

Book Reviews

Preaching with Bold Assurance. By Hershael W. York and Bert Decker. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003, 275 pp., \$21.99.

“What is the most important thing in communicating—content or delivery?” The answer is an emphatic “Both” according to Hershael York and Bert Decker’s *Preaching with Bold Assurance*. York serves as Victor and Louise Lester Professor of Christian Preaching at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Decker is chairman and founder of Decker Communications, Inc. The book is somewhat of a sequel to the two authors’ first project together, *Speaking with Bold Assurance* (Broadman & Holman, 2001).

While much contemporary preaching theory pays lip-service to the need for both textual integrity and communication skill, the modern practice of preaching appears to worship the latter while giving only token acknowledgement to the former. In other words, much contemporary preaching is functionally *non-biblical*. At the same time, the often criticized practice of expository preaching is long overdue for a reformation from simply imparting information. Quite possibly the “95 Theses” for such a change can be found in this engaging book that calls for a wedding of sound biblical exposition with culturally relevant communication technique.

Shunning the tendency of preachers to simply fill their listeners’ heads with information, the authors cham-

panion for proclamation of the Word that grips people’s souls and motivates them to conform to the will of God. “Our approach to the Bible and to preaching,” they say, “has application as its ultimate goal.” Consequently, sermons must be custom-built to change lives.

Such an approach places dual emphasis on exposition and communication in order to conform listeners to the will of God. The authors refuse to allow preachers to choose between being either biblical or effective. They refreshingly call upon them to be both. Correcting the myth that expository preaching is one among many sermon forms, this book describes it as “the end result of explaining and applying the meaning of the text.” In other words, it is the kind of preaching that shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it to their lives.

Lamenting the rarity of true expositors in contemporary pulpits, York and Decker begin by calling preachers back to preparing sermons that are saturated with the Word of God so that they capitalize on its inherent power to change lives. To assist with such a task, the book provides extensive help for outlining and diagramming passages in order to engage the biblical text and allow it to drive the sermon.

After laying the foundation for exposition, the authors then provide practical help in developing the skill of sermon crafting, contending that the preacher must be committed both to biblical truth and also to culturally

relevant styles of communication. The book guides preachers in the technical aspects of building sermons that connect with contemporary culture, addressing such expected topics as sermon outlines, illustrations, introductions, and conclusions. What separates York and Decker’s treatment of such topics apart from that of other homiletical works is the provision of numerous practical helps, clear examples, and specific references to relevant issues germane to the respective subjects.

Building on principles of sound exposition and effective sermon-building, *Preaching with Bold Assurance* then guides the preacher in the practice of skillful sermon delivery. The authors emphasize the need for the preacher to establish trust with the congregation by utilizing both verbal and visual communication. This contention is not a call for preachers to stoop to “selling the Gospel,” but it is a warning that people may not even hear the Gospel if they do not find preachers credible. Listeners “must have an emotional response to the evangelist before they can ever hear the evangel.”

Preaching with Bold Assurance is an enjoyable read because of the authors’ use of numerous personal illustrations and practical examples. One particular quality that sets it apart from many preaching works is that the writers cut through the chase of homiletical theory and jargon. The book is simple and to the point. Additionally, York and Decker do a magnificent job of

answering common objections to expository preaching and dispelling familiar myths related to its practice.

While one must be picky to identify weaknesses in the work, a humble attempt at objectivity brings two areas to the surface. First, while the authors do an outstanding job of distinguishing between preachers who have a working knowledge of the biblical languages and those who do not, the amount of time spent on diagramming passages is quite extensive in comparison to treatments of other subjects. However, this weightiness is likely due to York's background in New Testament studies, an emphasis which certainly is welcome to the serious student of biblical exposition. Second, the use of the Decker Grid System in crafting the sermon is somewhat laborious and appears at times to be forced on the process of biblical exposition. Consequently, the approach may limit the sermon in some cases from being entirely text-driven.

While the authors' first work was more Decker and less York, the current title is more York and less Decker. Consequently, the first book was driven predominantly by general communication theory. Pleasantly, this recent release is driven mainly by solid expositional and homiletical theory, making it a much more relevant tool for those commissioned with the preaching task. This work will serve well the serious preacher, teacher of preaching, and student of preaching in their pursuit of the much-needed synthesis of biblical exposition and relevant communication theory.

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Jewish Law in Gentiles Churches: Halakah and the Beginning of Christian Public Ethics. By Markus Bockmuehl. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, xvi + 314 pp. \$29.99 paper.

This work by Markus Bockmuehl was published by T. & T. Clark in 2000 and has now been issued by Baker Academic. Most of the chapters in the book were published earlier in journals or books containing a collection of essays. Issuing these articles here along with two new chapters is useful since the essays receive thereby a wider distribution and all of the essays examine the issue of law and ethics at some level.

