirectly probably Hinduism and Buddhism too, as well as the strikingly Mosaic Confucian philosophy of China" (p. 80). One wonders whether one ought to waste any time in reading the book after such a fantastic conglomeration of fact and fiction, fantasy and flippancy. Perhaps we ought to be thankful that Chandler insists that Moses was an historic personage and leave it at that.

In the first chapter Chandler deals with the date of the exodus. Every student of ancient history realizes how complicated and involved the arguments are for the early and late date of the exodus. Chandler ignores most of the evidence for the early date (particularly of recent times) and lists fifteen reasons for a late date, fixing it in this way: "These 15 lines of reasoning make it most unlikely that the Exodus began at any other date than 1348 B.C. If this conclusion is still unclear, please re-read this section." Perhaps symptomatic of Chandler's reasoning is his fourteenth line: "Easier to grasp and more convincing is the introduction of the alphabet. Egypt invented many letters very early but dropped most of them. Queen Hatshepsut seems to have made one alphabetic inscription, but still the idea didn't catch on. Ikhnaton, however, being a monotheist, eliminated at least one god-sign from Egyptian writing and substituted a letter for it. The process then must have gone very fast indeed. As professor Gelb glibly puts it, 'Alphabets were springing up like mushrooms after a rain.' A strong tradition held that Moses was the inventor of the alphabet. The date when alphabets appear at Ugarit, Crete, Mohenjo-daro etc. was c. 1360 B.C. If Moses started this movement going, he lived then" (p. 4). There are no footnotes so that one could check out the Gelb quotation or the "strong tradition." To be sure, the Ugaritic alphabet did not appear around 1360 B.C. but at least a hundred years earlier. Does Chandler realize that his "easier to grasp and more convincing" argument argues for an early date?

The third chapter, "The Legend of Moses," carries this conclusion: "What are we to make of all this? The story starts out charmingly, as a waif in a basket is found and lovingly cared for. It goes on to some unusual miracles and ends in an orgy of horror. There are here the ear-marks of a story that has grown more than a little in the telling. The central force is a deity considerably more cruel and capricious than the old pagan gods of Egypt. Was this part of the Bible compiled by an unreconstructed spirit-worshipper who wanted to undermine the Jewish faith? If so, he very nearly succeeded, for this is one of the sections of the Bible that have [*sic*] figured significantly in getting Jews distrusted. Their harsh God is contrasted to disadvantage with the gentler God of Jesus or of other religions. . . . One bit of wisdom does glimmer through this narrative. The God of Moses is only 'I am,' existence itself. This God seems to coincide with nature. . . . Another item that rings true is the reference to elders before the Exodus. This means limited democracy was created in Egypt, not on the road out of it" (pp. 12-13).

In Chandler's view Moses is none other than Ramose, the vizier of Akhenaten (the famous monolatrism of Egypt) and his "sole companion" (p. 14). The Joseph of the Bible is Phinehas (actually Pnehasi, "the superintendent of the cattle of

Aten"). "Under the dreamy Ikhnaton, Ramose and Pnehasi were the effective administrators of Egypt" (p. 49). Both led their monotheistic followers out of Egypt, and thus the ancient historian Chaeremon was literally correct when he stated that "the Exodus was led by Moses and Joseph." Exod 13:19 says it differently: "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him"—which also supports Chaeremon's statement.

If Moses is Ramose and Joseph is Pnehasi, who is Abraham? Chandler assures us that here, too, the Biblical data cannot be trusted. He much rather accepts an out-of-date hypothesis of Cyrus Gordon, published during the early days of Ugaritic research, which has long since been proven wrong, and builds a case for "Abraham's Precise Date" (chap. 14): 1396-1321. Thus Abraham is also a contemporary of Moses, "descended from the Hyksos kings and adopted into the royal family of Mittani" (p. 54). By now we are no longer surprised to find out that Adam and Eve were "punished for having joined the revolt of Ugarit city against Egypt in 1444 B.C." and exiled to Aden at the southern tip of Arabia (p. 58), or that the Egyptian god Aten is Adonai, the god of Moses. Indeed in some cases final proof is derived from Sigmund Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*.

The bibliography is disappointing, listing only fifteen authors and dating before 1955 (although Chandler refers to his full bibliography in his book *Godly Kings and Early Ethics*).

This book was a surprise to me. I had not realized that someone could write such a book in 1986, at a time when through painstaking and excellent historical research available to all scholars around the world the views expressed in *Moses and the Golden Age* would be proven patently unconvincing, unacceptable, and unhistorical.

Harold H. P. Dressler
Surrey-Vancouver, BC, Canada

The New Testament in Its Social Environment. By John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986, 194 pp., \$18.95.

This lively and engaging collaboration between classicist Stambaugh and NT scholar Balch is the second volume in Westminster's Library of Early Christianity under the general editorship of Wayne A. Meeks. A remarkable amount of information is packed within the compass of relatively few pages. It adequately fulfills the series' stated purpose: to understand the Christian "communities as they believed, thought, and acted then and there—not to 'explain' them by some supposedly universal laws of social behavior" (p. 9).

The first three chapters were written by Stambaugh. He begins by surveying the history of the eastern Mediterranean world from the beginning of the Hellenistic era in the fourth century B.C.E. through the close of the NT period in the early second century C.E. and sketches Roman administration and law. The second chapter deals with the background of the spread of Christianity by focusing attention on communication, the movement of religions, the Jewish diaspora, and the social characteristics of Christian movements. Chapter 3 details economic factors and their impact on social structure, agriculture, commerce, and municipal and imperial finance.

In chap. 4 Balch examines the Jewish and rural society with which Jews and early Christians would have been familiar. Relying upon the work of G. Theissen he describes the "Ecology of the Jesus Movement"—the relationship between people and material resources and the impact this relationship has on social and cultural patterns. The final two chapters are a collaborative effort and examine urban life: physical environment, the stratification of society, work, leisure, educational opportunities and religious and social organizations (chap. 5) and how Christianity adapted to urban social forms and where this adaptation took place (chap. 6).

The well-crafted volume concludes with bibliographical information for each chapter—a virtual gold mine of possibilities for the intended readership of college and seminary students and interested lay people—and indices for selected subjects, NT references and sixteen color maps.

This is a brief yet complete social description of life in the world in which Christianity developed. The description of the six major centers of early Christianity—Antioch, Ephesus, Macedonia (Philippi and Thessalonica), Achaia (Corinth), Rome and Alexandria—assembles a great deal of information that would otherwise have to be retrieved from many sources. Unlike treatments of early Christianity that focus on the NT and flavor the examination with social tidbits, this discussion focuses instead on the broader social history and then includes numerous illustrations from early Christianity. For the most part the NT is accepted as a reliable historical document.

Those who read this book seeking a coherent socio-scientific methodology will be disappointed. The exclusively descriptive nature of the series' agenda is clearly stated in the foreword. More problematic is the way the authors treat the NT as a socio-cultural unity. One of the benefits of the recent interest in the socio-historical study of the NT has been the identification of distinctives within the NT documents. But Balch and Stambaugh on occasion make assertions about early Christianity with little regard to the distinctive points of view of the writers and the changing circumstances of the communities. More serious is the anachronistic use of Mishna and Talmud to generalize about Judaism and late antiquity and the use of Philostratus' third-century *Life of Apollonius* to reconstruct first-century itinerant teachers. There appears to be no knowledge of the recent work of D. Ulansey and others exposing the inadequacy of the myth of Mithras reconstructed by Cumont. One might also question the assertion of a statement such as this: "The lack of possessions is a Lucan redactional emphasis . . . not an historical description of the Jesus movement in Palestine" (p. 105). Such assertions, without explanation, can only leave the careful reader bewildered since the authenticity and historical reliability of some texts is selectively questioned without adequate examination. Balch's statement that Mark 10:15 is "a saying Bultmann judged authentic" (p. 106) might mystify the beginner. I could find no reference to any work of the great *Neutestamentlicher* in the footnotes or bibliographies.

One might quibble with topics that are not discussed (e.g. millenarianism), but one can add to any work. One gets the uncomfortable feeling that the twentieth-century perceptions with which the authors organize the data may have had the same significance for a person living in the Mediterranean world at the time Christianity was emerging. But this is the danger of any social history. These caveats aside, this is a fine volume, providing a concise, readable and comprehensive source book for its intended audience.

James L. Jaquette
Union Church of South Foxboro, MA

Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity. By Stanley K. Stowers. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986, 188 pp., n.p.

This monograph joins seven others (e.g. David Aune's *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*) in the Library of Early Christianity series, a collection of monographs devoted to clarifying the historical, social and literary context of the NT. More specifically, as the series' general editor Wayne Meeks states, the unifying point of view "is that of social history" (p. 9). This involves careful examination of the social background, taken in a very broad sense, of Christianity seen in the context of classical antiquity from the time of Homer until roughly the sixth century A.D. The chronological span covered by Stower's investigation, therefore, is very broad indeed.

The strengths of this approach, and of Stower's own study, are several. First, it is self-consciously interdisciplinary. It attempts to employ insights from areas of inquiry other than NT studies *per se* (e.g. Roman history, Latin and Greek literature, classical rhetorical theory). Second, it strives to be free from the partisanship of theological bias, which can make "historical" study into little more than an exercise in reading contemporary prejudices into ancient texts. Third, it does justice to the NT as we have it—a collection of documents permeated by certain cultural assumptions present over a broad span of time. A variegated approach that places a premium on all available and relevant data can pay rich dividends.

Stowers cashes in on all of these strengths. Summing up and furthering a good deal of research (in a half-dozen languages) dating back to the last century, he first treats "Greco-Roman Letter Writing and Early Christianity" (pp. 15-47). This section is particularly informative and marks the high point of the book. He then examines in sequence a dozen general "types" of letters, drawing parallels along the way to the NT epistolary corpus (pp. 51-173).

The strengths, however, have their reverse side. First, the attempt to be broadly interdisciplinary may mean the loss of disciplinary precision. The form of Paul's letters, e.g., is clarified, but this is seldom if ever meaningfully related to their theology. This leaves one wondering about the relevance of the whole exercise.

Second, the apparent absence of theological bias signals a commitment not only to impartial scholarship but also to downplaying any unique features of the NT letters (suggesting, of course, that the absence of bias may in fact be more apparent than real). Yet any investigation of their formal characteristics that fails to give full weight to how their content sets them apart from other ancient letters is inadequate. In this case form and content cannot be so radically separated. I am not denying that NT letters are to a considerable extent products of their environment. I am only pointing out that an approach that very largely reduces them to precisely the same level and function as ancient epistolary correspondence at large is perhaps as dogmatically informed as more "traditional" Christian readings of the letters may be thought to be. For in point of historical fact no other collection of letters in Greco-Roman antiquity had the subsequent impact, or stood in the peculiar relationship to Jesus and the OT, or functioned in the same manner in the apostolic Church, that the NT corpus did. Can we be satisfied with a formal analysis that downplays, if not ignores, this state of affairs? Stowers is convincing in depicting the similarity of the NT epistles to other ancient documents of that genre (if that is not too restrictive a term to apply to such a disparate collection of writings). I am not sure he is careful enough in noting ways in which they are different.

Third, a variegated approach typically runs the risk of lacking focus due to its broad scope and stress on general patterns rather than specific conclusions. It is

not always immediately clear just how examples of letters dating from up to a half a millennium before and after the NT documents lend reliable assistance to the study of the first century and the NT. Yet this is precisely what the book claims to do.

The specialist will find a number of useful nuggets in this study. In particular, those whose focus is the Pauline corpus need to have it under their belts. As a contribution to a comprehensive grasp of NT backgrounds, Stowers' discussion and conclusions, when he comes to any, are to be welcomed. The book's limitations, however, which are considerably more numerous and profound than a brief review can adequately recount, are apt to render it of limited value for many readers.

Robert W. Yarbrough
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

I, II, III John. By Robert Kysar. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986, 336 pp., \$14.95 paper.

The Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament is "written for lay people, students, and pastors"—with the emphasis certainly on the first two. As successive volumes appear, the series is becoming well-known—a useful and engaging set of commentaries designed primarily for the more conservative wing of the liberal spectrum (if these labels are not too simplistic). Kysar needs no introduction to those who work in the field of Johannine studies. In addition to numerous essays and minor works, his major survey and assessment of these studies (*The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel*) has rightly earned him gratitude and respect.

On most issues Kysar adopts fairly common views. After briefly probing the relationship between the fourth gospel and the Johannine epistles, he concludes that "the epistles are products of and for a Christian church that shared a tradition embraced by the author of the Fourth Gospel." Similarly he thinks it impossible to show that 2 John and 3 John are from the same hand that wrote 1 John and that in any case it is more likely that they simply "shared with the Fourth Evangelist the same community." The time is toward the end of the first century, after John's gospel has circulated for some time and a group of separatists, committed to what is now called docetic Christology, has pulled out and left the original Church in some disarray. 1 John has been written to address their confusion. Kysar thinks it is made up of fragments of a number of messages patched together into written form and given something of the atmosphere of a letter by numerous "I write to you" formulas. This, he thinks, accounts for the fact that it does not share many formal characteristics with known letters of the ancient world. I am inclined to think it is better classified as a modified tractate letter and that its lack of the more obvious formal characteristics may be accounted for by the fact that it served as a circular that was introduced by cover letters such as 2 John and 3 John.

The exegesis, based on the RSV, is always clear and is usually restrained and sensible. What it lacks is bold theological exploration. For instance, the "faithful and just" phrasing of 1:9 cries out to be unpacked a little further. The use of *hilasmos* at 2:2 and 4:10, rendered "expiation" in the RSV, is discussed so briefly (about 15 lines) that although some of the issues are nicely set out, the cut and thrust of theological debate and its pastoral implications are inevitably lost, along with the full power of the term in its context. The devil seems to be depersonalized

on p. 80. At 3:9 Kysar appeals to John 1:12 for understanding "seed" as that which "God has implanted in Christians that . . . makes them his children." I rather think he has entirely missed the point of the clause "sin is lawlessness" at 3:4. The same is true for the "sin unto death" passage (5:16-17).

All in all this is a useful commentary and, as with anything from Kysar's pen, entirely lucid. Most readers who want a commentary on the Johannine epistles pitched at this level, however, would do better reading Stott (in his revised commentary for the Tyndale NT commentary series)—a work that, strangely, is not even mentioned by Kysar.

D. A. Carson

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

Backgrounds for the Bible. Edited by Michael Patrick O'Connor and David Noel Freedman. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1987, xii + 369 pp., \$17.50.

A fascinating hodgepodge. The twenty-four essays of this book range from exegesis, philology and archeology on the one hand to the use of the Bible in modern art, literature and poetry on the other. Indeed, little holds these diverse essays together except the binding.

Many of the chapters originally appeared in a special Summer 1983 issue of the *Michigan Quarterly Review* entitled *The Bible and Its Traditions*. The articles by P. Tribble and J. R. Moore have also been published in books by their authors (*Texts of Terror and Evolution, Religion, and Society* respectively). The authors reflect a variety of perspectives: Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, secular. Unfortunately there is no biographical information on the various essayists. What follows is a categorization of the various articles with brief comments.

Old Testament: P. Tribble's "A Daughter's Death" gives a feminist literary reading of the story of Jephthah's daughter (Judg 11:29-40). D. N. Freedman's "The Earliest Bible" offers source-critical speculations into the prehistory and compilations of the major components of the Hebrew Bible. F. I. Andersen's "On Reading Genesis 1-3" concentrates on the meaning of *ʿēd* in Gen 2:6 ("water flowing from the ground"), the syntax of Gen 1:1, and the history of the interpretation of the making of Adam from the ground to show how an interpreter's lexical, grammatical, scientific and intellectual assumptions affect his readings of the text. C. Meyers' "The Israelite Empire: In Defense of King Solomon" gives a historical reconstruction of Solomon's reign. K. D. Sakenfeld's "Loyalty and Love" gives a philological treatment of *hesed* and *ʾāhēb*. T. Frymer-Kensky's "Biblical Cosmology" tries to reproduce the complex of ideas that undergirds OT thought about the world and nature. B. Levine's "The Language of Holiness" investigates the meaning and theology of *qādōš* and its cognates.

Archeology and science: H. B. Huffmon in "*Babel und Bibel*" chronicles the use of Assyriology by Friedrich Delitzsch (apostate son of the famous 19th-century conservative Lutheran OT scholar Franz Delitzsch) to debunk and repudiate the OT. M. P. O'Connor in "Ugarit and the Bible" describes this second-millennium-B.C. north Syrian city, how its poetry parallels Hebrew poetry, and how three philologists (Gaster, Ginsberg, Gordon) have tried to use the Ugaritic language, a variety of Northwest Semitic, to illuminate the Hebrew Bible. J. R. Moore's "Interpreting the New Creationism" offers a critical analysis of creation science. He gives special attention to the response of nineteenth-century clerics to the theories of Lyell and Darwin in contrast with creationism. He sees creationism as a

social and intellectual protest against an elite professional hegemony in the biological and human sciences from which creationists had been excluded.

New Testament: J. D. Crossan's "The Hermeneutical Jesus" is a redaction-critical study of Matt 22:1-14, Luke 14:16-24 and *Gos. Thom.* 64 (the great supper). J. L. Martyn's "A Law-Observant Mission to the Gentiles: The Background of Galatians" covers the vexed question of Paul and the Law. J. J. Collins' "Apocalyptic Context of Christian Origins" investigates the influence of apocalyptic on the NT writers.