The book is divided into three sections. The first part examines Christianity in the land of Israel with chapters on the halakah and ethics in the Jesus tradition, Matthew's divorce texts, the Jesus logion, "let the dead bury their dead," and James, Israel, and Antioch. The first chapter sets the stage, reviewing Jesus' moral teaching relative to Jewish halakah. Bockmuehl maintains that Jesus' view of Torah was remarkably Jewish. Like the rabbis he erected a "fence" around Torah, even if it was emphatically scriptural. At the end of the day, according to Bockmuehl, Jesus affirms the authority of the Torah.

Bockmuehl overstates his case, though he rightly observes that others have exaggerated the discontinuity between Jesus and Torah. The salvation historical context of the Gos-

pels is ignored, so that we have an isolated treatment instead of setting Jesus' teachings on the law into the flow of the biblical narrative. Bockmuehl also minimizes Jesus' messianic authority over Torah in texts like Mark 2:23-28. Jesus' deliberate healing on the Sabbath points towards a new stance on the law. The religious leaders did not view the controversies between Jesus and themselves merely as interpretive debates over halakah. They discerned that Jesus was introducing something new relative to Torah. This is evident in Jesus' assertion that the temple tax no longer applies to him or his followers (Matt 17:24-27)—a text not even mentioned by Bockmuehl. Nor is it apposite to say that Jesus erected a "fence" around Torah, for the term is quite misleading as a designation of Jesus' approach to Scripture since it could be argued that he tears down any such fence. Jesus does not explicitly abolish Torah, but his behavior on the Sabbath, his comments on cleanliness, and his ignoring of purity rules (touching the dead and lepers) all point in this direction. Bockmuehl mistakenly limits Jesus' touching of the dead and lepers to the level of halakah, noting that purity laws were suspended when the impure are transformed by Jesus' touch. Such actions, however, also suggest a new relationship to the law, in which Jesus as Messiah has the authority to interpret the law since it is fulfilled in him (Matt 5:17-48).

Such a lengthy discussion of the first chapter is warranted since it sets the stage for the remainder of the book. Bockmuehl's study of Matthew's divorce texts investigates such

against the background of Jewish law. He canvasses pre-rabbinic tradition that *required* divorce for sexual infidelity. He suggests that the exception clauses in Matthew fit with this tradition, thus prohibiting conjugal union after the marriage has been defiled by *porneia*. Bockmuehl helpfully situates Jesus' words on divorce within Jewish exegetical tradition, but he appears to go too far in suggesting that Jesus ratifies rabbinic interpretation. The Matthean exception *permits* but does not mandate (or even necessarily encourage) divorce for sexual infidelity. Hence, Jesus' view, though similar in some respects to his Jewish contemporaries, differs at a significant point.

In the third chapter Bockmuehl considers the logion on the dead burying their own dead. He argues against the consensus represented by Hengel and Sanders, for the latter have maintained that this saying represents a radical contravention of what the Torah enjoins. Bockmuehl in this instance has raised serious questions about the plausibility of the received interpretation. Hengel relies on evidence from the third century A.D. and later to support his conclusion. Moreover, even the Tannaitic evidence marshaled by Hengel does not clearly point to an abrogation of the law. Hence, Matthew 8:22/Luke 9:62 do not clearly support the nullification of the law. Bockmuehl's own solution, that the saying may reflect Nazirite motifs, is intriguing but cannot be established from the existing evidence.

Chapter four surveys Syrian Antioch and considers the Jewish community in the city. Bockmuehl

suggests that a spectrum of belief and practice existed on table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. He also maintains that Antioch was judged to be part of the Holy Land by many Jews. Bockmuehl then tackles the question of James's embassy to Antioch (Gal 2:12). The "men from James" genuinely represented him. They were not Judaizers who required circumcision, nor were they opposed to the Gentile mission. Bockmuehl proceeds to argue that the Jewish Christians in Antioch did not withdraw from fellowship with the Gentiles because of Gentile food or concerns about idolatry. The men from James did not impose the apostolic decree when they arrived. Bockmuehl surmises that James's concerns were probably political. Given the tense political situation in Judea and its environs, James desired solidarity among Jewish believers to further the Jewish mission in Judea and Jerusalem. Since Antioch was considered to be part of the Holy Land, the Jewish and Gentile mission should be kept separate in Antioch. Paul, therefore, did not disagree with James soteriologically, nor is it even clear that Paul disagreed with James in any respect. What Paul objected to was the behavior of Peter. James interfered here but not elsewhere in the Pauline mission because Antioch was considered to be part of the land promised to the twelve tribes. Bockmuehl's resolution of this age-old problem text is quite ingenious, but the evidence he compiles supporting Antioch as part of the Holy Land is quite uncertain and speculative. Nor is there any evidence that James or any Jewish Chris-

tians considered Antioch to be part of the Holy Land. Hence, the conclusions drawn here remain unpersuasive.