Judaica: J. Neusner's "Accommodating the Mishnah to Scripture in Judaism" involves the use of Scripture as prooftexts in the Talmud. A. Band's "The Politics of Scripture" discusses how haggadic tales came to have near Scriptural status in the hasidic movement.

Church usage: A. Kavanagh discusses "Scripture and Worship in Synagogue and Church." C. H. Sisson's "The Prayer Book Controversy" is on the recent revision of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*. C. Libolt's "Protestantism and Preaching" deals with how to preach, given the modern quagmire in hermeneutics. B. McGinn treats "Symbols of the Apocalypse in Medieval Culture."

Modern literary employment: "The Biblical Presence in Modern Art" ranges from the bizarre to the steamy, especially E. Gill's sexual interpretation of Eve's temptation. Other titles are E. Coffin, "The Binding of Isaac in Modern Israeli Literature"; D. Lehman, "Fantasia on Kierkegaard and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*"; D. Kirkpatrick, "Religious Photography in the Victorian Age"; D. Blamires, "The Use of the Bible in *The Roman Quarry* of David Jones."

My chief complaint with this volume is that the title of the book, the name of the editors (both prominent ancient Near East scholars), and the publisher (a specialist in ancient Near Eastern studies) might lead one to expect something other than the book presented. A descriptive subtitle could have gone a long way in preventing the disappointment that comes when one receives a very different kind of book than the one he thought he was ordering.

There are good indices (subject, texts, Hebrew). Articles have brief bibliographies but no footnotes.

J. M. Sprinkle
Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, GA

The Kingdom of Priests: A History of the Old Testament. By Eugene H. Merrill. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987, 546 pp., \$24.95.

Merrill has given us an enlightened, well-written, up-to-date, scholarly OT history from a conservative evangelical viewpoint. His work surpasses previous evangelical works such as those by F. F. Bruce (1963), L. Wood (1970), R. K. Harrison (1970), and C. F. Pfeiffer (1973) to become to date the standard evangelical history of Israel. The author is to be congratulated for this fine contribution to evangelical scholarship.

Especially appreciated is the obvious depth of research. The author is well aware of the ancient Near Eastern backdrop of OT events, and frequent reference is made to those points where ancient Near Eastern history intersects with Biblical history. Accordingly the 'Apiru, the Hyksos, the Moabite stone, the black obelisk, the royal inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon II, Sennacherib and Cyrus, among other items, make their appearances in appropriate places in the narrative.

Moreover the author has grappled with the extensive secondary literature. More than a thousand footnotes (real footnotes, not those maddening endnotes) line the

pages of this book. They cite hundreds of journal articles and monographs, often providing more technical discussion of debated points. An example of such a note is a discussion of whether *ia-ù-a* on the black obelisk, normally understood to mean "Jehu," might not be better read "Joram," as McCarter has suggested (p. 349). There are many such mini-discussions. These notes show that Merrill has read extensively and attentively in the world of critical scholarship. His readings, however, give only occasional evidence of contact with works outside of English. Despite the scholarly notes, the text itself reads smoothly enough for an undergraduate to read.

Merrill is not satisfied simply to retell the Biblical story; rather, he carefully reconstructs his history from the text. In the process he finds points where the Bible chooses a nonchronological arrangement of the narrative. One provocative case of nonchronological interpretation is David's bringing the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. Merrill departs from traditional approaches to the Davidic period in suggesting that the bringing of the ark to Jerusalem, which closely follows the account of David's first becoming king of all Israel, actually occurs toward the end of David's life. Whether one agrees with this reconstruction, it shows the author to have interacted creatively with the Biblical material.

Since chronology is the backbone of history, Merrill naturally enough devotes considerable space to reconstructing chronological sequence and the assignment of absolute dates to the events in the Biblical narratives. This interest in chronology is for the good. Merrill goes too far, however, in seeking chronological exactitude in dating events. Dating the death of Sarah at 2029, the conquest at 1406-1399, the anointing of Saul at 1051 seems to express a chronological certainty about these events that, as Merrill knows, could under slightly different chronological assumptions differ by decades in the case of Saul to centuries in the case of Sarah. A more cautious approach would be in order.

Nine chronological tables and seventeen maps accompany Merrill's history. These are generally well done and helpful, though even more helpful would have been additional maps that show movements of peoples and armies rather than static names and places. I would have liked to have seen separate discussions that more extensively quote the extra-Biblical source materials to help the reader appreciate how Near Eastern historiography adds to our knowledge of ancient Israel. The liberal history by J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes (1986) does this well. Pictures from Near Eastern archeology and geography would have added to the color and interest of the volume, though it would also have added to its cost.

So many topics are covered in a book of this scope that naturally a reviewer will find some problems or disagreement. Some examples: Merrill seems to want to have his cake and eat it too when he argues that the term "Hebrew" (*ʿibri*) comes both from *ʿapiru* and Abraham's ancestor *ʿEber* (p. 101). He inadequately explains how the Melchizedek priesthood could be applied to David personally (p. 186) when Jesus says that David is addressing his "Lord." Merrill identifies Chaldeans as Aramean immigrants, which is debatable since the two seem clearly distinguished in the cuneiform literature. Such problems here and there, however, do not mitigate the reviewer's high regard for this work. It is a must for theological libraries and students of the OT.

There is a short bibliography limited to full-length treatments of the history and civilization of the ancient Near East and of Israel that supplements the footnotes, as well as good Scripture and subject indices.

J. M. Sprinkle
Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, GA

Genesis: A Practical Commentary. By Claus Westermann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, xii + 338 pp., \$16.95.

Westermann has produced a volume on Genesis for the Text and Interpretation series, which "aims to provide the reader with clear and concise explanations of every book of the Bible" and has the needs of both pastors and lay persons in mind. The bulk of the book consists of Westermann's translation of a section of Genesis, from a few verses to a whole chapter, followed by one to four pages of comments on that section. Westermann's contribution is largely a condensation of his recently-translated, massive, three-volume technical commentary on Genesis (Augsburg, 1984-86).

The theological stance of the author might best be characterized as neo-orthodox. At times Westermann can sound quite conservative, as when he says, "The way of the people of God, which began with the call of the patriarch Abraham, has its goal in the sending of the Son, whose way, whose life and passion took place for 'all the families of the earth'" (p. xi). Conservative evangelicals could affirm that statement. Also along more conservative lines Westermann feels that archeology and the religion of the patriarchs give good reason to suppose that the patriarchs might well have lived in the period before the exodus as the Biblical story affirms, contrary to recent critical opinion.

On the other hand, Westermann is no conservative. The first eleven chapters of Genesis, at a minimum, represent theology rather than history according to Westermann. Moreover he affirms the kinds of source-oriented criticism stemming from Wellhausen and Gunkel that play havoc with Biblical history. He does differ with Wellhausen at points. He rejects Wellhausen's premise that J could be distinguished from E as separate documents. Instead he sees E as an expansion of J. These combined with P and R (Redactor), mixed in with a bit of oral transmission and the Joseph story as an independent *Novelle*, explain the origins of the book of Genesis. Most evangelicals, being antithetical toward the whole source-critical enterprise, will find Westermann's differences with Wellhausen to be of detail rather than of kind. Westermann unfortunately has been little influenced by the newer literary approach or rhetorical criticism, which is much more inclined to examine the text as it stands rather than its prehistory.

It is hard to recommend this work even though Westermann sometimes offers intriguing interpretations. On the one hand I could not recommend it to laymen (for whom the series is in part designed) because of its theological and critical stance. Although pastors will find a disproportionate amount of space wasted on source criticism and Westermann's translation of the text, they will discover some suggestive if brief theological reflections.

I would not recommend it for scholars since it lacks the philological reasoning behind the translation, the religious-historical background, bibliographical data, and the details of exegesis. The commentary has no index, and documentation is almost completely lacking. The discussion on each chapter is brief. The scholar must turn, instead, to Westermann's three-volume commentary for the kind of detail he seeks.

This work could serve as a useful index to Westermann's commentary, providing the reader with an overview of his interpretation of Genesis without having to wade through his technical discussions.

J. M. Sprinkle
Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, GA

Israel Alive Again: A Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. By Fredrick Carlson Holmgren. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 162 pp., \$10.95 paper.

Ezra and Nehemiah are two of the most neglected historical books of the OT, often holding little interest for Biblical scholars and laymen, and a thicket of difficulties for commentators concerning authorship, chronology and theology. Despite these traps laid in the path of any commentator, Holmgren, one of the two general editors of the International Theological Commentary series, chose to make this his first commentary in this series. He spends little time on introductory matters: There is no discussion of the literary relationship of Ezra and Nehemiah to Chronicles, the bilingual nature of Ezra is passed over in silence, and most of the chronological problems are treated in cursory fashion. Instead, in keeping with the stated purpose of this series Holmgren chooses to concentrate on the theological task of explicating the meaning of the various pericopes in Ezra and Nehemiah, applying them to what he considers contemporary situations.

Many of Holmgren's observations and applications seem to be all too captive to the modern critical assumptions that underlie much of the commentary. There are three presuppositions in particular upon which the commentary is based. The first is an acceptance of P. Hanson's theory of the inter-Jewish conflict between a priestly ("Zadokite") party and a "visionary" party. Holmgren would place the book of Ezra nearer the priestly party because of the support it shows for the rebuilding of the temple. Thus he cautions his readers to listen to the "whole" word of God by reading Isaiah 56-66 because these chapters give a different (presumably conflicting if not diametrically opposed) view.

Secondly, Holmgren makes the statement several times that the author of Ezra-Nehemiah is not interested in writing all the details of history but intends to interpret history to his readers by a selective recording of events in his era. This in itself is nothing extraordinary. All historians (even modern historians) treat their data selectively in order to prove their thesis. But Holmgren is obsessed with the idea of the "selective" use of history (I counted at least four references to it). It seems to lead him to the conclusion that man, not God, is the primary controller of history. Thus he states that when man fails to view God's working in the world, especially in times of suffering, there is no doctrine that can explain God's seeming neglect of the sufferer (cf. p. 42). It would appear that Holmgren's view of Ezra as preserving primarily man's view of history is parallel to a view that doctrine is primarily a human construct.

Finally, Holmgren attempts to speak to Jewish as well as Christian readers. Again, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with such an approach. It would seem, however, that though he clearly favors a Christian approach to understanding the text of Ezra-Nehemiah he does not view it as necessarily more valid than a Jewish one. Thus in discussing Neh 9:33 he states: "Righteousness of God that 'reaches out' is the good news announced in the NT: In Jesus Christ the saving righteousness of God is revealed to humankind (Rom 1:17; 3:21-22). Jews and Christians count on God's righteousness (as did the Jews of Nehemiah's time), because only this righteousness that 'goes beyond righteousness' gives us hope for the future" (p. 134). Holmgren can make such a statement only by ignoring the basic difference in understanding the "righteousness of God" as held in synagogue and Church. Certainly Jews do not count on God's righteousness as a free gift won by Jesus on the cross and assured to them by his resurrection. Did the Jews of Nehemiah's day count on God's righteousness as a gift to be secured for them by the Messiah promised to Abraham? The historic answer of the Christian Church to this question is "Yes," but the answer of the synagogue has been "No."

All this is not to say that there is nothing the evangelical scholar or pastor can find of value in this commentary. There are more than a few good observations about the meaning of the text and its application that evangelical scholars can gain by referring to Holmgren's work. Some of them hit the blind spots that many Christians have when seeking to apply the Bible to their lives. These observations can be profitably used if the biases of Holmgren's presuppositions are kept clearly in focus when reading his work.

Andrew E. Steinmann
Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI

The Beloved Disciple: His Name, His Story, His Thought. By Vernard Eller. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, xi + 124 pp., \$8.95 paper.

Eller writes at a popular level and with an ambitious purpose: to reconstruct clues scattered through the fourth gospel so that the real "beloved disciple" (cf. John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20)—who is not John the son of Zebedee—emerges. The first part of the book seeks to establish the writer's identity, the second the main features of his theology.

There have been many previous attempts, of course, to understand the so-called beloved disciple as someone other than John the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve and thus an eyewitness of Jesus' public ministry from its early stages. Loisy, A. Kragerud (who devoted an entire monograph to the subject), Bultmann, and Gregory the Great all suggested that the beloved disciple was not an historical personage at all but a symbolic figure. F. Filson and others have argued that he was Lazarus. Still others have associated him with John Mark.

Since Eller has chosen to air his views in detective-story format, I will not ruin the surprise for his future readers. Suffice it to say that he breaks no new ground, though he does succeed in arriving at conclusions in innovative and original ways. His cleverness too often shades off into faulty logic, however, as when he argues that if John were really the author of the fourth gospel he would have mentioned the transfiguration, but he did not, so he is not. Or when he makes much of John's being a Galilean fisherman, stating that such a fellow could probably not even have written the gospel's prologue. Or when he insists that it would have been arrogance for John to refer to himself as the beloved disciple. Or when he argues, as he often does, from differences between the synoptics and John to some hidden meaning in one tradition or another—e.g. he raises the question of whether the fourth gospel's mention of Jesus' betrayer among "the twelve" (cf. John 6:66 ff.) may not be "a deliberate whack at the Synoptic tendency to exalt the Twelve" (p. 35).

Occasionally there are outright factual misrepresentations. To my knowledge it is simply not true that "second-century church tradition tells us there was a man known as 'John the Elder' who was associated with 'John the Disciple, son of Zebedee' in the writing of the Gospel" (p. 44). If this is a reference to the Papias fragment, it goes far beyond what Papias actually states. In any case it is quite probable that the elder John as someone distinct from the son of Zebedee never existed until Eusebius' fertile, antimillenarian imagination went to work to find a "John" who was not an apostle to whom to trace the canonical Apocalypse.

Such problems in Eller's study, however, are confined largely to part 1. Part 2 is much less bogged down in dubious inferences and hypotheses. Eller goes to work bringing the fourth gospel's message into dialogue with Christendom's notion of

sacrament and successfully demonstrates how far from the gospel's understanding the Church—both liberal and evangelical—has often strayed. With help from Barth (both Karl and Markus), Buber, and Kierkegaard, Eller preaches the Word made flesh in no uncertain terms and challenges all those whose God is swallowed up in mystery (as in feel-good conservative churches), ineffability, and utter unknowability (as in most post-Kantian theology). Why is there such a strong tendency in Christian thought of many stripes to move in these directions? Eller's partial answer (p. 80): "The more specific, close, real, down-to-earth, and personal God is, the better is his position for exercising his particular functions of lordship. . . . Conversely, the further God is pushed into the passive realm of mystery, the more room that leaves us to take over as our own lords . . . and at the same time to eliminate any need for grace or forgiveness (there being no one there who could call us guilty in the first place)" (p. 80). Eller says much more along these lines, but one can see that he is wrestling seriously with the theology of the gospel that so clearly represents Jesus as depicting definitely both divinity and true humanity—and doing so not for the sake of idle contemplation and self-serving reverie but so that God might be honored in man's every thought, word and deed.

The book leaves something to be desired in terms of exegesis, sometimes tending to create more mysteries than it dispels. Yet it makes numerous positive contributions to an understanding of the theology of the gospel of John, bringing many a criminal neglect and misuse of this document to trial and successful conviction.

Robert W. Yarbrough
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction. By Robert H. Stein. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987, 292 pp., n. p.

It is the goal of this work to introduce the reader to the synoptic problem in a thorough, systematic manner from an evangelical point of view. The presentation reconstructs the discussion historically, beginning with literary (i.e., source) criticism and proceeding through form and redaction criticisms. "Part 1 presents the arguments for and against Mark's priority and Q's existence before coming down in favor of both. Part 2 discusses the presuppositions of form criticism, the general reliability of the oral transmission of the Gospel traditions, and the value of form criticism. Part 3 treats the method, practice, and value of redaction criticism" (dust jacket).

There are several strengths to Stein's work. First, it is evangelical. Although he makes the reader aware of the difficulties raised by a study of the synoptic gospels and does not shy away from consideration of the results of radical form and redaction critics, he is theologically responsible. In addition to pointing out the errors in logic and judgment that have plagued the historical-critical method, Stein also reminds the reader that we are dealing with an inspired text. One never gets the impression that he is juggling the evidence. This is a responsible treatment that forthrightly places its presuppositions out in front where they belong and invites dissenters to be as honest.

Second, the book is thorough but unassuming. Stein expects only that his reader will be an intelligent novice and carefully paces the argument so that the synoptic problem is quite adequately traced from its inception to the present. While a

sophomore may profitably read this work with a little help from a professor, a seminarian would be challenged as well.

But clearly the unique feature of the book and the one that makes it most attractive is its "work manual" style. At each point in the discussion, whether detecting Q material or Matthean and Lukan editions of Mark, the student is invited to analyze eighty-nine double- or triple-tradition parallels with a suggested color coding system. (This system can be easily adapted to suit the needs or personality of the professor or reader.) The book serves the invaluable purpose of allowing the reader to work through these "problems" for himself, as if for the first time. It allows one to rediscover exactly why there is a problem and invites dialogue about possible solutions before offering the scholars' opinions. Rarely is a book so successful in giving its readers such valuable, hands-on experience.