Part two of the book considers natural law in Second Temple Judaism, the New Testament, and concludes with a study of the relationship of the Noachide commandments to New Testament ethics. Bockmuehl argues that in Second Temple Judaism there is no natural law apart from God himself, so that no law operated outside of or above God. What we find in natural law accords with God's commands in Torah, so that the two are in harmony. The notion of natural law in Judaism precedes Philo and is rooted in both the OT and Second Temple traditions previous to Philo. Natural law is not explicitly acknowledged in the NT, but there is enough evidence to conclude that natural law played a role, though it was not a decisive or ultimate criterion for ethics. Both Jesus and Paul appealed to the created order for moral instruction, but such morality is finally interpreted in light of the kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus Christ, so that natural law is not an ultimate norm but is modified and even relativized in some instances.

What laws were binding on Gentile Christians? Bockmuehl suggests that the Noachide commandments played an important role in establishing what was normative for Gentile Christians. He objects to the law-gospel antithesis formulated by many Lutheran interpreters. Though Bockmuehl sees a shift from Torah to Christ, such does not mean that the content of the law has changed dramatically. The Noachide commandments were observed in early

Christianity since those laws were viewed as normative for Gentiles in Jewish circles. Bockmuehl traces the tradition of the Noachide commandments, seeing them as formulated explicitly in the second century A.D., though their substance has many antecedents in Jewish tradition.

Bockmuehl argues that the apostolic council considers what Gentiles must do in order to be saved, so that the issue is not merely regulating social relations between Jews and Gentiles. What the council required of Gentiles is remarkably similar to the Noachide commandments. Bockmuehl understands the decrees of the council to contain both moral injunctions (related to idolatry and sexuality) and ritual matters (prohibiting meat with blood and meat from an animal slaughtered improperly). He sides with minority opinion in saying that Paul forbade the eating of all idol food and speculates that Paul would not have tolerated consuming blood. Hence, Paul would not have had any reservations about the apostolic decree. Paul expected the Jews to live by the entire Torah and Gentiles by what are essentially the Noachide commandments. Space is lacking to interact with Bockmuehl's interpretation of the apostolic council and Paul. Against Bockmuehl 1 Corinthians 8-10 reads more naturally as a permission to eat idol food in certain contexts, even when the eater *knows* it is idol food. It is likely, then, that the apostolic decree was a temporary expedient to facilitate fellowship between Jews and Gentiles and not required for salvation. Much more should be said, obviously, to defend the latter

conclusion.

Bockmuehl closes the work in part three with stimulating chapters on the role of public ethics, investigating especially the contribution of Aristides of Athens and the *Epistle of Diognetus*. He argues that the Jewish halakah was foundational for the content of Christian ethics, noting that Jews and Christians overlapped significantly on the content of public ethics. Bockmuehl is almost certainly correct about the shared heritage in many respects of Jewish and Christian ethics. Even though his arguments fail to convince at a number of points, Bockmuehl has reminded us that the early Christian movement had ethical norms and that some of these norms were shaped by the OT and Jewish tradition.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Encountering the Book of Psalms. By C. Hassell Bullock. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001, 266 pp., \$24.99.

This is an excellent summary of information about the various scholarly opinions about the Book of Psalms. Bullock covers most of the significant views with currency in today's academy. At times he will offer an opinion, such as on p. 73: "I am inclined toward giving the historical titles and the Davidic ascriptions more credence." Why his "inclinations" should carry any weight is not clear (though in this case I have reasons to agree with him). On p. 232 he says: "In this section I want to further discuss some aspects of the imprecatory psalms to try to understand their theological

positives and negatives." Overlooking the split infinitive, I found his five theological observations true, but I had to agree with him that "these observations may not have solved the problems."

The subtitle of the volume is "A Literary and Theological Introduction." It does not purport to be a commentary. Sections are devoted to literary categories such as psalms of praise, lament, and thanksgiving. Bullock also finds a category he calls "Psalms of Trust." Then he has psalms of an earthly king to set beside those of a heavenly king. Finally he finds groups of wisdom psalms, psalms of the Torah, and, of course, imprecatory psalms. These types are reasonable second order groupings, but why these categories? The ancient poets did not choose to write in terms of categories; and if the few verses of cursing were removed, would not those imprecatory psalms be reclassified? This does not negate the value of a classification system (and I find these classifications helpful), but to me even the most obvious classifications fail to reveal the richness of an individual psalm.

Bullock reveals the problem we modern interpreters have when he quotes Psalm 56:12 (a thanksgiving verse) to lead into his personal acknowledgments for the help he received on the book, and he even tries to make the point that Psalm 23:4a speaks authentically to millions who face death but who never walk through the particular geographical valley with which David was familiar. Interpretation flows easily into application, but the two should be

clearly distinguished.

The “Encountering” series is designed to appeal to a modern reader. Clear headings, sidebars, study questions, tables, and various graphical elements make the pages visually interesting. The text shows awareness of most of the important issues, but the hermeneutical principles and conclusions are within traditional, conservative norms. Chapter one gives a good summary of what we can safely say about the Psalm titles, including a term-by-term analysis of the musical notations. Chapter two surveys the various kinds of poetic forms found in Hebrew: chiasmic structures and various kinds of parallelism. Chapter three focuses on the structure of the canonical Psalter. Interestingly, he proposes a theory of canon formation similar to one I proposed several years ago (a theory for which I was strongly criticized).

With amazement (and appreciation) I notice that Bullock urges the reader to consider the historical experience of the psalmist as the starting place for interpretation. (I was strongly criticized for taking this position as well.) Too quickly, however, he moves to what he calls the “editor’s experience” and the “reader’s experience.” Then Bullock wants us to examine the apostles’ experience of the psalms, the “experience” of the literary critics, and finally the student’s experience. Six hermeneutical principles are then offered including seeking the genre, looking for recurring words, discovering the emotional orientation of the psalm, discovering the purpose, the speaker, etc. I am not sure that list goes far

enough, but it is a good beginning.

The most interesting and, in my view, the most important of the chapters is the fifth one on theology and history in the psalms. We have psalms of creation, psalms that look back to the patriarchs, to the exodus, to Sinai, to the wilderness, the conquest, the land, the monarchy, and finally to the exile. Bullock wants to find the return as well, but I am not persuaded that his citations originally refer to the return from Babylon. I think that the Psalter closed a bit earlier than Bullock does. Nevertheless, this is to me the chapter that best reveals what is at the heart of the Psalter. It is not mere praise for the emotional satisfaction of praise itself, but rather it is the historical theology of Israel poetically captured.

This is not the commentary you need, but it is an excellent introduction to scholarly and devotional approaches to the psalms. A student or pastor building a personal library should seriously consider adding this volume to his Psalms-shelf.

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The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus. By G. Michael Thomas. Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1997, 277 pp., \$26.99 paper.

Lest anyone think that the classical Reformed tradition spoke with one voice on the extent of the atonement, Michael Thomas is here to tell us otherwise. Even the representatives at

the Synod of Dort, which produced a document (The Canons of Dort) that decidedly affirms particular redemption, were not in agreement about how to articulate this doctrine. In this fascinating, though sometimes heady, analysis Thomas follows the crimson thread of atonement theories from Calvin to the Swiss Consensus of 1675 and so chronicles a little over a century and a quarter of Reformed debates on this still-debated topic.

He summarizes previous research on Calvin and the atonement, and then engages the Genevan Reformer’s writings to attempt to wend his way through the maze of conflicting interpretations. On the one hand, Roger Nicole, Paul Helm, and others are convinced that Calvin was a true five-pointer; taking the opposing position are R. T. Kendall, Basil Hall, and Paul Van Buren. This is but a short list of the protagonists on either side. Thomas concludes from his study that from the perspective of election Christ did not die for all individuals, but from the perspective of the promise of the gospel he died for all, “even for those who do not participate in the purchased benefit” (p. 33). Doubtless the debate about Calvin will continue on.

In the post-Calvin era Beza rang the chimes loudly for particular redemption, but Bullinger went the other direction, even waffling on the unconditionality of election. Zanchius and Vermigli, working together in Strasbourg in the 1550s, were close to Beza in their exposition, but Ursinus of Heidelberg and many of the other Palatinate theologians present a different story. Ursinus argued that the merits of Christ and the conditional

covenant associated with them are universally available, though, according to God's plan in election, the extent of the mediation is restricted. Olevianus, another Palatinate theologian, argued in a somewhat Bezan fashion that faith is the gift, not the condition, of the covenant, and that the Spirit does not give the gift of faith to all. The major difference between Beza and Olevianus is that the latter does not employ an Aristotelian form of argument to prove his case, but resorts, rather, simply to the Bible (114).