The only criticism I would venture is the failure to deal at least cursorily with the recent attempt of literary criticism (*à la* Rhoads' and Michie's *Mark as Story*) to read the gospels holistically. It would have followed quite naturally the insight that with the redaction-critical "emphasis upon the unique elements in each Gospel, there has been a concentration of labor and energy upon the 'diversity' of the Gospels and a corresponding loss of interest in their 'unity.'" The result is that "redaction-critical emphases of the Evangelists are mistakenly equated with the theology of the Evangelists" (pp. 234-235). In fairness, however, this would probably have taken the presentation beyond a discussion of the synoptic problem and in any case is a trivial complaint in light of the accomplishment.

In scope the book exceeds the expectations raised by the title. I recommend this work to the readers of *JETS* without reservation and predict its serviceability and acclaim for years to come.

Robert W. Herron, Jr.
Lee College, Cleveland, TN

What Are They Saying About Mark? By Frank J. Matera. New York/Mahwah: Paulist, 1987, x + 114 pp., \$4.95.

The "they" in the title of this book refers to Markan scholars, chiefly of the last twenty-five years. Matera's purpose in attempting to answer his own question "is not to open new territory in Markan studies but to introduce others to the lay of the land" (p. vii). The author succeeds in this modest, not to say simple, objective.

Though his survey glances back briefly to the efforts of the nineteenth century and Wrede's *Messianic Secret*, it is by and large limited to redaction-critical studies. The titles of each of the chapters reflect the redaction critics' concern for the third *Sitz im Leben*.

Chapter 1 surveys theories about "The Setting of Mark's Gospel"—i.e. Rome, Galilee, or Syria. Chapters 2-3 address the central theological issues of Christology and discipleship. "Is the evangelist attacking a false Christology within his community, or is he simply concerned to present Jesus as the Son of God? Did Mark view the disciples as adversaries, or was he using the examples of their failure to instruct his readers about the true nature of discipleship?" (p. 93). The final two chapters address methodological questions: "From what sources and with what literary skill did Mark write his gospel?" and "How should we read his gospel?"

Matera offers only brief critiques of the positions summarized, but they evidence insight and reflection. He almost invariably, if cautiously, favors the traditional positions regarding authorship, setting and theology.

The author's prognostication is that "the most profitable agenda for Markan studies lies in the direction set by literary criticism" (p. 91). I agree. Approaching the gospel of Mark as a narrative with its own integrity will almost certainly be more beneficial (and in any case logically prior) to dealing with its setting, sources, redactional emphases, etc. The reason is so obvious it needs restating: We have the text before us; everything else is reconstructed and hypothetical.

Having said that, Matera immediately reminds the reader of the impending danger of literary criticism: "An exclusively literary-critical approach to the Gospel presents the danger of dislodging the Gospel from its historical moorings. Sooner or later NT scholars must address the historical questions surrounding the Gospel" (pp. 91-92).

Such advice reminds us that the alleged gap between the concerns and beliefs of Catholics and evangelicals is sometimes not so great as we have thought. The Biblical texts should be accepted at face value (which is not the same as naively). The message of the gospels is not mystical and esoteric. Moreover the issue of the historical moorings is very much to the point. Having determined what a Biblical text like Mark says (which has never been so difficult as the historical-critical method has made it), one must decide whether to believe it (a task in which academia can help only so much).

In order to be succinct and readable Matera had to give up any attempt to be exhaustive. But what the book lacks in thoroughness it makes up in fair representation. It is brief and to the point. The author knows the landscape of Markan studies, and his map is an accurate one. From here a reader may secure a more detailed map or confidently attempt to chart his/her own course.

Robert W. Herron, Jr.
Lee College, Cleveland, TN

According to Luke: A New Exposition of the Third Gospel. By David Gooding. Leicester: Inter-Varsity/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 362 pp., \$12.95.

Gooding presents this study of the third gospel based on an analysis of Luke's literary structure. While there are a great number of studies available on the literary structure of Biblical books, this book is neither a technical study of the literary structure of Luke nor a simple commentary on the text. The exposition combines features of both. It is written not for the professional scholar but "with a great deal of fellow-feeling for non-expert but serious readers of Luke's Gospel whose main difficulty lies not in understanding exactly what Luke is saying, but in understanding why he says it."

Gooding states in an introductory chapter that his approach "will be that of a scholar who comes to Luke from the study of classical and hellenistic authors." He approaches the gospel by observing three features of the work: (1) Luke's selection of material and the relative proportions he assigns to the various parts of that material, (2) any themes or ideas that reoccur in the various and separate items Luke has selected, and (3) the way Luke orders the individual parts of his material in relation to each other and to the whole, and the effect this has on the thought flow of the narrative.

While such an approach helps us see that Luke was concerned with more than just the mere recording of historical fact, one must be careful not to impose themes and ideas on the text based on a particular theological bias or literary form. Gooding recognizes that the study of literary structure must always remain subordinate to "the primary ongoing endeavor to understand Luke's flow of thought and the message he was inspired to convey." Happily he remains consistent with this statement throughout the exposition.

Luke's message is divided into two broad movements: the "coming" of the Lord from heaven to earth (1:1-9:50) and his "going" from earth to heaven (9:51-24:53). The transition comes as Luke records of Jesus: "And it came about, when the days were approaching for his ascension, that he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem."

In his exposition of the first movement Gooding shows how Luke, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, selects and arranges his material to demonstrate that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. From the announcement of his supernatural birth to the exalted vision of the transfigured Christ conversing with Moses and Elijah, each story serves to introduce Jesus as the one who has come from God to deal with sin and sinners in a bold new way.

The exposition of the second movement focuses not on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem but on his movement along the path to glory. The goal is not Jerusalem; it is to return to his exalted position at the Father's right hand. Luke's selection and arrangement of material in this section serves not only to follow the Son of God as he returns to heaven but also to explain what men and women can expect who will follow Jesus on this journey to glory.

The exposition as a whole is fresh, enlightening, and often challenging. One particular aspect that I found especially delightful was the way Gooding often referred to the expansion and development in the epistles of truths stated by Jesus. This demonstrates the unity of truth in the NT as well as its progressive nature.

While one will probably not agree with all the interconnections and structural insights that Gooding develops, it is overall a helpful approach to the third gospel. One of the most refreshing features of this exposition is the combination of scholarly investigation into the literary structure and theological purpose of the gospel with a commitment to the inspiration and historical reliability of the gospel account. This makes for an open-minded approach, yet does not step beyond the bounds of submission to God as the final authority of all interpretation of Scripture.

Gooding's exposition of the third gospel meets a need in the evangelical community. It helps bridge the gap between scholarly investigation into literary structures and theological purposes on the one hand and practical exposition of the text and application of its message to daily life on the other.

Doug Addington
Lexington, SC

The Unfettered Word: Southern Baptists Confront the Authority-Inerrancy Question. Edited by Robinson B. James. Waco: Word, 1987, 190 pp., n. p.

For ten years Southern Baptists, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, have been in open conflict over Biblical inerrancy. The roots of the controversy go back much further, but in 1979 messengers to the annual Southern Baptist Convention began to elect presidents who advocate inerrancy.

Southern Baptists employ congregational government even at their annual meeting, which since 1979 has rarely had fewer than 20,000 eligible voting messengers and which had 45,000 messengers in 1985. Messengers elect a president. An elected president chooses a committee on committees. That group chooses a committee on boards that in turn nominates persons to serve on the convention's various boards of trustees. The annual convention then approves these nominees, though technically they could reject them. Obviously, then, whatever ideological conviction controls the annual meeting will control the decision-making structure of the 15,000,000-member body.

As its title indicates, *The Unfettered Word* stands firmly against the conservative movement in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Perhaps better stated, the volume's editor and contributors feel the current shift is one from conservatism to fundamentalism of the most trenchant kind. Therefore James claims that a strict view of inerrancy, as advocated by present SBC leaders, chains the Bible, binds the believer and cripples scholarship (pp. 17-24). To address this perceived problem, James collected articles from a number of prominent Southern Baptist scholars. Mark Noll and Clark Pinnock are the only non-SBC writers in the book. Most of these essays originally appeared in *SBC Today*, a journal that opposes the denomination's shift to the right. Others were composed for the collection, and one was reprinted from *Perspectives in Religious Studies*.

James states that the articles are "written for laypeople" (p. 9) and that they use "Baptist material as illustrative of problems which arise within every denomination, and within every thoughtful soul" (p. 10). Also James hopes the volume will produce a "scholarly discussion of the chief biblical issues from a moderate-conservative position" (p. 10). Finally, the editor notes that the collection addresses issues raised at the convention's 1987 Ridgecrest Conference on Biblical Inerrancy (p. 11). So the book speaks mainly to a Southern Baptist audience, yet hopes to be relevant to all believers. It attempts to be general enough for lay persons but specific enough for scholars.

The book has four sections, each of which seeks to support James' thesis that a strict inerrancy position "fetters" the Bible. By "elaborate" or "strict" inerrancy James means the Princeton view that the autographs of Scripture were inerrant (pp. 21-22). Section 1 asserts that the Bible is truthful even if it has minor errors or contradictions (p. 35). What matters is that the Bible is trustworthy for matters of faith and practice. Section 2 defends the role of Biblical criticism and claims that accuracy and authority do not depend on inerrancy. Sections 3-4 focus on past Southern Baptist scholars and confessions of faith. These chapters try to demonstrate that traditionally Baptists have allowed a great deal of latitude in their definition of inspiration. Also the articles in this portion portray inerrancy as creedalistic and a tool of those who want to take over the SBC.

Certain parts of the book make a contribution to the study of Biblical inspiration. F. Humphreys observes eleven qualifications inerrantists place on their position (pp. 49-52). Some of these qualifications are hermeneutical in nature, but others are more difficult to explain. Conservatives must grapple seriously with whether inerrancy may be an overly-nuanced term. Part 3 reminds us of the dangers of claiming historical personages as allies in a current dispute, unless those individuals spoke directly to the subject. Finally, the authors underscore the importance of precise definitions in theological debates.

In many ways, however, *The Unfettered Word* exposes problems in the SBC in general and in its moderate wing in particular. First, the writers do not possess a valid definition of inerrancy. They seem to believe all inerrantists hold the dicta-

tion rather than verbal plenary position. James makes unfounded—almost insulting—charges, such as that strict inerrancy “is *designed* to be incorruptable by anything it might find in the Bible” (p. 83). He also strongly implies that inerrantists do not even consult the Bible for their doctrine of inspiration. Of course he interprets 2 Tim 3:16, Ps 19:7–14, etc., differently than inerrantists. Such charges are made in the heat of denominational struggle but are as indefensible as some made against Baptist moderates. These writers need to dialogue more with recent works on inerrancy, such as those by Carson and Woodbridge. In short, James either really fights an ecclesiological style or he is largely ignorant of inerrantists’ beliefs.

Second, in their critique of inerrantists the authors use tactics they denounce in their opponents. They claim past Southern Baptist theologians as proponents of their views. They use the word “authority” without defining it carefully. Too often they judge the motives of inerrantists (cf. p. 33). Each writer in this volume possesses excellent research skills. They can do a fairer job than they have done. To decry the other side’s lack of objectivity does not suffice, though the conservative movement has not always argued evenhandedly either.

What could help moderates and conservatives solve this clash? No one knows, perhaps, but a suggestion may help. Convention moderates are largely ignorant of evangelical scholarship. Convention conservatives often exhibit an old-line fundamentalist style. To borrow from E. V. McKnight’s article (pp. 90 ff.), an “evangelical middle” is needed. That middle will arise only when moderates know that “evangelical” is both a noun and an adjective, when they admit that evangelical scholarship exists. The middle may emerge when conservatives forego a triumphalist spirit and when they place more emphasis on academic writing and research.

Will this “middle” be formed? Only time will tell. For now, though, we continue to see books that do not tell the whole story. Though it has its conservative counterparts, *The Unfettered Word* is, sadly, such a volume. It loses its scholarly impact in its determination to direct the denominational positions of lay persons.

Paul R. House
Taylor University, Upland, IN

No Falling Words: Expositions of the Book of Joshua. By Dale Ralph Davis. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 204 pp., n. p.

The book under review is by design an expositional commentary, not a critical commentary. Yet the reader will find the homiletical messages rooted in a treasury of exegetical insight. The structural and literary observations alone are worth the price of the book. Davis disclaims in his preface any attempt at exhausting critical matters. Nevertheless both commentary and abundant footnotes guide the reader with concise summaries of the more important critical issues and direct attention to helpful bibliographic references for further study. Exposition is controlled by the “conviction . . . that if one is willing to keep his Hebrew Bible before his eyes, a congregation of God’s people next to his heart, and the struggle of hermeneutics (i.e., what does this writer intend to proclaim to God’s people in his time, and how do I faithfully hold to that intention and helpfully apply that text to God’s contemporary flock?) in his mind, he will have manna to set before God’s hungering people” (p. 7).

Davis' description of the hermeneutical task in exposition correctly exposes the most important test when bridging the gap between ancient text and contemporary audience. Would the Biblical author recognize his original message in the hands of the modern expositor? The expositor of today must anchor his application to the text so that his message would be as relevant to the original audience as to the modern. For example, in developing the message of Joshua 22 Davis writes: "Now to chapter 22; let us try to mount the right hermeneutical horse at the outset. Clearly, the keynote of this chapter is the pervasive passion for fidelity to Yahweh (e.g., vv. 5, 19, 29, 31). Hence, we must beware of moralizing the text into anything less, such as the peril of rumor, the tragedy of misunderstanding, or the need to talk out problems reasonably. Those may be commendable concerns, but they do not constitute the main freight of chapter 22" (p. 167). Such sensitivity to the Biblical theology of the text (with which this commentary abounds) is a crucial correction to much of modern exposition (especially in narrative material).

The 21 chapters of the commentary divide the book of Joshua into manageable units for exposition with appropriate (sermon?) titles for each pericope. My only serious criticism of the work is that the message of each section is not more clearly expressed in one concise sentence (such as in the expositional commentary on Genesis, *Creation and Blessing*, by A. P. Ross [Baker, 1988]). The applications for each section vary in specificity, but there is always adequate assistance in the general direction that exposition should take. Davis is particularly helpful for preaching the difficult passages (e.g. lists of conquered kings, land distributions, holy war). The book is written in an expository style, and reading the commentary is itself a devotional exercise. Davis' commentary deserves a place in the library of pastors and teachers alongside any of the major works on Joshua. Davis deserves our thanks for a very helpful guide to the exposition of that book.

John W. Hilber
Believers Fellowship, Gig Harbor, WA

The Epistle to the Galatians. NICOT. By Ronald Y. K. Fung. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988, 342 pp., \$21.95.

Background introductory problems such as occasion, date and recipients are in keeping with the position of F. F. Bruce, under whom Fung studied. He proposes an early date of A.D. 48 to the churches of the Roman province of Galatia. The agitators are the Judaizers. He fully espouses the South Galatian theory. His work is thorough, treating a wide range of literature. He gives ample scholarly reasons for his conclusions. He has a clear and beautiful style. This volume would be a valuable tool in any minister's library. Laymen will also find it most helpful, although the references to Greek words may pose a problem. Fung gives careful attention to detail but is not wordy. He is not afraid to exegete difficult passages, although the length of the book does not lend itself to exhaustive word studies. At times he has chosen not to pursue fruitless details. On the other hand pursuing certain details more fully and openly might prove helpful.

For example, *en emoi* in Gal 1:16 is normally translated "in me" (e.g. *KJV*, *RV*, *NIV*). In keeping with a few commentators, however, he translates it "to me." The historical objectivity of the appearance of Jesus on the Damascus road "to" Paul is thereby safeguarded. But one might question whether this is necessary, since 1:11-

12 points to an objective revelation "from Jesus Christ." In addition other NT records affirm clearly the historical, objective appearance of Christ to Saul (Acts 9, 22, 26; 1 Cor 9:1). I sense in Fung an orthodox position, but perhaps he misses the deeper meaning of *en emoi*. The believer's mystical union with Christ is also a part of orthodox theology. Of course Fung himself holds to the believer's incorporation into Christ. As long as this is held in balance by the more definable historical data concerning Christ as the object of our faith, the *en emoi* should be translated "in me" to give depth of meaning. This was Paul's intention. Galatians 2:20 reads: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." On this verse Fung states: "This death is accomplished 'through the law'; this is more specifically expressed in the clause 'I have been crucified with Christ,' which refers not in an ethical sense to a subjective experience in Christian consciousness, but to the believer's objective position in Christ" (p. 123). Here we see Fung's apparent avoidance of treating the mystical union emphasis in favor of a more legal standing in Christ.

Perhaps what is meant in 1:16 is that it was necessary for Paul to have a deep sanctifying experience of Christ "in me" before he could effectually preach Christ to the Gentiles. Perhaps this is a reference to the silent years of preparation between conversion and his second visit to Jerusalem after conversion. Saul certainly needed Christ dwelling in him mystically in order to demonstrate that he was indeed a Christian. He needed to overcome the prejudices of the Christians against his having persecuted the church. God was effecting Paul's sanctification. In Gal 4:19, Paul yearns for the Galatians to have Christ formed in them. Again Fung veers away from the mystical union in his explanation.