The most fascinating chapter in the book is the one dealing with the Synod of Dort. After laying out the historical context (The Remonstrance, the political implications, etc.), Thomas shows that each regional deputation was implored to offer its own position in writing, and that these "position papers" were carefully considered before the final draft of the Canons was prepared. The Canons are really a carefully worded set of compromises between the various regional factions. The British deputation, for instance, led by John Davenant, would probably have been content had the Synod decided against limited atonement. The Geneva and North Holland representatives, however, were adamant about the language of particular redemption, as were most of the others in one way or another. But the "one way or another" is clearly the point. Thomas argues that three basic views could be found among the Dortian scholars on the extent of the atonement: some held the commercial view that Jesus died for the specific sins of those specifically elected and for that

number alone, a second group saw the atonement as having universal potential (a medicine available even to those who refuse to use it), and a third granted a kind of universal potential to the atonement but denied that this was a significant part of the divine purpose (147). The final chapters deal with the school of Saumur (Cameron and Amyraut) and the Swiss Consensus.

This is an excellent book. It has one drawback. It often reads like a dissertation, and terms are sometimes defined rather loosely or not at all. The book presumes that the reader has already read several other works on the same subject, and this will not always be the case. But for the dedicated student, this volume will repay the time and exertion expended in the task. There really is nothing else quite like it in the field.

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The Blackwell Companion to Judaism. Edited by Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, xiv + 553 pp., \$29.95.

This edited volume is part of the *Blackwell Companion to Religion Series*. The volume is designed to provide an overview of Judaism for readers who have no prior knowledge of the topic. Although there is a section on theology, the book does not specifically discuss beliefs and practices within Judaism. The book presents its topic from a historical-sociological perspective. Although the essays are written by top scholars in the field, the essays are not academic nor do

they summarize the various scholarly views concerning the individual topics. The book is designed to provide an easily readable text that reflects mainstream scholarship concerning Judaism.

The book is divided into four sections: "The History of Judaism," "The Principle Doctrines of Judaism," "Modern and Contemporary Judaisms," and "Special Topics in Understanding Judaism." It is easy for readers to come to the subject assuming that Judaism is monolithic, not realizing that there are many forms of Judaism. An underlying theme throughout this book is the concept of multiple Judaisms. The essays introduce this concept while providing a comprehensive and synthetic introduction to Judaism.

The first section on the history of Judaism includes nine essays. After an introductory essay, each essay discusses the development of Judaism within various historical periods. Five essays discuss Judaism from the world of ancient Israel to the development of Rabbinic Judaism. The last three essays discuss the development of Judaism within the dominant political and social culture from the first century to the Middle Ages. Included are essays addressing Judaism in the Muslim World and Judaism in Eastern Europe.

The second section contains five essays dealing with doctrines of Judaism: Torah, God, Israel, Messiah, and the Hebrew Language. This is perhaps the weakest section of the book. Each of the theological topics is discussed in terms of their historical development. While Jewish theologians have

not developed systematic theological approaches found in Christian denominations, the essays do not discuss the various doctrinal positions found within Judaism. Each topic is presented from a modern mainstream position, with scarce comparative information of the various positions and beliefs within Judaism. Although lacking in the presentation of various doctrinal views, the essays do provide excellent overviews in regard to the development of these doctrines.

The third section is perhaps one of the most useful sections for non-Jewish readers. It contains essays on Reform, Orthodox, Conservative, and New Age Judaisms. The focus is on the historical-sociological developments of each Jewish group. The last section is a potpourri of topics addressing: "Ethics of Judaism," "Women in Contemporary Judaism," "Judaism as a Theopolitical Phenomenon," "Contemporary Jewish Theology," "Secular Forms of Jewishness," "Judaism and Zionism," and the recent trend among Jews to adopt a traditional Judaism.

The book has achieved its goal and provides an outstanding introduction to Judaism. There are no footnotes but there is a comprehensive index. The book will make an excellent introductory textbook to Judaism focusing on historical developments and issues concerning modern Judaism. Even though the book sets out to introduce the divergent views within Judaism, it fails in the arena of systematic theology and belief and practice.

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The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible. By Natalio Fernández Marcos, translated by W. G. E. Watson. Leiden: Brill, 2000, xvi + 394 pp., \$39.95 paper.

Introductions to the Greek Version(s) of the Hebrew Scriptures / Old Testament are few and far between in the last century of scholarship. For English there is only H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge, 1902) and S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1968). In French we have M. Harl, G. Dorival, and O. Munnich, *La Bible Grecque des Septante* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), in Italian M. Cimosà, *Guida allo studio della Bibbia Greca: (LXX)* (Rome: Britannica & Forestiera, 1995) and in Spanish N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las versiones griegas de la Biblia*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1979, 1998). Now, at the beginning of a new century (and millennium), we have two in English: K. H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2000) and the book under review by Fernández Marcos. While the former volume by Jobes and Silva is an excellent primer for beginners, the latter is more than just an English translation of the Spanish Edition of 1979. Fernández Marcos has both thoroughly updated and extensively expanded the text, including the bibliographies, and added two new chapters as well, resulting in a vol-

ume that is not only the most comprehensive available, but sets a new standard for Septuagint studies.

Fernández Marcos' introduction comprises twenty-two chapters in five parts. Each chapter is arranged according to clear and logical subdivisions and concluded by a bibliography of selected works for reference and further reading. The content and structure of the volume deserve some description and evaluation. Part one is devoted to "The Linguistic and Cultural Setting," with a chapter on "Biblical Greek and its Position within *koiné*" and one on "The Septuagint as a Translation." The author presents key issues regarding the language of the Septuagint economically in a short space, demonstrating that he is abreast of current linguistic research.

Part two deals with "The Origins of the Septuagint" with chapters on "The Letter of Pseudo-Aristeas and Other Ancient Sources," "Modern Interpretations of the Origins of the Septuagint," "The Septuagint and the Hebrew Text" (a new chapter), and "The Double Texts of the Greek Bible and Targumism." This arrangement helpfully separates ancient debates and propaganda from analysis and conclusions by modern scholars. Nicely integrated into this presentation is the hugely important question of the Septuagint's relationship to the Qumran Texts and the long debate over the original unity of the translation versus Kahle's targumic theory.

Parts three and four trace respectively "The Septuagint in Jewish Tradition" and "The Septuagint in Christian Tradition." In part three there is a chapter each on "Aquila and

his Predecessors," "Symmachus the Translator," and "Theodotion and the *kaige* Revision." Items such as Quinta, Sexta, the 'Hebrew', the 'Syrian' are treated in "Other Ancient Versions" and finally a chapter on "Jewish Versions into Mediaeval and Modern Greek." To my knowledge no one else follows the Jewish tradition so thoroughly into the later periods. Fernández Marcos treats the development within the Christian tradition in part four in eight chapters, making this the longest section in the book. This is naturally so since the Septuagint was mainly transmitted by Christians. These chapters focus on early textual transmission, Origen's Hexapla, the Lucianic recension, the Alexandrian Text Group and its relation to Hesychius' recension, other revisions both pre- and para-hexaplaric, indirect textual transmission in biblical quotations by authors both Jewish and Christian, and Christian literature such as *aporiai* and biblical commentaries on the one hand and the *catenae* on the other. Fernández Marcos' division of the material according to Jewish and Christian traditions is somewhat logical, but is not clean, partly because the history itself is messy and partly because of judgments made by the author. Thus in the section on citations of the Septuagint in other works, early Jewish Hellenistic writers and Philo and Josephus are treated and then citations in the New Testament, in inscriptions and papyri, and in patristic works. The author also includes discussion of a revision such as the *kaige* tradition, along with the proto-Lucianic revision, in part four, instead of in part

three in the chapter entitled "Theodotion and the *kaige* Revision." Nonetheless, the author's contribution is significant for introductions to the Septuagint rarely describe the special literature in Christian tradition of questions and responses (*aporiai*) or of "chaining" together comments from Patristic writers (*catenae*) and the vital importance such materials have for LXX studies. Indeed, the select bibliography provided on *catenae* which lists some thirty-six works going back over a hundred years to the foundational writings of Faulhaber and Karo-Lietzmann has not a single item in English, so Fernández Marcos has done a real service in giving us both a digest and update on this topic.

Finally part five, entitled "The Septuagint and Christian Origins" deals with "The Religion of the Septuagint and Hellenism," "The Septuagint and the New Testament," and "The Septuagint and Early Christian Literature" (new chapter). This is not a homogeneous section moving from what the Septuagint may reveal about Hellenization in early Judaism, to the use of the Old Testament in the New and then to the Bible of the Church Fathers. Fernández Marcos also takes up the question of Christian Greek and Septuagint daughter versions (Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, Georgian, Gothic, Latin, Syriac and Slavonic).

Included are a glossary of technical terms, indices of both biblical quotations and modern authors, and a list of abbreviations.

Fernández Marcos' knowledge of the literature is encyclopedic and his handling of controversies and debates

generally judicious and magisterial. Nonetheless, there are some noticeable inconsistencies. For example, in Fernández Marcos' discussion of the pluriformity of the early Hebrew text (74-75, 249-250) he expresses appreciation for Cross' theory of local texts, although he does present the views of dissenters such as Talmon, Tov and Chiesa. At the same time he argues that the tradition behind the LXX and the Masoretic Text cannot be reduced to a common original (77), yet this is the basic assumption of Cross' theory which he has just espoused. Fernández Marcos is amazingly abreast of the latest research. Occasionally, however, his discussion fails to include new contributions to the field. Tim McLay's treatment of Theodotion in Daniel (1996) is but one example.