The greater issue in Galatians is handled well by Fung. His treatment of justification by faith in Christ alone apart from works of the law is lucid. Galatians 5:4 is explained as follows: "From this it may reasonably be inferred that justification is not attained through the law, but by grace through Christ. But as grace on God's part points to faith as the appropriate response on the part of mankind, and in view of what Paul has already said about the place of faith and of Christ in justification (especially in 2:15-21; 3:13f., 21-26), we may interpret 'by grace through Christ' to mean: 'by faith, through incorporation into Christ and on the basis of his atoning work.' Once again, therefore, justification by faith is by implication clearly contrasted with justification through the law" (p. 223). No effort is made, however, to deal theologically with Paul's statement translated "you have fallen out of the domain of God's grace." The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is not treated.

Overall the book is encouraging and helpful, written by a first-rate Chinese scholar who is thoroughly evangelical.

Benson Cain
Melrose, FL

The House Church: A Model for Renewing the Church. By Del Birkey. Scottdale/Kitchener: Herald, 1988, 192 pp., \$18.95/\$26.50.

Birkey's work is an intriguing and insightful study of the house-church structure and its subsequent implications for a theology of renewal and revitalization of modern church life. The book is well-written, clear and easily readable. It is divided

into three sections with a total of nine chapters. Birkey has a fine bibliography with 134 sources. His study incorporates Biblical, sociological and archeological materials.

Birkey begins by stating that he seeks to revitalize contemporary church life by reshaping it according to Biblical values: "The church needs to give priority of concentration to its structures or patterns of relating to one another" (p. 27). The house church of the NT is, for Birkey, such a structure, which fosters and nurtures intimate relationships among people.

Birkey gives Biblical and historical evidence of the house church in the first section of his work. He cites the NT evidence of the house-church structure with such examples as that in Jerusalem (Acts 2:46), Lydia's church in her house in Philippi (16:15), and the house church of Stephanas in Corinth (1 Cor 16:5).

Using sociological categories Birkey identifies the house churches as "primary groups" because they functioned as intimate associations like families or peer groups. He contrasts these to the "sanctuary church" structure which is characterized by "secondary group" associations that are more formal. The latter became dominant after the third century.

Birkey points out, however, that it was the small groups that fostered renewal of church life throughout the centuries. For example, Birkey cites the anabaptist movements such as the Mennonites and the early Brethren. He states that the house church exists today in such countries as the Peoples' Republic of China.

Birkey offers implications of the house-church model for a theology of contemporary renewal in the second section of the work. He discusses the NT model for ministry that was appropriate to the house churches and offers correctives and challenges to contemporary church life. His work will be of interest to those who seek alternative models of ministry for church life and practice.

From the NT Birkey recognizes a servanthood style of ministry based on the model of Jesus as servant from John 13:15-16. He identifies equality of the sexes as a hallmark of the house-church ministry and fellowship in the NT. He points to Paul's words in Gal 3:28 and to persons such as Phoebe in Rom 16:1-2 in affirming mutual leadership of both men and women.

Personal giftedness is emphasized. It is based on the evidence of the NT, which demonstrates the actualization of individual gifts of the Spirit for corporate growth and edification (Eph 4:7-16; 1 Pet 4:9-11; 1 Corinthians 12-14). Birkey seeks a simplification of worship life and style as seen in the NT house-church practice. He recognizes two sections of worship: "The Liturgy of the Scriptures" and "The Liturgy of the Supper" (p. 127).

In the final section of the book, Birkey advocates an "integrity of commitment" for the good of the corporate community. He then delineates what he calls basic evidence of a "Spirit renewed church" in a "pentecostal paradigm" derived from Acts 2:42: concentrated study, spiritual fellowship, spiritual worship and committed membership.

Birkey's theology of renewal from insights gleaned through the house-church model offers a corrective to traditional modern church life. This thought-provoking study is Biblically and theologically sound. It gives clear ideas for renewal that will challenge pastors, educators and laity. Birkey's work deserves careful consideration and may serve as an impetus for revitalization of contemporary congregational life.

JoAnn Ford Watson
Camroden Presbyterian Church, North Western, NY

The Sufficiency of Scripture. By Noel Weeks. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1988, 309 pp., \$24.95.

Weeks believes that the Biblical infallibility debate has shifted. The shift developed from older distinctions between fundamentalist and modernist to newer tendencies within evangelicalism that restrict Biblical authority. This book examines the issues and arguments of the debate with an investigation of the ethical implications of Biblical infallibility.

The argument against partial infallibility follows two lines of reasoning. (1) Partial infallibility equates exhaustiveness with authority. Because the Bible is not exhaustive in science, history or ethics it is not relevant. Weeks counters by saying that the Bible is not exhaustive in religious matters, and yet the Bible remains authoritative. (2) Partial infallibility reflects a deistic perspective. It subtly denies the ability of God to act or speak in creation. But this poses problems for Biblical miracles, conversion, and the inspiration of Scripture. The result is historical relativism and no authority.

Weeks argues for Biblical infallibility along two lines of reasoning. (1) The Bible has the character of an authoritative source because of its claims (2 Tim 3:16-17). Jesus Christ is both the Creator (Col 1:15-17) and the Redeemer (1:18-23). Christ's authority in both realms reinforces the Bible's full authority. (2) The Holy Spirit's inspiration and illumination of Scripture produces a transcultural authority, thereby overcoming relativism.

Weeks successfully argues for more consistency among those proposing partial infallibility, especially in regard to creation, prophecy, Church/state issues and academic integrity. But his fundamental case for Biblical authority is neither consistent nor convincing.

(1) A selective application of the doctrine of sin allows him to discount proofs for God's existence using general revelation and reason (p. 216). But sin does not deter an unregenerate person from inferring such things as personal guilt and the existence of the God of the Bible.

(2) Whereas God has a "very tight and definite control" over the production of Scripture (p. 45), he allows human errors in copying and translating and in misconceptions of Scripture. Nevertheless "the convicting, converting, and sanctifying truth of Scripture [still] comes through" (p. 42).

(3) Hermeneutically, one must approach the Bible on its own terms (p. 100). Yet subjective involvement in interpretation is minimized by an appeal to the "whole teaching of God's Word" (p. 261). But subjectivity, and not merely disobedience, influences which "whole teaching of Scripture" one accepts.

The book asserts the authority of the Bible in all of life but avoids the necessary corollary that all of life influences the way one interprets the Bible.

Terry G. Hiebert
Gospel Church, Warman, SK, Canada

Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of the Book of Genesis. By Allen P. Ross. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 744 pp., \$29.95.

Karl Barth once lamented that modern commentators have not produced commentaries "but merely the first steps toward a commentary" (*The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 6-7). It is widely acknowledged today that there is a need for commentaries that go beyond the first step of the necessary exegetical matters to

deal with the theology of the text. Ross has provided a sterling model of just such a work.

He begins by informing us that his work “is not a commentary. . . . It is rather a guide to the study and exposition of the book” (pp. 13-14). He means by this that rather than providing a complete exegesis of each narrative he has chosen to concentrate on the literary and theological dimensions of the text. Though the work is based on exegesis (as his comments abundantly demonstrate), he has focused on literary genre, narrative structure, rhetorical devices, and the unified theological point of each narrative, and correlation of that theology with the theology of the book and with the Bible as a whole (pp. 37-38). The result is rhetorical-critical reflection at its finest, in the vein of Alter, Fokkelman and Fishbane.

Ross begins with four chapters on introductory matters. He treats “Approaches to Genesis” (literary-analytical, form-critical, traditio-historical, rhetorical-critical), followed by the “Nature of Genesis” (allegations of myth, etiology, etc.) and the “Composition of Genesis” (theme, structure, purpose). His chapter on “Method for Studying Genesis” details an approach to studying narrative literature. All four chapters are expert and stimulating treatments of their topics. He then treats each successive unit of the text and ends with four appendices and a bibliography.

Each unit in Genesis is treated following a threefold format: theological ideas, structure and synthesis, and development of the exposition. A bibliography for each unit is appended. His treatment of Gen 6:9-8:22 will serve to illustrate the book’s approach and its richness (see pp. 188-200).

With respect to theological ideas Ross first points out that the major theme of the narrative is divine judgment of sinners. A related theme is deliverance from judgment by divine grace. Next, concerning structure and synthesis Ross shows that the passage is a chiasm, centering on God’s “remembering” Noah (8:1a). In his development of the exposition he expounds the text in detail under the headings he would use in a sermon. His first section is “God instructs the righteous to prepare to escape the judgment of the wicked (6:9-22).” He exegetes the meaning of Noah’s “blamelessness,” observing that the note that “God saw the corruption of the earth” alludes to how God “saw” in Genesis 1. He points to a wordplay in 6:13 and makes comparisons to extra-Biblical flood stories. His next text (7:1-24), “The Lord destroys the wicked and their world but saves a remnant through the obedience of one man,” concludes that the chapter answers the question, “Can men and women pursue their lives immorally and enjoy the pleasures of this world with reckless abandon?” He alludes to Jesus’ use of the passage, showing that it anticipates the eschatological judgment. His final selection (8:1-22), “The righteous remnant that God delivers establishes a new order in the earth,” reflects on God’s “remembering” Noah, on the theology of rest (8:4), and on the terminology for sacrifice (8:20-22), which in turn reflects Leviticus 1. Finally he frames the expository idea of the passage: “God will judge the wicked with severe and catastrophic judgment in order to start life over with a worshipping community.”

The quality of *Creation and Blessing* seems to require superlatives. As a resource for preaching it surpasses von Rad, Westermann and Bueggemann. It models the kind of writing that those who teach must give to those who preach to facilitate accurate and rich exposition. Indeed, reading the book is an excellent course in studying and expounding narrative literature.

Van Campbell
Calvary Evangelical Free Church, Indiana, PA

On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent. By Gustavo Gutiérrez. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988, \$8.95 paper.

The story of Job recounts a wager proposed by Satan to God concerning the nature of Job's religious integrity. Did Job practice his religion gratis—that is, “for nothing” (1:9)—or did personal gain control his motives? According to Gutiérrez—and I think he is correct—only “disinterested religion” that is practiced without regard for personal benefit is true religion. Job passes the test, of course, and God wins the bet, but there is another and deeper lesson here.

How do we speak about God today when, to use Hegel's words, human history looks like a “slaughter-bench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of states, and the virtue of individuals have been sacrificed”? The real theme of Job is not so much suffering, which remains a mystery, but “how to speak of God in the midst of suffering” (p. 13). God concluded that, unlike Job's three friends, Job “spoke correctly” about him (42:7-8). Gutiérrez suggests that Job emerged from his dilemma in two stages and with two mutually dependent types of language about God.

The “language of prophecy” rejects the traditional theology of Job's friends, the doctrine of retribution that posits a cause-effect moral law in the universe whereby God rewarded the just and punished the wicked. Job's personal experience shattered this theology—and rightly so, for the text repeatedly affirms his innocence. But Job moves beyond his own personal experience to a solidarity with all those who suffer innocently. In “prophetic language” he asks the question of God's justice for all people.

But this prophetic language must be accompanied by the “language of contemplation” and worship, for Job, having recanted and repented (42:6), must accept the painful and mysterious truth that God is both his persecutor and his *gō'el*. God answers Job's pleas for a divine response, but in a disconcerting way. He speaks twice (chaps. 38-39; 40:7-41:34). First, he tells Job that he has a plan for the world, a plan of gratuitous love and not of retribution. The freedom of God from any human pretension that seeks to limit how he must work seeks, in response, the free and “disinterested” response of people. Second, God responds to Job's doubt about his just governance of the world by reminding Job that God cannot impose justice, for “the nature of created beings must be respected. God's power is limited by human freedom.”

Job did not replace the doctrine of retribution with the idea that chaos rules the world. Far from it. While he does not receive answers *per se*, he does receive the spiritual discernment that he must freely submit to God not in passive resignation but in “contemplative love.” Thus Job truly does believe in God “for nothing,” in an “utterly disinterested way.” All talk about God must witness to his prophetic justice, but there is more: the love of God, which “operates in a world not of cause and effect but of freedom and gratuitousness” (p. 87).

Gutiérrez does a fine job of elucidating some important Biblical truths, but I wish he had been more precise at two points. (1) While we must reject the superficial notion of cause-effect retribution, we do want to retain some idea of divine retribution in this life. Indeed liberation theologians rightly seek the establishment of God's justice now. God's judgment of Pharaoh, Egypt, and even Israel itself were all manifestations of his displeasure. Likewise Deuteronomy tells us of both blessings and curses related to the choices we make. (2) One might ask whether much of liberation theology is “disinterested.” Has it affirmed the truth of Exod 33:15—that it is better to remain in the fetters of Egypt with God's presence

than to be liberated without it? Has it learned the lesson of Job in which God criticized theologies that pigeonholed how he must work (p. 72)? The key, I think, rests in rejecting not only passive resignation toward injustice and suffering but also manipulation that tries "to establish limits and pathways for God's action in history" (p. 70).

Daniel B. Clendenin
William Tyndale College, Farmington Hills, MI

Reflections on the Gospel of John, Volume 3. By Leon Morris. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 164 pp., \$8.95 paper.

This is the first popular book by Morris that I have read, although he has written more than twenty-five books. My previous exposure to his work was in his more scholarly works, which are excellent. I was pleased to find the same quality of writing in this book, which is an exposition of John 11-16. These chapters encompass the raising of Lazarus from the dead, the plot to put Jesus to death, the last supper, and the upper-room discourse.

This is neither a popular "how-to-do-it" book nor a novel that can be hurried through in an evening. It and its companion volumes are an excellent series of commentaries on the gospel of John. These books have considerable depth, and Morris explores the subtleties of John's words and phrases. The first three volumes are sufficiently easy to understand so that Sunday-school teachers and interested laypeople will find them very useful. If one longs for something deeper for devotional study, this series would be a good investment.

The gospel of John is the most doctrinal of the gospels as it focuses on the divinity of Christ. Morris illuminates John's records, drawing on cultural and linguistic insights and weaving them together into a very thought-provoking pattern. He relates these matters to the lives of his readers as he gets behind the meaning of the English text. Unlike too many of us, he never allows his scholarliness to void his compelling writing style.

The person who, in devotional reading or in preparing Bible studies, can read only a chapter or two at a time will find the summaries with which Morris begins each chapter a helpful means of keeping in touch with the flow of the book and the Biblical text.

Scholars will not find much new in this set. Laypersons, however, could find these volumes to be the most useful material they have ever read on John. It is recommended accordingly.

Robert D. Pitts
Taylor University, Upland, IN

What's Good about the Good News? By Neal Punt. Chicago: Northland, 1988, 142 pp., \$7.95 paper.

For centuries theologians have tried to find a solution that would draw Calvinists and Arminians together. Punt has put forward the most unique attempt I have seen. Coming from a Calvinistic background, he is a graduate of Calvin Seminary and pastors a Christian Reformed church. But he was never able to reconcile the

universalistic texts in Scripture (John 1:9; 3:17; 12:32, 47; Rom 5:18; 11:32; 1 Cor 15:22; 2 Cor 5:14, 19; Col 1:20; 1 Tim 2:6; 4:10; Titus 2:11; Heb 2:9; 1 John 2:2) with his Calvinistic theology. This book sets forth Punt's criticisms of every theological tradition as well as his proposed solution.

Punt suggests that all persons are elect in Christ except those whom the Bible says will be finally lost. He takes the universalistic texts as expressions of actual, certain-to-be-realized salvation for all persons. The only exceptions are those who, in addition to their sin in Adam, willfully reject and remain indifferent throughout their entire life to God's revelation to them. These will be finally lost. Faith is a result or fruit of salvation and not a cause, prerequisite or condition for salvation.

The author describes his position as Biblical universalism. He suggests that we view everybody as heirs of the kingdom of heaven and announce and declare to them the good news of what God has done for us. We should assume their salvation until it becomes evident that they are one of the exceptions.

Punt rejects the understanding of original sin that condemns all people to eternal death unless the sovereign electing grace of God intervenes. Instead he postulates that the electing grace of God does intervene on behalf of every person.

Punt believes he has provided the basis for a solution to the debate between Calvinists and Arminians. He believes he has provided a Biblical basis for so communicating the gospel that it will engender a positive self-image in those who hear it. And he believes he has adequately answered the question of salvation for infants and those who have not heard.

Few who read this book, however, will be convinced. Punt has not only failed to solve these age-old questions but has also failed to argue persuasively. Rather than disagreeing solely with his conclusions, most readers will even disagree with the way he has stated the premises. Most annoying of all is his rejection of faith in Jesus Christ as a prerequisite for salvation. In his attempt to seek creative solutions to theological questions, Punt has distorted the gospel message.

Kenneth A. Daughters
Dallas Theological Seminary

Rethinking Realized Eschatology. By Clayton Sullivan. Macon: Mercer, 1988, 152 pp., n.p. *The Evidence of Prophecy: Fulfilled Prediction as a Testimony to the Truth of Christianity.* Edited by Robert C. Newman. Hatfield: Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 1988, 149 pp., \$6.95 paper.

Eschatology continues to spark interest at both the academic and practical levels, as these worthy volumes by Sullivan and Newman illustrate. Newman demonstrates one practical use of Biblical prophecy, while Sullivan makes an important contribution to the ongoing academic debate about synoptic eschatology.