Although I do not know Spanish, as a native speaker of English I can say that the translation by W. G. E. Watson is generally smooth and flows well. Only rarely does literal translation obscure the meaning (e.g. bottom p. 95). Blunders in copy-editing are few, a miracle in a book so complex in terms of typesetting. On page 45 the references *Sôferîm* 1,8 and *Maseket Sôferîm* 1,8 are in fact the same source. On page 142, note 2, an English translation of the Greek source is helpful, but the translation as it stands does not accurately convey the meaning of the original. Normally, no English is given for Latin sources. Olympiodorus is misspelled on page 162, and on page 344 "concluding that its reaching the conclusion that its" is a copy-editing doublet. In the glossary "(revision)" should be "*kaige* (revision)" and *aporiai* seems an obvious omission.

In sum, Fernández Marcos has put scholars and students alike around the world in his debt for such an authoritative and comprehensive introduction to the Septuagint.

Peter J. Gentry

New Testament Textual Criticism and Exegesis. Festschrift J. Delobel. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium, CLXI. Edited by A. Denaux. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002, xviii + 391pp., \$77.00.

This *Festschrift* was dedicated to Professor Joel Delobel on the occasion of his retirement in 2001 from the faculty of the University of Louvain, Belgium. Twenty scholars contributed to the volume. Written by former students, colleagues on the Louvain faculty, and friends of Delobel, the articles are mainly in the area of textual criticism and its impact on exegesis.

The articles cover a wide range of text-critical concerns. For instance, B. Aland discusses the method of determining whether to include in an apparatus a singular reading found in one of the more recently edited small papyrus fragments (P101-114). J. Lust contrasts the textual criticism of the Septuagint with that of the New Testament. D. C. Parker compares the recently-released text of James in the *Editio Critica Maior* with other major critical editions. Most of the articles deal with specific New Testament textual issues. Some are well-known cruxes: the ending of Mark (article by C. Focant), the “agony” in Luke 22:43-44 (C. M. Tuckett), the long Roman

doxology (R. F. Collins), the “western non-interpolation” at Luke 24:12 (F. Neiryneck), and the “apostolic decrees” of Acts 15 and 21 (C. Amphoux). Less famous problems include the parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32 (J. K. Elliott), “Jesus” or “Lord” at John 4:1 (G. Van Belle), whether the Spirit “guides” or “will guide” “in” or “to” the truth in John 16:13 (R. Bieringer), the “mystery” or “witness” of God in 1 Corinthians 2:1 (V. Koperski), the number of the beast as 616 in Revelation 13:18 (J. N. Birdsall), and whether Satan is thrown “out” or “down” in John 12:31 (M.-E. Boismard).

Some articles deal more with broad exegetical issues than with specific textual readings. J. Lambrecht examines the theme of exhortation throughout Revelation. W. L. Petersen argues that the early fathers are the most reliable witnesses to the earliest New Testament texts. J. Verheyden responds to Petersen’s thesis by showing the secondary nature of many Biblical citations in Justin Martyr. The article by E. J. Epp, the longest in the volume, argues for the feminine *Junia* reading in Romans 16:7 and relates it to the larger issue of female ministries in the early church.

This volume is primarily for scholars. Most of the articles assume a working knowledge of the history and methodology of textual criticism. They vary in their degree of technicality, however. Epp’s article, for instance, should be readily understood by the non-specialist, while the other extreme is set by T. Baarda’s examination of an obscure variant of Luke 7:42 found in some editions of Tatian’s *Diatessaron*. Most articles are

in English, but Aland’s is in German, and those by Focant, Boismard, and Amphoux are in French. The many articles that examine specific texts will prove to be invaluable examples for students of text criticism as they demonstrate how competent text critics go about balancing external and internal considerations.

John B. Polhill

The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology. By Charles H. H. Scobie. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, xvii + 1038 pp., \$45.00.

This massive volume represents something almost unheard of in technical biblical scholarship in this era. Charles Scobie offers a biblical theology of the entire Bible. Theologies of the NT or OT or works that concentrate on various themes in biblical theology are common, but virtually no one attempts to write a whole Bible theology. One of the remarkable features of the work is the lucidity and clarity that characterize the study. What Scobie writes is surely accessible to college students with a desire to acquaint themselves with biblical theology.

The book is split into two parts. The first part functions as prolegomena to biblical theology and comprises about one hundred pages. Scobie considers the following topics: (1) the definition of biblical theology; (2) the history of the discipline; (3) new directions in biblical theology; (4) the method of biblical theology; and (5) the structure of biblical theology. Scobie proposes “an intermediate biblical theology” in

which the discipline functions as a bridge between academic study and service to the church. Biblical theology must be rooted in history, but it cannot be neutral. We must bring presuppositions to our work, and yet always be ready to have those presuppositions critiqued and evaluated. Biblical theology cannot be equated with “history of religion,” and hence the canon functions as the limit for such study, and Christians should agree that the canon is closed. Scobie essentially accepts the Protestant canon for his study, though he appeals to works in the apocrypha and Roman Catholic canonical tradition to shed light on the text.