Newman's collection of essays is designed to confront thinking inquirers with Christianity by way of fulfilled prophecy. The ten essays are drawn from student papers in a course taught by Newman, from Newman's own work, and from other sources including Samuel Kellogg and Calvin Stowe (husband of Harriet Beecher Stowe). Each is short (averaging about 10 pages), free of academic jargon, and reasonable rather than militant.

Newman has selected contributions of high quality. The authors make liberal use of original sources (e.g. Cicero, Plutarch, Herodotus, Josephus, rabbinical literature) and draw widely upon other respected sources (*CAH*, *HTR*, *Int*, etc.).

They also interact with a wide range of Biblical and historical scholarship (Rabbi Akiba and W. F. Albright, Edersheim and Eichrodt, Gottwald and Gibbon). The reader is treated to a well-informed apologetic that is neither sensationalistic nor shallow. He is called to consider, not coerced to convert.

The selections are divided into prophecies about the nations, prophecies about Israel, and prophecies about the Messiah. Included are such titles as "Biblical Prophecy and Pagan Oracles," "The Destruction of Tyre," and "The Work of the Messiah." Newman's contribution on "The Person of the Messiah" is a good example of the type of treatment a reader will find in the book. Restricting himself to OT passages considered messianic by the ancient rabbis, Newman tests several "models" that have been suggested through history to explain the OT data by examining them in light of the "paradoxes" about the Messiah (e.g. is he a king or a suffering servant?). He builds a persuasive case for the superiority of the NT model over its competitors. Newman's book will challenge one who thinks to think about the One to whom the Scriptures bear eloquent testimony.

Sullivan's work, aimed at academia, is a stimulating challenge to C. H. Dodd's realized eschatology. Compact and clear even to nonspecialists, the book begins with a short overview of the situation in NT studies that gave rise to Dodd's view. Sullivan then critiques Dodd's use of the two-document hypothesis in formulating realized eschatology (chap. 2), moves to a study of the kingdom in Dodd and in the synoptic gospels (chap. 3), and then distinguishes two versions of realized eschatology ("Kingdom Version" and "Christological Version") in Dodd's writings (chaps. 4, 5). Sullivan's treatment concludes with a suggestion for rethinking realized eschatology (chap. 6) and with two helpful appendices listing all of the references to "kingdom" in the synoptics and examining the kingdom concept in patristic literature.

Sullivan opens his discussion to the noninitiated by reviewing in chap. 1 the context of the debate and how Dodd fits into it. He begins with the Enlightenment, which gave rise to the quest for the historical Jesus in the work of S. Reimarus (1778) and the resultant focus on the kingdom as central to Jesus' teaching. He then traces the debate over the meaning of the kingdom through J. Weiss (1892) and his "consistent eschatology" (Jesus proclaimed the imminent coming of God's kingdom to earth, but he was wrong), to Dodd's 1935 counterproposal in *The Parables of the Kingdom*: realized eschatology (the kingdom was "realized" or actualized in Jesus' ministry). He concludes by showing that a mediating view is now common that combines "consistent" and "realized" eschatology.

In chap. 2 Sullivan shows the pivotal role of the two-document hypothesis in Dodd's formulation of realized eschatology. The two-document hypothesis (that two documents, Mark and Q, served as the source of the other written gospels and are therefore the most trustworthy sources about Jesus) was accepted nearly unanimously when Dodd wrote *The Parables of the Kingdom*. Based upon his confidence in the hypothesis, Dodd formulated realized eschatology based solely upon kingdom material from Mark and Q. Thus a vast amount of synoptic data about the kingdom was excluded by Dodd. Sullivan then argues that since both Markan priority and confidence in Q have come under such serious attack in recent times neither can be considered as an assured result of criticism. Thus neither is a safe base upon which to build a synoptic theology of the kingdom. (Sullivan cites extensive evidence for the dethroning of the two-document hypothesis, particularly W. F. Farmer and Hans-Herbert Stoldt. While not disproven, it can no longer be considered assured: The question is open.) Thus synoptic eschatology must be rethought using all of the synoptic data.

In order to rethink synoptic eschatology, Sullivan devotes chap. 3 to a study of the kingdom in Dodd's writings and in the synoptics. Deploring "Professor Dodd's slippery use of language" (p. 37), Sullivan documents the ambiguity of *basileia* in Dodd's works and in the mediating theologians. His detailed examination of the synoptic data as well as Dodd's failure to be able to make his definition of "kingdom" work lead Sullivan to conclude that the consistent eschatology of Weiss and Schweitzer was correct: "Kingdom" in the synoptics means a "realm" or "place," and "Jesus' Kingdom preaching was predicated on a mistake" (p. 64).

Sullivan further unravels Dodd's case by a detailed examination of Dodd's main proof texts (chap. 4) and by demonstrating the existence of a "Christological Version" of realized eschatology in Dodd's post-1935 writings (in this version "eschatological" means "ultimate in significance" and is predicated of "the Christ event"). He concludes that "realized eschatology" is an oxymoron and that Dodd's "Kingdom Version" is untenable. He suggests that the Christological version could be modified by utilizing "person" rather than "event." Thus modified "realized eschatology" would designate the theological view that at the heart of the Christian faith is a Person and a life, not a dogmatic system or ethical code (p. 117).

In summary, Newman's book is a useful apologetic tool. Sullivan's case against Dodd is persuasive and well done and deserves a wide hearing. Evangelicals can appreciate Sullivan's argument and his call to focus on the Person of Christ while resisting some of his conclusions.

Van Campbell
Calvary Evangelical Free Church, Indiana, PA

The Correspondence of Erasmus. Volume 8: Letters 1122 to 1251. By Desiderius Erasmus. Translated by R. A. B. Mynors. Annotated by Peter G. Bietenholz. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988, 498 pp., \$75.00. *Paraphrase on Mark.* By Desiderius Erasmus. Translated and annotated by Erika Rummel. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1988, 235 pp., \$40.00.

The latest in the University of Toronto Press 85-volume project designed to bring the works of Erasmus to English readers, these two books are samples of that great Renaissance humanist at his best, both as a Biblical scholar and as an epistolary craftsman. Furthermore these volumes are a book lover's delight: They are a rare match between the bookbinder's and the writer's art—the books themselves are as beautiful and durable in their own way as the ideas they contain. Thus while more expensive than most academic books they are nevertheless an excellent value.

Erasmus believed that his divinely appointed mission in life was to restore Christian theology to its apostolic purity by ridding it of the scholastic accretions that he believed encumbered it. In so doing he was supplying a religious dimension to the Renaissance watchword *ad fontes*, a slogan by which the humanists urged themselves back to the pure fountains of antiquity. In this case the fountains were the writings of the Church fathers on the one hand and (more importantly) the Scriptures themselves on the other. To do this Erasmus employed the many tools and insights lately afforded him by Renaissance humanism, tools such as philology, textual criticism and rhetoric. With these he was able to bring out critical editions of such formidable ancient theologians as Augustine, Jerome, Origen and

Basil, to name but a few. He also was the first to publish the NT in its original Greek, with which he coupled a revision of the Vulgate on facing pages.

The result was not what he had hoped. An army of Catholic theologians attacked him from all sides. Not only had he the temerity to stand in judgment over the Vulgate and to correct it, they argued, he had aided and abetted a serious schism: Just one short year after the Greek NT appeared, Luther posted his explosive *Ninety-Five Theses*. To the traditionalists, the causal connection was clear.

Though no Lutheran himself, Erasmus was sympathetic to the German Reformer's desire both to free the Church of the abuses that so severely hindered it and to return it to a more fully Biblical faith and polity. Unlike Luther, however, Erasmus preferred to conduct himself peaceably so as to avoid schism if possible. Luther frightened Erasmus in at least two ways: He was afraid that Luther's bombastic language and tactics would cripple effective reform within Roman Catholicism and that they would serve only to bring down scorn and reproach on the *studia humanitatis*, the very means by which Erasmus was working to restore theology.

Coming as they do at the time of the Diet of Worms and of Luther's subsequent excommunication, these letters show the embattled Erasmus working to protect his theological and literary gains. He was doing so in the heart of Luther's tumultuous insurrection, when humanist concerns were being eclipsed by political intrigue and theological controversy on the widest scale.

By any estimate, Erasmus' letters are grand reading—not merely because they are finely crafted specimens of epistolary art and genuinely edifying but also because the list of correspondents includes the most notable figures of the sixteenth century: Pope Leo X, Martin Luther, Thomas Wolsey, Thomas More, Duke George of Saxony, Johann Reuchlin, Albert of Brandenburg, Wolfgang Capito, and Willibald Pirckheimer, among others. Because these fine letters are written by a great figure for figures equally great they are a splendid window through which to view that important epoch in religious and cultural history.

Erasmus of course did far more than write letters or work as a missionary to the intellectuals of his day. His commitment to Scripture included a long-term effort to make the Bible accessible to those who were not trilingual, to those who had not mastered the Hebrew of the OT, the Greek of the NT, or the Latin of theology. Erasmus set himself the task of paraphrasing major portions of the Bible so that it could be "studied eagerly by everyone, even laymen in private station." In that way "even professional experts in the Scripture [would be] often worsted in debate" by those schooled in little more than the Bible itself.

Erasmus' method of paraphrase is called *contaminatio*, a classical term for the eclectic blending of elements from various works into one. Thus though the paraphrase at hand is ostensibly of Mark's gospel, for the sake of clarity and completeness (things that Mark's gospel itself sometimes lacks) Erasmus occasionally goes beyond strictly Markan bounds. He includes, for example, such incidents as the sending out of the seventy and the healing of Malchus' ear, incidents that, though found in other gospels, are not in Mark.

Erasmus' paraphrase of Mark is what one would produce if one were to apply the *Living Bible's* technique of rendition to the *Amplified Bible* and then generously sprinkle the whole with the devotional insights of Matthew Henry. That is, Erasmus did not content himself with paraphrase and amplification. He included commentary and expertly rhetorical exhortation as well.

The overall effect, of course, is stunning. The result is something like listening to Mark think aloud. This historically important book is sixteenth-century Biblical scholarship and theological imagination brought to the service of piety.

Michael Bauman
Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, MI

Theology of the Reformers. By Timothy George. Nashville: Broadman, 1988, 337 pp., n.p.

George provides a fresh, contemporary appraisal of the major theological tenets of four major Reformers: Martin Luther, John Calvin, Huldrych Zwingli, and Menno Simons. Although he does not offer any groundbreaking insights, he does attempt to bring the theology of these major figures up to date in providing spiritual and theological lessons for the contemporary believer. This work would serve well as an introductory text for a seminary or college class on Reformation history and theology. George summarizes the major secondary literature on each figure and therefore provides a starting point for important discussions on contemporary developments in Reformation research.

In his first chapter, where he surveys the medieval antecedents to the Reformation, George portrays the late medieval period as an age of anxiety and of a crisis of confidence in the Roman Catholic Church. This is evidenced by the conciliar movement and by the dissenting beliefs of such groups as the Waldensians, Hussites and Lollards. George goes on to describe the differences between the *via antiqua* of Aquinas and the *via moderna* of late-medieval nominalists like William of Ockham. He adopts the interpretation of S. Ozment in pointing out that the nominalists' attack on natural theology undermined the traditional Thomist arguments for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. The result of this was further spiritual anxiety. George then describes the mysticism of the *Devotio Moderna* and follows H. Oberman in pointing out Luther's debt to mystics such as J. Tauler. Lastly, he outlines the contribution of the humanist movement to the Reformation in its emphasis on the return to sources and the need for critical editions of such texts as the Bible. None of George's analysis here is new. All he does is cite the major secondary works on the subject and provide the reader with a basic overall framework on the topic. In fact Ozment's *Age of Reform: 1250-1550* does a much more thorough job in analyzing the late-medieval contribution to the Reformation.

In George's chapter on John Calvin he surveys the major topics of the *Institutes* and provides a good introduction for the first-time reader of Calvin's *magnum opus*. Of particular interest is his discussion of Calvin's position on divine accommodation in Biblical revelation. George attributes Calvin's use of accommodation to his humanist training in classical rhetoric. He points out that the primary purpose of rhetoric was "to accommodate, to adjust, to adapt, to fit one's language in a way that would be suitable to the intended audience" (p. 192). This is precisely what God did in Biblical revelation.

The key question for evangelicals on this topic is whether Calvin's doctrine of accommodation makes it possible for Biblical revelation to be errant. George writes

that for Calvin "the Word, accommodating itself to human sinfulness, was enfleshed in the incarnation, 'in-lettred' in Holy Scripture, and visibly and audibly displayed in the ministry of the sacraments and preaching" (p. 193). He points out that Calvin employed two expressions to describe such accommodated revelation. The first portrays the Bible as a pair of "divine spectacles" for the spiritually near-sighted, and the second describes God's revelation as divine "baby-talk" for sinful people who are limited in their ability to understand. For example, when Scripture describes natural science it does not intend to provide exact scientific information but rather phenomenological descriptions of nature in order to convey a spiritual message. This does not mean that Scripture is errant but that it does not purport to be a scientific text. In the area of apparent contradictions, where Calvin admits of an error in the text, George leaves the question open as to whether the error was in the original or in the hands of the copyists. He infers that Calvin was not concerned about inerrancy *per se* but about inspiration and infallibility. He writes: "Calvin showed remarkable freedom in dealing with the text of Scripture precisely because he had implicit confidence both in its authority as a God-breathed oracle and in its ability to accomplish its purpose—to show forth Christ" (p. 196). George considers the evangelical debates over Calvin's position on inerrancy to be largely "unedifying" (*ibid.*).

In his chapter on Menno Simons and the anabaptist movement, George follows the basic framework of G. H. Williams whose *The Radical Reformation* remains the standard work in the field. It should be noted that George studied under Williams at Harvard and dedicated this work to his mentor. George makes the standard distinction between the revolutionaries of Münster and the pacifism of Simons. He then describes the major differences between Simons and the magisterial Reformers. George points out that Simons' emphasis on religious toleration in the midst of persecution serves as an enduring legacy for all who strive against tremendous odds for the sake of conscience.

George ends his work with an attempt to make the themes of the Reformation relevant to the contemporary scene. For example, he decries the decline of the importance of the sacraments in the life of the Church and, as a Southern Baptist, he rebukes his own denomination for allowing young children to be baptized and for the tendency to tack baptism onto the end of the worship service virtually as an afterthought. He concludes that we can learn valuable lessons from these four Reformers on the subject of baptism, such as reclaiming a theology of presence, returning to the practice of more frequent communion, and restoring the balance between Word and sacrament in Christian worship.

Martin I. Klauber
Trinity College, Deerfield, IL

So Doth, So Is Religion: John Donne and Diplomatic Contexts in the Reformed Netherlands, 1619-1620. By Paul R. Sellin. Columbia: University of Missouri, 1988, 295 pp., \$35.00.

John Donne has always been a man of enigmas, as is perhaps befitting the greatest of the metaphysical poets. The playful and irreverently amorous poems of

his youth have to be glossed with notes from philosophical theology, and the intense devotional poems of his second career are full of erotic imagery. He has perhaps better name recognition than any other early seventeenth-century Anglican clergyman, but not primarily as a divine. Yet he left us not only the great *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (source of the oft-quoted "for whom the bell tolls") but also a collection of sermons that covers ten volumes in the standard edition—sermons that were among the most eloquent and well-attended in the realm when they were first delivered, mostly at St. Paul's Cathedral. Despite a great deal of scholarly interest in Donne the poet and man of letters (in which the devotions and sermons have not been neglected), very little detailed attention has been given to his theology. And that, despite the title and also much space given to the intricacies of English-Dutch diplomacy, is the concern of Sellin's book.

Donne's theology is not easy to get at. The sermons are thoughtful, meditative, full of wordplay. For a man whose ministry was primarily aimed at the intelligentsia, they have a great deal of spiritual application. There is much solid evangelical content, but they studiously avoid references to doctrinal controversy (except for anti-Roman propaganda). In fact they abound with warnings that "to follow Christ doctrinally is to embrace those doctrines in which his church hath walked from the beginning, and not to vex thyself with new points not necessary to salvation" (Sermon 72). Yet it would be more useful to know Donne's theological leanings—to know, for example, whether the famous "Batter my heart, three-personed God" sonnet presupposes an orthodox Calvinist view of effectual calling. In the absence of definitive pronouncements to the contrary in Donne's works, the tendency has been to assume that one so learned, urbane and witty could not possibly have been anything so backward and puritanical as an orthodox Calvinist and thus must have sympathized with the wave of the future: Laudian Arminianism. Students of Church history will recognize immediately how dangerous is this assumption on the part of literary critics.

Sellin's work has been to examine the question in light of the available evidence, and its results have been to overturn the common assumptions. In an earlier book (*John Donne and "Calvinist" Views of Grace* [Amsterdam: Free University, 1983]) he examined the evidence from the sermons Donne preached "in Calvinist strongholds on the heels of the Synod of Dort" (p. 3). The present work examines what might be called the external or perhaps even circumstantial evidence for Donne's theological tendencies: his participation in an important diplomatic mission to the Low Countries in 1619-1620. As far as the Dutch were concerned, orthodox Reformed theology and politics were inextricably intertwined, and indeed the issues dealt with by the English ambassador involved the very survival of the Reformed movement on the continent. Donne was present as chaplain and advisor to Lord Hay, Viscount Doncaster, the British ambassador. Do his behavior during and after the mission and his recorded statements to the Dutch shed any light on his theological convictions? Sellin's thesis is that they do.

It will take some time for scholarship to evaluate the success of Sellin's case. He has uncovered some new hard data with some possibly interesting implications, and he has shifted the focus of the debate to new areas that have hitherto been neglected. But there are gaps in the data: A large portion of his account necessarily consists of reconstructions of what, given the standard diplomatic protocol of the times, a member of an ambassador's entourage of Donne's rank "must" have done. My own impression is that the argument does succeed in adding at least some weight to his earlier conclusion that Reformed thought may be more relevant to

Donne's writings than has previously been recognized. And if it merely succeeds in reawakening interest in Donne as a doctor of the Church it will have been infinitely worthwhile.

Donald T. Williams
Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, GA

Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875. By Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988, 296 pp., \$29.95.

Hughes and Allen argue that American Church history, indeed American culture, is built in part upon a desire to recover or restore the primal purity and rightness of primitive Christianity.

In the wake of the Reformation, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century churchmen believed that the Church was a victim of centuries of layered human error. Consequently the only way to legitimate one's worship activity was to duplicate the practices of the primitive Church. Unlike Martin Luther's desire for "ontological" reformation, asking the question "How can one find a place to stand before a sovereign God?", late Reformation and Puritan desires for reform were "primal," asking the question "What was the ancient tradition?" This shift in perspective eventually influenced churchmen to equate their denomination and their nation with the assumed perfection and purity of the early Church's "first times."

According to Hughes and Allen, as a philosophy and as a movement primitivism suffered from an inherent irony. Proponents of primitivism desired to free their worship from ecclesiastical trappings, eliminating human dogma and other intermediaries between God and man. Once a group of churchmen identified what they believed were self-evident ancient and Biblical traditions, however, they insisted that all churchgoers abide by the traditions without dissent. Consequently restorationism or primitivism, though emphasizing freedom, often produced coercion and repression. The authors contend that this danger is still apparent today in American sectarianism, and even in some imperialistic episodes in twentieth-century American foreign policy.

One weakness of this text is the authors' failure to identify any virtue in American primitivism. This is especially curious from a Christian perspective. While early Americans may be faulted for their naivete, surely their desire to honor Scripture is laudable. Early and nineteenth-century Americans too easily equated their civilization with Biblical ideals, but these people must be respected for seeking an ideal by which to measure their cultural accomplishments. The peculiar malady of the late twentieth century is that we do not seem to be able to produce a consensus on any ideal. Indeed until recently we seem to have been afraid of ideals.

Hughes and Allen are correct to suggest that restoration be considered a process, not a *fait accompli*. And they also benefit the reader by clearly demonstrating the imprudence of identifying the particularities of the moment with universal ideals. This book raises questions, and the insights one finds in the text make it a worthy purchase.

Rex M. Rogers
The King's College, Briarcliff Manor, NY

Established Church, Sectarian People, Itinerancy and the Transformation of English Dissent, 1780-1830. By Deryck W. Lovegrove. Cambridge University, 1988, xii + 254 pp., \$44.50.

This work is the culmination of more than a decade of research into the nature of evangelical dissent in late Hanoverian England. Lovegrove begins with a brief review of the growth of dissent from the sixteenth century to 1780 and asserts that by the latter date the national Church's neglect of many parishes had enhanced "the attractiveness of newer, more vigorous and more socially relevant forms of Christianity" (p. 13). Itinerant evangelism emerged as the most effective means of reaching those indifferent to religion or disaffected by the Church of England. The title is somewhat misleading in that the author focuses on dissent among Calvinistic groups, especially Particular Baptists.

Although Lovegrove maintains a strict historical perspective, his review of the rise and decline of itinerant evangelism foreshadows problems related to evangelism in our own day. For instance in chap. 4, "The Academic Leaven," one learns that dissenting evangelical groups responded to charges of ignorance and inadequacy by establishing new educational academies designed to make evangelicals, and thus their gospel, more socially acceptable. Having determined to better educate itinerant preachers, however, church leaders could find no clear guidelines for establishing a proper balance between abstract and practical courses of study. In terms of organization, dissenters "could assume a spontaneous and unco-ordinated character of the type readily attributable to the unpredictable movement of the Holy Spirit, or [they] could submit to varying degrees of supervision designed to ensure that the energies available would be applied as effectively as possible to the opportunities presented by a given area" (p. 88). No evangelical organization has yet resolved all the ambiguities implicit in submitting to the leadership of the Spirit and at the same organizing for efficiency according to the temporal and often secular canons of reason and common sense. Within thirty years evangelicalism, and with it itinerancy, began to "settle down" as evangelism came to be regarded as a "denominational rather than local responsibility" (p. 142). The ossifying effects of the institutionalization of Christian evangelism were as real in 1830 as they are today.

One of the most valuable aspects of this work is the ably edited journal (1797-1798) of T. Wastfield, paid itinerant of the Baptist Missionary Society. With so much attention having been directed toward A. Fuller, W. Carey, and the advent of the foreign missions movement, it is useful to be reminded of an important early interest among dissenters in home missions. Wastfield's journal provides ample evidence of the difficulties involved in itinerancy, both in opposition from churchmen and in carrying out the regular course of a grueling schedule that sometimes required the preaching of six Sunday sermons in six different locations from a variety of texts.

Established Church, Sectarian People is remarkable in that it comprises information from two hundred contemporary manuscript and printed sources, and it clearly surpasses other accounts of the impact of dissenting itinerancy in rural England for the period. Yet Lovegrove's work necessarily suffers from the difficulties inherent in assessing genuine religious experiences. In properly utilizing the riches of his research the author regularly must admit that there are no simple equations, that ambiguity abounds, and that strong elements of subjectivity must

necessarily be considered. In the end one is reminded that while evangelism does lead to church growth, even the best motivated attempts to institutionalize the Christian witness are bound to fail.

John Powell
Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, MO

Lewis Sperry Chafer: Systematic Theology. Two volumes. By John F. Walvoord. Wheaton: Victor, 1988, 934 pp., \$37.95.

An artist traces another man's painting and paints the tracing with the same colors used in the original. Even though the brush strokes are noticeably different, he signs the work with the original artist's name and acknowledges his own involvement in the production as being merely that of placing a trimmer, more contemporary frame around the artist's work. Sound farfetched? That is essentially what we have in this work. The cover and title page name Chafer as author and Walvoord as editor. The foreword written by D. K. Campbell, however, claims that the actual writing was done by Walvoord. Most confusing.

A comparison with Chafer's own *Systematic Theology* shows at once that this is not a cut-and-paste condensation refitted with new headings and whatever transitional writing a condensation would require. Chafer's outline and divisions have largely been retained, but the writing is not his. Every sentence has been recast. The work claims to be an "abridged edition" of Chafer's *Systematic Theology*. But it is not an abridgment in the sense of an editing-down of Chafer's admittedly verbose and redundant style. Instead it is a rewriting that attempts to capture the essential sense and substance of Chafer. I find it most disconcerting that this "abridgment" is being sold as merely a condensation of Chafer. For example, the entry in the Christian Book Distributor's catalog reads in part: "Content is complete as only duplicate entries were edited from the 8-volume original." But, I repeat, Chafer did not author this work. Walvoord did. One might best think of the work as a paraphrase of Chafer's theology.

Let us look at two examples of parallel entries. Chafer contended that Adam was devoid of positive moral righteousness and thus was denied any opportunity of developing a "tested moral character" until he sinned (2. 202-203). Thus the fall was decreed by God as a didactic device by which man might attain learned virtue. Chafer concluded that "man must learn concerning both good and evil. He must realize the sinfulness of sin if he is to attain in any degree to the knowledge God possesses; but he cannot attain to such knowledge unless sin exists as a living reality which is ever demonstrating its sinful character. . . . If man is to attain to the knowledge of good and evil, there must be evil in the world with all its tragic effects as well as the prospect of divine judgment for sin" (2. 231-232). Walvoord retains the idea of a didactic theodicy and rewrites Chafer's conclusion in this way: "Man learns the reality of sin both from the suffering that it inflicts and from biblical revelation concerning the judgments God imposes on those who sin. There must be evil in the world if man is to attain the knowledge of good and evil" (1. 362).

Under the paragraph entitled "Systematic Theology Must Be Unabridged" Chafer claimed that as the astronomer or chemist would not think of working with only a portion of the available data, so systematic theology ought to be as comprehensive as any other science. He bemoans the fact that theologies often omit such topics as angelology, prophecy, typology, Christ's present ministry, the Christian life, the Pauline revelation concerning the Church, and "the dispensational program of the ages." In order to "hold the truth in its right perspective," then, one must include the dispensational program of God (1. 11-12). Walvoord's paragraph, although similar in intent, lacks the bite of the original: "Though the length of theological treatment may be restricted in order to bring it into the realm of comprehension, the length of treatment does not in itself prove that it is unabridged, but no important field of systematic theology should be left out. Too often essential areas of theology are either neglected or abridged with resulting failure to comprehend the wide expanse of divine truth" (1. 41).

Chafer has been thoroughly reworked here, but only at the verbal level. Walvoord's work is merely an attempt to cast Chafer's ideas in shorter form. In no way does it represent a development beyond Chafer. By looking at the work one would never know that there have been over four decades of growth in dispensationalist theology since Chafer wrote. Interestingly, the bibliographies at the end of each volume do not reflect this 1940s-theology-written-for-the-1980s approach. The majority of the works listed were written after Chafer's death in 1952. Among those works actually available to Chafer are several with which his corpus evidences no familiarity. Significantly, for all practical purposes the bibliographies are as extraneous to Walvoord's text as they are to Chafer's, as the former shows no substantive interaction with the majority of works mentioned.

One cannot but wonder why such a work was produced. The foreword lauds Chafer's *Systematic Theology* as a signal work in the history of theology. Whether this is a factual statement is not my concern here. My point is that one must not emend or recast the theological heroes of the past. Only Calvin was sufficiently competent to rework his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Who would presume to rewrite Barth's *Church Dogmatics*? The stated reason for this work's production is to renew interest in "this system of theology." In view of the present revisionist movement within dispensationalist circles we might refer to "this system" as classical dispensationalism. I would suggest that if Walvoord truly wants to revive interest in Chafer's brand of dispensationalism his goal would be better served by a reflective work on Chafer's contribution to American orthodoxy or an original statement of that theology rather than a verbal revision of forty-year-old articulations. This work does not address current concerns within dispensational theology at all. Nor does it present itself as an apologetic for classical dispensationalism. Rather, Walvoord proceeds—exactly as Chafer did before him—by assuming a particular brand of systematics as first-order theological business. The back jacket of Walvoord's work claims that Chafer "takes the Bible at its word, letting the Bible mold the theology, rather than the theological system forcing the Bible into its mold." Such statements cannot be taken seriously by any reader of Chafer's preface, or Walvoord's, because both posit the dispensational plan of the ages as the necessary assumption for systematics. The dispensationalist notion of historical compartmentalization is not presented as a thesis to be established but apodictically assumed as the necessary condition for doing theology. Exegesis plays second fiddle to the theological grid of "rightly dividing the Word of truth" within the Chafer-Walvoord model.

By borrowing so liberally from Chafer's outline and methodological commitments, Walvoord has unfortunately inherited many of Chafer's weaknesses as well. To me the most glaring example is an ecclesiology that is almost a nonecclesiology, one wherein the Ramistic dichotomization that characterizes classical dispensationalism is especially evident. Walvoord has almost more to say about Israel than about the Church within his ecclesiology. One senses that he is more concerned with what the Church is not than with what it is. Proceeding under Chafer's metaphysical distinction between Israel and the Church, Walvoord claims that the Church is not Israel, is not mentioned in the OT, is not earthly, and is not an organization within our world. The essential otherworldliness of classical dispensationalism's understanding of the Church is fully and unabashedly retained. Heavenly citizenship means nothing less than release from this-worldly concern (2. 282-283). A view that associates Israel with this-worldly realities and the Church with the transcendent realm only pours gasoline on the already flaming allegation that dispensationalism is at heart an anti-Church movement.

For all his shortcomings as a theologian, Chafer could write with color and a fair amount of passion—attributes sorely needed in theological writing. Unfortunately all of Chafer's quaint, common-sense-realistic analogies between the theologian and the natural scientist have been purged, even though the method that informed them remains. The dragons Chafer fought in the earlier decades of this century have been either declawed or declared extinct by noninclusion. Walvoord's version of Chafer's critique of amillennialism is devoid of the original's vitality, and his polemic against liberal theology does not convince me that he truly or adequately understands liberalism.

Walvoord is merely going through a checklist of data. A theological assertion is made, and then a list of proof texts is given. There is no apparent dismay over the sinfulness of man, no wonder and awe in the face of the divine promise of the future of redemption in Walvoord's work. There is only the lifeless interchange of item/citation, item/citation. Theology is an impersonal and passionless thing in Walvoord's hands. By "passion" I do not mean a teary-eyed emotionalism that keeps the theologian from being clearheaded, but rather an involvement with the text of Scripture and its message that demonstrates a depth of reflection and an awareness on the theologian's part that he is a participant in the drama of redemption.

To see classical dispensationalist theology at its best, one must read Darby or Chafer. Both men were warriors, and both were at their best when they had someone to fight. Walvoord is not battling any foes. He is not defending the faith against its detractors. Rather, he is trying to hold on to ground that may in fact be already lost. Employing "Chafer" as a brand name will not help his cause. In Walvoord's work Chafer's name no longer stands for the eight-volume *Systematic Theology* published in the 1940s, a work that most certainly has a place in the history of American orthodox thought. "Chafer" now means a particular theological style or combination of theological commitments. How easily a man and his work are reduced to adjectival status! Walvoord's need to rewrite Chafer speaks of an awareness of the historicity of the theological process, or at the very least an awareness that theology needs to be contextualized to the times to which it speaks. In principle, however, the retention of Chafer's name on the jacket denies that very commendable awareness.

There is little to recommend Walvoord's work to the reader. Chafer's own theology is superior in almost every way. This is not to say that Chafer was a great

theologian. He probably was not. The breadth of his reading was limited, and his theological abilities were no more than average. A mediocre theologian Chafer may have been, but he was never boring. Walvoord's rendition of a Chaferian theology retains the original's mediocrity but lacks its liveliness.

Michael D. Williams
Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

The Providence of God. By Benjamin Wirt Farley. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 257 pp., \$16.95.

The major feature of Farley's treatment of the doctrine of divine providence is the issue of the relationship between the sovereignty of God and human accountability, an age-long debate in the history of Christian thought. The opening two chapters introduce the topic by defining the doctrine of providence in its broader systematic-theological context, relating the work of providence to faith and revelation, the (electing) decree of God, and original creation. Chapters 3–10 trace the history of the doctrine of providence—the understanding of God's interaction with the world—from early to modern times, beginning with ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and concluding with contemporary process theology. The final chapter returns to a consideration of the cogency and relevance of the Reformed interpretation of divine providence. The important question here is which variety of Reformed theology the author defends and whether in fact it measures up to the Biblical teaching.

Along the way the reader will certainly find some helpful insights into Scripture as well as a number of strong criticisms of modernist theology in its more radical forms. This study, however, is not without serious problems of a philosophico-theological nature. Additionally there are a number of inconsistencies and contradictions in his analysis of historical theology, especially concerning the Protestant Reformers. Above all it would be a great mistake to regard Farley's interpretation of divine providence as reflecting Reformed catholic thinking, in that his views lean strongly in the direction of Barth and Brunner. The book suffers generally from a rather superficial reading of the source material and a limited and inadequate use of secondary literature. Its usefulness as a seminary or college text is therefore highly dubious.

Noting some of the particulars of Farley's argument, we observe that the doctrine of providence "belongs to the central faith of the Bible . . . to the sphere of the church's message, not simply to the sphere of theology" (p. 15). In the author's paraphrase of Brunner, "the providence of God is a biblical kerygma, not simply a kerygma of the church" (*ibid.*). This dichotomy between Biblical *kerygma* and Christian doctrine (i.e. theology) undermines the legitimacy and normativity of confessional and dogmatic theology. It wrongly implies that the proclamation of Biblical *kerygma* is somehow nondogmatic. In order to clarify and defend God's truth in each succeeding generation, systematic and confessional theology (including what Farley calls the "kerygma") is obliged to restate—i.e., reformulate—Biblical truth, nothing more and nothing less. To be sure, the Church is not infallible in its interpretative understanding of Scripture. (As a rule of faith, the confessional writings are subordinate to Scripture.) Even if one chooses to regard

Biblical *kérygma* in distinction from Christian doctrine as being the direct citing of Scriptural texts, its meaning is subject to theological interpretation. The idea of Biblical *kérygma* in distinction from dogmatics is pointless. Farley's use of the distinction suggests a faulty understanding of the nature and task of Christian dogmatics, and the effects of this are apparent throughout his study. In sum, writes Farley, "the providence of God is a doctrine of faith. It is neither a postulate of reason or science nor a philosophical position. It is a conviction of faith, based on revelation. It is confessional and practical. Its purposes are to challenge, comfort, and edify the believer in all that he thinks and does. In the Bible, these aspects always take precedence over the more formal, propositional, impersonal, and deductive nuances of the doctrine" (p. 18). The author's endorsement of a neo-orthodox conception of faith as subjective encounter would effectively destroy, not defend, Biblical (Reformed) faith. Fortunately Farley's study overall does greater service to Scripture than to this alien principle of interpretation.

Through his earlier work in translating Calvin's *Treatise Against the Libertines* Farley was brought to a reassessment of Calvin's doctrine of providence and predestination. His former misimpression gave way to a new appreciation of Calvin, so much so that his work would now serve "as a sort of guiding norm" in the present study (p. 11). Calvin "avoids purely rationalistic theological reductionism" (p. 154). Even though Zwingli in Farley's estimation did not espouse double predestination, the author finds himself uneasy with his position. Zwingli's interpretation of the all-encompassing decree of God is judged to be deterministic and one of the "excesses" of his theological formulations (p. 149). This accusation made against much of early Reformed teaching, especially that of orthodox scholasticism, gives clear indication of the direction Farley's analysis and critique would take. Only by reading Calvin through Barthian lenses is the author able to vindicate Calvin from the throes of rationalistic determinism, a virus Farley sees infecting much of sixteenth-century Reformed thinking. (Compare the careful and balanced analysis on Reformed scholasticism presented by R. A. Muller in his recent studies.) Further, Farley's liberal reading of such writers as Bultmann and L. Gilkey rests heavily on his own neo-orthodox conception of human faith and experience.

Even more contestable than Farley's assessment of Reformed orthodoxy is his opinion that "the rudiments of a Reformed doctrine of the providence of God lie deeply embedded in the Western philosophical tradition. There is little point," writes Farley, "in debating this" (p. 47). In the case of Irenaeus and Tertullian, however, Farley locates the strength of their position in their break from classical philosophy, in relying primarily on Biblical sources and formulating their views "in terms of biblical considerations and categories" (p. 83). In a Reformed understanding of these matters the radical discontinuity between Jerusalem and Athens must be consistently maintained.

These are but a few of the problems in Farley's theological critique of the Reformed interpretation of divine providence. A close reading of this work will leave the reader confused on many points in the author's thinking. With regard to typographical errors in the printed text the date of the Second Helvetic Confession on p. 161 should read "1566."

Mark W. Karlberg
Warminster, PA

Understanding the Trinity. By Alister E. McGrath. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, 154 pp., \$11.95.

The Trinity, long the central Christian mystery, has just as long been the central Christian mystification. The doctrine of the Trinity, as Brunner pointed out fifty years ago, is the chief example of a Christian heritage fallen on the hard times of the neglect of the laity. As engaging to theologians as it is offputting to laypeople, the average Christian is likely to agree with Kant's assertion that the doctrine of the Trinity matters not one whit for ethics. Whether three can be one or one three is without consequence for everyday moral, and even Christian, life.

McGrath's profoundly nimble volume recovers the lost relevance of the doctrine of the Trinity. It accomplishes this primarily by bracketing "the doctrine of" and leaving it to the professional theologians. An academic exercise, valuable and necessary as that may be, is not McGrath's point. Rather, it is "the experience of" the Trinity that McGrath urges upon his readers.

He refuses, however, to hide behind a positivism of revelation. Understanding that truly modern people will have taken their critiques of religion seriously, McGrath summarily and effectively dismantles the claims of Feuerbach, Marx and Freud against the holy. Their complaints appear lame next to McGrath's wilting logic. One could only ask that the Irishman McGrath had similarly rebuffed the Scotsman Hume.

The rubble of skepticism having been cleared, McGrath is ready to construct in brief compass a Biblical concept of God. Rejecting Tillich's argument for the compatibility of Biblical religion and ontological speculation, McGrath hews closely to the Reformation's *sola Scriptura*, no surprise in view of McGrath's credentials as a Luther scholar. "We are authorized," McGrath is convinced, "to use only certain models of God—those given in Scripture." Among the many models McGrath might have chosen, he finds five particularly compelling: God as shepherd, spirit, parent, light, rock. He suggests four others worthy of our pondering: God as king, friend, judge, fire. Taken together these are not so very far from the three recently proposed—lover, mother, friend—by S. McFague in her *Models of God*. Yet McGrath obviously rejects McFague's feminist exegesis and excesses.

The incarnation is for McGrath the central Biblical evidence for the Trinity. Because it is, one might have wished for obviously trinitarian events from Jesus' life to have received greater attention. Instead of polemicizing against modern theology (J. A. T. Robinson's *Honest to God* is a favorite target) and nineteenth-century idealist philosophy, McGrath might have devoted some space to explicating the baptism, transfiguration and passion of Jesus.

A few other glitches dot the pages. Buber's thought is appropriated in one place without mention of his being Jewish. What has always been a Christological formula—"prophet, priest, king"—is once called "Trinitarian." McGrath twice employs the "light as wave, also as particle" analogy, which is once too often. But these are trifles and quibbles. To the not overcrowded genre of lay theology, perhaps best exemplified by C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, one happily adds *Understanding the Trinity*. Best of all, McGrath is not stingy: He has written three other easily accessible works, one each on Jesus, the cross, and justification. For the specialist, the gifted young Oxford theologian has provided a raft of works in historical theology.

McGrath may or may not have set out to write lay theology. But he has endeavored, to great and wondrous effect, to write personal theology. This is not

suffocatingly subjective but is clarifying, alluring and endearing, not to McGrath but to the God whom he serves. McGrath's delicious store of literary anecdotes and scientific illustrations (he owns a doctorate in molecular biology) draws in the widest circle of readers. His warmth invites us to experience not merely the doctrine of the Trinity (although one so disposed will be equipped by his book) but nothing short of the fullness of divinity, the Triune God.

Roderick T. Leupp
Warner Pacific College, Portland, OR

Philosophy and the Christian Faith. Edited by Thomas V. Morris. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988, 300 pp., \$31.95.

Anyone with a philosophical bent of mind who has studied theology cannot but notice how each of the various branches of systematic theology fairly bristles with interesting and important philosophical issues. Unfortunately these sorts of issues have been largely ignored by contemporary philosophers, who have been content to leave them in the hands of theologians, who have in turn been often too ill-equipped or even uninterested to do them justice.

All that is changing. One of the most fascinating features of the recent upsurge in Christian philosophy of religion has been the incursion of Christian philosophers into fields normally reserved for the systematic theologian. The present volume, edited by an evangelical philosopher at the University of Notre Dame, brings together the papers presented at a 1985 NEH-funded conference at Notre Dame, which I was privileged to attend.

Notre Dame President Theodore Hesburgh, to whom this collection is dedicated, opened the conference by hailing it as a significant step forward on the part of Christian philosophers from reflection on a general theism to consideration of topics essential to a distinctively Christian theism. To someone familiar with traditional philosophical theology, the topics handled in this book by some of the world's finest Christian philosophers are downright shocking: R. Swinburne on "The Christian Scheme of Salvation," W. Wainwright on "Original Sin," E. Stump on "Atonement according to Aquinas," M. Adams on "Separation and Reversal in Luke-Acts," W. Alston on "The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit," R. Adams on "Christian Liberty," N. Kretzmann on "Warring against the Law of My Mind: Aquinas on Romans 7," N. Wolterstorff on "Suffering Love," P. van Inwagen on "And Yet They Are Not Three Gods But One God," J. Ross on "Eschatological Pragmatism."

In his delightful introduction to the book, Morris chastises the currently fashionable "theological anti-realism," which eschews metaphysical and doctrinal truth in favor of nonpropositional, experiential religious models. In one sparkling passage Morris observes that although theologians intone, almost deferentially, the names of Hume and Kant in explaining the death of traditional theology, they never explain which arguments of Hume and Kant are supposed to have had such devastating effect: "In fact, I must confess to never having seen in the writings of any contemporary theologian the exposition of a single argument from either Hume or Kant . . . which comes anywhere near to demolishing . . . traditional theistic metaphysics" (pp. 3-4). Theologians who decry metaphysics have themselves been "constrained by a naturalistic or materialist metaphysic alien to the gospel" (p. 7). In a "remarkable turn of affairs," theologians have on philosophical grounds

been abandoning theological realism just at the time that philosophers of religion have turned to its defense (p. 2). Quoting the axiom that "a little philosophy is a dangerous thing," Morris believes that this divergence of opinion between contemporary philosophers and theologians is due in part to the fact that "the theologians have had a dangerous amount of philosophy in the course of their theological training" (p. 8). Evangelical theologians should themselves heed Morris' advice: "If Christian thinkers do not, as part of their theological work, seek to develop and refine suitable philosophical tools for the expression of their faith, they inevitably just inherit their philosophical assumptions and dispositions from the culture around them" (p. 7).

The lesson of this book goes beyond that, however. The essays show, I think, how badly Christian theologians and philosophers need each other as dialogue partners. I came away from the conference convinced that Christian philosophers are themselves generally too ill-equipped in the areas of Biblical and systematic theology to handle alone the task of elucidating Christian doctrine adequately. (A notable exception is Adams, who may serve well as a model of the philosopher-theologian.) Some of the essays are stained with heterodoxy and bad theology. To give just a couple of examples, Wainwright's essay, while defending our being held liable for Adam's failure in terms of bearing certain consequences of it, nevertheless guts the doctrine of original sin by arguing that we cannot share in the guilt of Adam's sin. Or again, the essay by Stump, herself a gracious Christian who radiates Christ, is in effect a rejection of the penal theory of the atonement—which I take to best capture the teaching of Paul—on the basis of Enlightenment-style reasoning that it would be immoral to punish an innocent person for someone else's sin. It is a shame that the responses read at the conference to the papers were not also included in the volume, for some of these incisively pointed out such shortcomings. But better still would be to involve some conservative theologians in the dialogue.

Still, we may hope, such dialogue is precisely what this book may inspire. Theologians need to be aware of the philosophical problems at least in the areas in which they teach and study, and this collection will be a very helpful guide.

William Lane Craig

Practicing Christianity. By Margaret R. Miles. New York: Crossroad, 1988, 207 pp., \$19.95. *Speak That We May Know.* By Justus George Lawler. Bloomington: Meyer-Stone, 1988, 96 pp., \$7.95 paper.

Miles' book is a survey of the schools of spirituality in Christianity from an historical theologian's point of view. In the first part of her book Miles discusses the metaphors of Christian spiritual life: the imitation of Christ, a pilgrimage, and ascending a ladder. In the second part she discusses the techniques of spiritual development: asceticism, worship and sacraments, service, meditation and contemplation. In the third part Miles deals with relationships and the paradox of joy and suffering. As such the book makes for a thorough study of the history of spiritual theology that can be used in seminary classes and is practical enough for use in a pastoral setting.

The book also delves into the place of women in the history of spiritual theology: the Church's paradoxical views of the status of women, the tendency to

equate women with men's projections of lust, temptation and weakness, of equating women with the physical and men with the spiritual and the theological contradictions this tendency engenders, etc.

Miles is a true historical theologian who shows the development of theology not as a neat progression from one body of doctrine to another but of conflicting schools of thought heaped one on top of another. She challenges the reader to understand our Church's past in the context of the past and not to read our own modern prejudices into it. The book is readable, enjoyable, prodding and yet affirming. As a history of spiritual theology it shows how spirituality developed in the centuries since NT times and provides a bridge between the past and present.

Lawler's volume is written more from a Roman Catholic point of view. Whereas Miles' book is from a truly ecumenical perspective, Lawler speaks of spirituality from his own tradition. The book is interesting, however, in that Lawler attempts to show how language colors one's perception of God, the world and existence in the manner of an intellectual/mental lens. In so doing Lawler demonstrates that he has a serious background both in the philosophy of language and in classical languages. Unfortunately he does not go far enough with this very interesting and potentially useful approach, for he also attempts to be "pastoral" in order to make the book palatable for a lay audience. The result is that Lawler becomes bogged down in "consciousness-raising" and New Age-style pop psychology, which makes for a curious blend of old-style Roman Catholic philosophical reasoning and a post-Vatican II approach that tries too hard to be relevant and modern.

Despite this book's problems, I would recommend it for use by a daring, innovative seminary professor who might want to give his or her students some insight into the relationship between language and philosophical/theological reasoning. But the professor's students would need some familiarity with Latin. This is not intended to be a criticism, however, but as a simple statement of fact. Having translated Biblical and theological material from Hebrew, Greek and Latin into contemporary English, I am all too aware of the problems of language, translation and interpretation, and it is well that theological students become aware of the impact of language on theological understanding. Lawler's book provides a pleasant enough introduction to this facet of divinity.

It would appear from reading Lawler's book, however, that he also intended it to provide the reader with some pastoral, personal advice on how to develop one's own spiritual relationship with God. While this is a laudable motive, Lawler is far more successful as a linguist than he is as a retreat director. All too often Lawler becomes troubled with the need to coin a phrase as a label for an abstract idea and ends up spending too much time trying to define the terms he had just invented rather than trying to illustrate his ideas with simple and effective examples from everyday life.

Another problem with Lawler's book is its specialist's approach to Roman Catholic liturgical terms and usages. Referring to liturgical terms to identify various prayers and parts of the body of worship material is a standard practice in liturgical studies, but it can be tough going for the nonspecialist. Lawler is presuming that his reader is a layperson, knowledgeable in Latin and liturgics as well as in Roman Catholic philosophical theology.

In the beginning of his book, Lawler states that he is presuming that his reader is on a spiritual quest and thus uses the pilgrimage/ascent model to which Miles refers. The book then digresses into philology.

What concerns me the most about Lawler's book is his failure to apply his points about spirituality to pastoral situations. Those of us who have served the

people of God in the context of a parochial ministry, institutional chaplaincy or a similar field know that for an idea to be good it must not only sound good but also work. Lawler simply does not provide enough examples from experience.

As theological philology, Lawler's book is to be recommended. As a study of spiritual theology, however, the book has serious deficiencies.

Wayne W. Gau

Community of St. Columba, The Celtic Evangelical Church, Honolulu, HI

Christian Spirituality: The Essential Guide to the Most Influential Spiritual Writings of the Christian Tradition. Edited by Frank N. Magill and Ian P. McGreal. San Francisco: Harper, 1988, 694 pp., \$34.95.

This well-organized and handsomely produced book discusses in chronological order 125 leading works of Christian spirituality from the second-century fathers to the present. The treatment of each work follows a consistent plan, which includes a summary of the life and contributions of the writer, identification of the nature of the work, and the date when the work was written. This is followed by a brief listing of the major theses of the writing, a useful feature that enables the reader to quickly identify topics of special interest. There follows a more detailed summary, typically in three to five pages, of the content of the spiritual classic under consideration. The treatment concludes with a list of recommended reading, including primary texts and important secondary literature.

Some of the spiritual classics featured in the book include *Mystical Theology* by Dionysius, *Pastoral Care* by Gregory the Great, *On Loving God* by Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Mind's Road to God* by Bonaventura, *The Fire of Love* by R. Rolle, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, *The Freedom of a Christian* by Martin Luther, *Dark Night of the Soul* by John of the Cross, *Interior Castle* by Teresa of Avila, *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence, *Mysticism* by E. Underhill, and *The Pursuit of God* by A. W. Tozer. The vast majority of authors treated represent the broad orthodox tradition within Christendom, but a few, like R. W. Emerson, H. Bushnell, A. Schweitzer and R. Panikkar speak for the liberal or humanistic wing of the Church. I believe that true Christian spirituality flows from a Biblical recognition of human sinfulness and redemption through the resurrected Christ. Hence the contributions of the latter writers must be judged of lesser value.

The book succeeds in its aim of highlighting the contents of the great spiritual classics of the Church. Evangelical Christians, who often are unfamiliar with the long history of patristic and medieval spirituality, will find this work an invaluable resource for the spiritual journey. Its publication is timely, for a growing number of evangelicals now see that evangelicalism, with its strong emphasis on the objective and rational dimensions of the faith, has tended to neglect the subjective and mystical realities of Christian experience. In retrospect it appears that the Reformation, with its legitimate protest against the theological and ecclesiastical excesses of Rome, scuttled the long history of authentic spirituality embedded in patristic and medieval Christianity. In his essay entitled "Evangelical Spirituality: A Church Historian's Perspective" (*JETS* [March 1988] 25-35) R. Lovelace correctly judges that evangelicalism needs to enlarge its partial model of spirituality with ascetic and mystical insights from pre-Reformation Christian experience. I believe

that in our day the Holy Spirit is leading believers in Christ to a deeper experience of the reality of the living God. An important component of this renewal is heightened understanding of how believers of old came to know God more authentically through prayer, the Scriptures, fasting, and other spiritual disciplines. *Christian Spirituality* renders the invaluable service of bringing together into a single volume some of the greatest classics of Christian spirituality, both ancient and modern. Here is a resource that will enable the Christian scholar to bring intellectual notions about God down to the heart as lived, experiential realities. This book will also provide the pastor with rich insight into the classical spiritual disciplines and will assist ordinary believers to deepen and enrich their spiritual lives. In sum, this book is a must for every Christian who seeks to progress on the spiritual journey.

Bruce Demarest
Denver Seminary, Denver, CO

Roman Catholicism: A Contemporary Evangelical Perspective. Edited by Paul G. Schrottenboer. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988, 99 pp., \$5.95 paper.

This evaluation of Roman Catholicism is not an individual effort but the product of a commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. The advantages of a broad-based evangelical evaluation of key Roman Catholic beliefs and practices far outweigh the disadvantage of a document that reads like the product of a committee.

Despite a sharp critique of much post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism, this document shows a greater (although cautious) openness toward Catholicism than evangelicals have shown historically. According to the commission we need fear neither dialogue nor confrontation. The appropriateness of each depends upon the situation in which evangelicals find themselves. Evangelicals and Roman Catholics worship the same Lord and can share fellowship on the local level. In areas of social ethics evangelicals and Catholics agree on several important issues. But in some parts of the world Catholic social dominance makes evangelicals second-class citizens. Our tolerant religious situation is not found in many other parts of the world.

This book deals with nine specific areas of contemporary Catholic teaching. It evaluates them in terms of official documents, primarily those from Vatican II, but notes that at points Catholicism remains more exclusivistic than the Vatican II documents. It ignores areas where Catholicism might be more open. It also is more concerned with points of evangelical-Roman Catholic disagreement than with Catholic teaching *per se*. Despite acknowledgment that Rome has changed, the document plays down the extent and depth of that change.

The document discusses the Catholic Church and other churches, religious liberty, Mariology, Church authority, papal infallibility, theological liberalism, justification, the sacraments, and the mission of the Church. Each chapter is brief and generally accurate. Where it sees Catholicism taking a more Biblical stance, the document recognizes it. Although the document recognizes diversity within Catholicism, I am unsure that it recognizes its extent and depth.

This document makes clear that serious differences remain between evangelicals and Roman Catholics in many of the areas important to both groups, differences that hamper both fellowship and cooperation. One key difference cited by the

report is the continued Catholic dilution of Biblical authority despite an increased appreciation for the Bible. Nonetheless Roman Catholics are Christians, despite serious flaws in their belief and practice.

At several points the report presents a different understanding of Catholicism than do current Catholic documents. Whereas Catholicism now is coming to accept salvation in non-Christian religions, the report is concerned with the Catholic Church's claim to be the true Church. Vatican II made a conscious effort to play down Mariology, but the report emphasizes the threat of Mariology to the sufficiency of Jesus. This is a problem, but more in popular practice than in doctrine. The report also criticizes the objectivist understanding of the sacraments, but Catholicism has begun to reappraise the role of personal faith in receiving grace. The report recognizes the place of faith in terms of a new understanding of justification and rightly points out that Catholic and Protestant views of justification remain significantly different.

A formal assessment of the Roman Catholic Church by such a body as the World Evangelical Fellowship is a significant action. The positive conclusions it draws, although limited, provide a basis for evangelicals to reassess Catholicism in terms of informal fellowship and cooperation and encourage us to read and hear what the Catholic Church says about itself. This is particularly important today because the Roman Catholic Church is a church in turmoil, a church seeking its direction for the future. The contradictory and incomplete results of Vatican II permit different factions to pull Catholicism in different directions. The path the Catholic Church finally chooses will affect not only the future of Catholicism but will have an impact on all other branches of Christianity.

The conclusions of the WEF are important, but they are the compromise product of a committee and are deliberately limited in their scope. We need further evangelical studies of Catholicism. Some should deal in detail with topics covered in this study; others should deal more broadly with Catholic beliefs and practices beyond those considered by the WEF. In both cases, official documents need to be supplemented by the views of leading Catholic theologians and officials, Vatican pronouncements, and statements from the various national councils of bishops.

Those looking for a considered evangelical critique of Roman Catholicism would do well to start with this book. The annotated bibliography offers a few further readings but is both incomplete and dated. The index lists primarily persons and documents, but the table of contents and the specificity of the chapters compensate for this weakness. In conjunction with the Vatican II documents and a text like M. Hellwig's *Understanding Catholicism* (Paulist, 1981), this book can be a useful text for a course on Roman Catholicism.

Douglas McCready
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Sacramental Theology: A General Introduction. By Kenan B. Osborne. New York: Paulist, 1988, 154 pp., \$7.95 paper.

R. P. McBrien wrote that the theological principle most characteristic of Roman Catholicism and most central to its identity is that of sacramentality: "The Catholic vision sees God in and through all things: other people, committees, movements, events, places, objects, the world at large, the whole cosmos. The visible, the tangible, the finite, the historical—all these are actual or potential

carriers of the divine presence. *Indeed, it is only in and through these material realities that we can even encounter the invisible God*" (*Catholicism*, p. 1180 [italics mine]). McBrien goes on to declare that Jesus Christ is the sacrament of our encounter with God, the Church the sacrament of our encounter with Christ, and the traditional seven sacraments the "signs and instruments" that express our "ecclesial encounter with Christ" (ibid.).

Osborne's volume follows up and amplifies McBrien's insight, and as such it is an important work. Like McBrien, Osborne notes that the Roman Catholic Church has added two more sacraments to the seven we know since the Council of Trent. This causes problems in three ways, since Trent defined sacraments as external signs instituted by Christ that convey grace and limited them in number to no more or less than seven. (1) Historically, the seven cannot all be traced to Christ himself. Only two are mentioned in the NT as commanded by him, and the others were gradually added from the second to the twelfth centuries. (2) Adding Christ and the Church as sacraments increases the number to nine. (3) The Council of Trent pronounced a curse on those who say that there are more or less than seven, and therefore those who enumerated sacraments before the twelfth century and those who have done so since Vatican II are anathema. Yet, Osborne observes, in our day no one has called down a curse on Vatican II or on post-Vatican II theologians.

These problems call for some fancy theological footwork, which Osborne attempts. Tracing the history of the problem, he notes that in the NT there were only two sacraments, and no definition or "overarching term" referred to both baptism and the eucharist (the Lord's supper). Then from the second to the twelfth centuries five more were added (penance through marriage). Gradually the now familiar number and definition came to be accepted and was made official by the Council of Trent, with appropriate anathemas. Now there is the desire to include these additional two—the Church, as a "basic" sacrament sanctioned specifically by Vatican II, and Christ as the "primordial" sacrament, not sanctioned as yet by a council or pope but a live topic among theologians.

The problem, of course, is that Christ as a sacrament does not especially fit the approved Tridentine definition. In what sense is Christ "instituted by Christ"? (As a matter of fact the last five of the traditional seven do not fit historically either, Osborne admits). Osborne suggests what amounts to theological squirming: Redefine "sacrament" to include these others.

Another problem is the seeming absolutist stance of Trent. The seven are *de fide definata* ("to be believed as defined"). Osborne seeks to escape this by moving to a higher order of abstraction. *De fide definata*, he seems to say, must mean "accept the teaching authority (magisterium) of the Church, whatever it is at the moment. Do not challenge it. Of course, the Church may change its mind in the future on what is infallible. But do not say now that what the Church might later say is wrong is already wrong, on pain of excommunication from the Church. Love the Church (he implies) more than you do (unchangeable, eternal) truth."

Another problem is that Osborne's discussion of the sacramentality of Jesus Christ moves toward Nestorianism. It is Jesus' earthly, visible humanity during certain specific years on earth that is the sacrament (sign and symbol) of the "reality," his deity. He thus seems to separate Christ in his personal manifestation into two persons. His motivation is good—to avoid Arian subordinationism—but his drive to extend the concept of sacrament to Christ and the Church gets him into trouble.

The author feels that the new movement in sacramental theology will help ecumenical discussion. But in so doing he tends to blur differences between Luther

and Calvin on baptism and the Lord's supper and overlook nonsacramental views of Zwinglians, Baptists and others.

Osborne's work is well written and informative and contains sections with which the heart of an evangelical can resonate. His discussion of Jesus Christ as the source of Christian spirituality is one such section. But his emphasis on the magisterium of the Roman Church reveals that this position has not changed from the late nineteenth century.

Gilbert Brewster Weaver

John Brown University, Siloam Springs, AR

Speak Up for Just War or Pacifism: A Critique of the United Methodist Bishops' Pastoral Letter "In Defense of Creation." By Paul Ramsey, with an epilogue by Stanley Hauerwas. University Park/London: Pennsylvania State University, 1988, 214 pp., \$24.95/\$12.95.

Sent to the publisher just weeks before his death, this work concludes Ramsey's career of demanding clear thinking in Christian ethics. Assuming that the highest respect he could pay the bishops of his United Methodist Church was the scholarly exposition of their statements, he analyzed "In Defense of Creation" with great care. Unfortunately for the bishops and characteristically for Ramsey, he did not hesitate to expose their statement as theologically incompetent and illiterate as well as self-contradictory. But with grace he attributes the problem finally to the professors of a generation ago who should have taught future bishops basic Christian theology and ethics.

The bishops' statement was predictable from an old-line church. With a generally liberal political stance they sometimes used just-war criteria, sometimes pacifist terms, to argue that nuclear war and weapons are immoral. Though both the just-war tradition and the pacifist tradition have had many worthy and respectable representatives, the bishops seemed unaware that the two theological perspectives on war are contradictory. The result of this basic confusion is theological mush. In the words of Hauerwas' epilogue: "In trying to go beyond pacifism and just war, the Methodist Bishops' position concerning Christian social responsibility is a hopeless muddle" (p. 167).

Yet this muddle has some shape, part of which comes from the bishops' assumptions. As utopians who have had "too many nips from the flask of the Enlightenment" (p. 4), they think we can bring "the Heavenly City down to the level of historical possibility" (p. 5). The achieving of a just and durable world peace is seen as a human possibility, not an eschatological gift. Like many social schemes that neglect original sin, the bishops assume that an institutional, social-works righteousness is possible.

A second part of the shape comes from the bishops' prime ethical norm: survival. Though Jesus talked about laying down one's life and taking up the cross, survivalist rhetoric is popular today. And it made its way to the heart of the bishops' teaching. They believe that the nuclear threat to human survival will force mankind to give up its violent ways.

In contrast to this muddle, Ramsey articulates a just-war theory and asks Hauerwas to argue pacifism. The result is an interesting dialogue.

Ramsey claims that two standards must be met for war to be justifiable: discrimination and proportionality. Discrimination requires "the moral immunity of noncombatants from intended direct attack." Proportionality requires "that cost

in destruction accepted and exacted be warranted by benefits there is reasonable expectation of gaining" (p. 197). Because these standards apply to threatened acts as well as real acts, current American nuclear policy is immoral. But nuclear policy could be reformulated by these standards to be ethically acceptable, while reducing the chance of war and creating a more credible deterrent.

Though Ramsey occasionally wanders from his topic and sometimes uses overly complicated terminology, I heartily recommend the book. It introduces both just-war and pacifist theory via able representatives, it takes up an important current issue, and it exposes the popular fallacy represented by the bishops. Such discussion may contribute to policy improvements. It also shows that to take up issues of society ably, Christians must grasp the terms and the perspectives developed in our tradition.

Yet I have some reservations about Ramsey's writing. At times I wonder how much of the Biblical story he really believes and how much he sees as mere "mythopoetic wisdom." I question his grasp of parts of Scripture, as when he compares Isaiah to the "enlightenment peacemakers" he castigates (p. 194). And at times it seems that he sees just war and pacifism as representing the Christian perspective equally well. He asked Hauerwas to contribute not simply because he was a gentleman but because he was tempted by pacifism. Yet it is a good read.

Thomas K. Johnson
Hope Presbyterian Church (PCA), Iowa City, IA

Tensions in Moral Theology. By Charles E. Curran. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1988, 214 pp., \$19.95.

Many know Curran as the former professor at Catholic University who was disciplined by the Vatican for his position on sexual ethics. What possible value could a book by such a liberal Roman Catholic have for evangelicals? Although nearly a third of Curran's book is about the Vatican's action against him, the remaining chapters survey Catholic teaching on a wide range of modern ethical concerns. Clearly written and well organized, this volume will help non-Catholics understand where many American Catholics are headed in their ethical teaching and practice. Curran is fair and restrained in presenting the views of his opponents. After explaining his dissent from the Roman Catholic Church, he tells us why he nonetheless remains a Catholic. This section highlights the fundamental differences between Catholic and Protestant approaches to Christianity.

The chapters are self-contained and can be read in any order. Curran discusses social and sexual ethics, the American bishops' letters on war and peace and the economy, the methodology of Catholic moral theology, academic freedom, and the role of individual conscience. Most of the articles deal in some way with his difficulties with the hierarchy, but that is not the tension to which the title refers. There is a tension in being American and Catholic, says Curran. It is legitimate and should be creative. He fears that the current tension is more negative than creative and thinks it will become worse in the short term. Curran notes that his conflict with the hierarchy has greatly increased his influence as a moral theologian. This highlights the problem of trying to correct erroneous teaching without attracting others to the disputed teaching.

Curran's challenge to the Roman Catholic Church appears on the surface to have much in common with evangelical concerns. He wants to modify the traditional natural-law base in a more Biblical direction. He also argues for the need to make Jesus understandable to each new generation, something he terms "creative fidelity." He draws on the concepts of historical consciousness and cultural relativity and Biblical-critical conclusions to implement this fidelity. The resulting conclusions have more in common with modern secularism than with evangelicalism (or traditional Catholicism).

Curran does not offer his controversial views on sexual morality in this book. His concern is more with the presuppositions and methods involved in moral theology today. He says that most Catholic moral theologians disagree with traditional Church teaching, so Vatican II's failure to deal with sexuality makes any attempt to alter the tradition first of all a matter of ecclesiology. Official refusal to change the Church's teaching on sexual ethics derives from a misunderstanding of the limits of the teaching office. Curran argues that there is room for dissent within a broader unity, but he suggests no limit. He reiterates the distinction between infallible and authoritative noninfallible teaching in the Catholic Church and fears that Cardinal Ratzinger is trying to blur this distinction. Curran recognizes that the conflict results from the clash of two conflicting worldviews, which he calls classicist and historical consciousness and which use sharply divergent methodologies.

Curran has spoken and written frequently about academic freedom in recent years. He argues that theologians ought to enjoy a relatively independent and cooperative role in relation to the magisterium, not a derivative and delegated one. His is a scholarly discipline, not one of proclaiming and protecting the faith, says Curran. He argues that academic freedom benefits the Catholic Church by giving expression to alternatives to the tradition. Because not all alternatives deserve expression, Curran suggests an academic review process instead of the current pastoral review. Catholic academics are more liberal than the hierarchy and the people in the pews, however, so Curran's proposal would eventually make similar positions the norm in Catholic academia.

Curran has written a book that will help Catholics and non-Catholics understand better the current conflict within American Catholicism. It is clearly written, and the chapter titles are self-explanatory. The notes for each chapter provide a list of additional readings for each topic. The book includes a complete index. Anyone seeking to understand the concerns and presuppositions of Catholic progressives could do worse than begin with this volume.

Douglas McCreedy
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Peace and Revolution: The Moral Crisis of American Pacifism. By Guenter Lewy. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988, 283 pp., n.p.

"During the last twenty years, American pacifism has undergone a series of far-reaching ideological changes that have brought all four major pacifist organizations into the camp of the political Left. The American Friends Service Committee [AFSC], the Fellowship of Reconciliation [FOR], and the War Resisters League today are an integral part of the New Left—an amorphous collection of political

groups who regard the United States as an imperialist nation responsible for the poverty of the Third World and who blame America for starting and maintaining a dangerous arms race that threatens nuclear catastrophe. Members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom have assumed the posture of Communist fellow travelers who laud the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union and defend its foreign policy at every step" (pp. 236-237).

Thus Lewy summarizes his impressive and assiduously documented intellectual history of modern American pacifism. Because his story is not well known and might seem surprising, he spared no effort to detail the loss of the moral high ground by the leading pacifist organizations and their descent into half-baked Marxism. Though a few pacifist leaders flirted with various forms of socialism prior to 1965, the organizations retained their integrity in refusing to bear arms or sanction any war while respecting the democratic process. Despite a few lonely voices of internal dissent, the pacifists became a victim of the Vietnam war and continue to endorse all sorts of violent leftists while rejecting the democratic process.

This book should interest theologians for several reasons. (1) The FOR claimed to be a Christian organization and AFSC is church-sponsored, yet they became prisoners of the left. In light of similar trends in the WCC, the NCC and liberation theology, it shows the need for a theological critique of Marxism and a more adequate Christian social theory. (2) It shows how easily an ethical program (pacifism) is politicized and falsified when stripped from its theological roots. (3) It shows inherent weaknesses in pacifism. Because it locates evil in society and not in the person it leans toward Marxism, which does the same. Because pacifists seek a political kingdom of God prior to the *parousia*, they are easily tempted by Marx. In contrast just-war Christians recognize the limited presence of the kingdom and seek a political realm that merely restrains sin, not one that aims to introduce utopia. (4) It shows that church social agencies (e.g. AFSC) can be radically out of touch with the rank and file of the Church. This may be due to the secularization of educated elites due to the loss of a Christian mind. (5) It should warn us that Christian social concerns must not become captive to the right as they have been to the left. I get worried when I hear that the Bible is opposed to gun control or that if I am really a Christian I will contribute to Oliver North's defense fund.

I wish Lewy had set his study in the context of modern secularization. I wish he had taken a look at the theological orthodoxy or lack thereof among those who drifted toward the left. And I wish he had emphasized that pacifist statements prior to 1965 tend to be set in utilitarian rather than deontological terms, which may leave one open to Marxist ideas.

Nevertheless this is important and often interesting reading for anyone concerned with current American culture. And it is essential for anyone seeking to develop or criticize pacifist thought.

Thomas K. Johnson
Hope Presbyterian Church (PCA), Iowa City, IA

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