He maintains that biblical theology is concerned with the final form of the text instead of basing conclusions on its alleged pre-history. He argues that the OT must be read “in light of the NT, and vice versa” (p. 75). Each piece of literature can be considered for its contribution, but it does not follow that every writing is of the same value. Romans is clearly more important than 2 Peter for instance. Scobie proposes a multi-thematic approach rooted in the topics arising from scripture.

The remainder of the book is part two in which Scobie sets forth his whole Bible theology. He divides the study into four sections: (1) God’s Order; (2) God’s Servant; (3) God’s People; and (4) God’s Way. Under God’s Order he has chapters on (a) the Living God, (b) the Lord of Creation, (c) the Lord of History, (d) the Adversary, and e) the Spirit. The section on God’s Servant includes chapters on (a) the Messiah, (b) the Son of Man, (c)

Glory, Word, Wisdom, Son; (d) the Servant’s Suffering; and (e) the Servant’s Vindication. The third part on God’s people studies (a) the Covenant Community; (b) the Nations; (c) Land and City; (d) Worship; and (e) Ministry. The section on God’s Way concludes the work with chapters on (a) the Human Condition; (b) Faith and Hope; (c) God’s Commandments; (d) Love Your Neighbor; and (e) Life. If we look at the plan of the book as a whole, we see that he emphasizes God, Christ, God’s people, and the way God’s people should live.

We do not have space, obviously, to interact in detail with Scobie. We must applaud anyone who has the courage to attempt such a massive undertaking, for to write this book one must know both OT and NT theology, and Scobie demonstrates such knowledge consistently in his work. Furthermore, he is clearly conversant with secondary sources and they are woven into the work throughout. The author clearly read prodigiously in completing his *magnum opus*. And yet the book is written simply and clearly and is uncluttered by jargon.

Scobie’s approach to biblical theology is also convincing. He eschews the kind of historicism that *a priori* strips the text of the supernatural. He approaches the text as canonical Scripture, as God’s word to his people. After exploring the various themes in their OT and then the NT context, he considers the message for God’s people today. No one, of course, will agree with all of Scobie’s conclusions. Still, Scobie’s work should be saluted for taking the canon seriously and because he has attempted to set forth

in all their diversity and unity major scriptural themes. Scobie is surely on target when he argues that God and Christ are major themes in biblical theology. God’s People and God’s Way are certainly central themes as well. It seems, however, that his structure puts less emphasis than warranted on God’s saving work in Christ. Naturally, the latter theme is not excluded by Scobie, and yet a more prominent place in the chapter titles is necessary. Nevertheless, we can be grateful for a work that takes Scripture seriously as the word of God, believes it voices a coherent message, and applies it to today’s world.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment. Edited by Bruce W. Longenecker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002, 253 pp., \$24.95 paper.

This book arises out of the current interest in “story.” It explores the issue of whether Paul’s theology is primarily narrative in nature, that is, the extent to which it can be traced to an underlying story. Twelve well-known British scholars collaborated in this effort. Five of them were assigned a particular Biblical narrative to trace, while five others served as their respondents. A somewhat artificial limit was set restricting their treatments solely to Romans and Galatians. The five narratives to be explored were (1) creation, (2) Israel, (3) Jesus, (4) Paul himself, and (5) Paul’s predecessors and successors. The five who examined the narratives

were (1) Edward Adams (R. Barry Matlock, respondent), (2) Bruce W. Longenecker (Morna Hooker, respondent), (3) Douglas A. Campbell (Graham N. Stanton, respondent), (4) John M.G. Barclay (David C. Horrell, respondent), and (5) Andrew T. Lincoln (I. Howard Marshall, respondent). The examination of these five “story lines” constitutes the bulk of the volume (chapters 2-11).

Perhaps the most helpful chapters are the first and the concluding two (12-13), by Bruce Longenecker, James D. G. Dunn, and Francis Watson. Longenecker’s introductory chapter sets forth the procedure to be followed in the symposium and introduces the whole issue of narrative studies and how they have been applied to Paul’s writings. The concluding chapters by Dunn and Watson interact with the entire project and provide their assessments of the value of a narrative approach to Paul.

After wading through this volume, this reviewer was left with more questions than answers. Most of the contributions did not really go beyond the obvious. For instance, that Paul drew heavily from the narratives of Adam and Abraham is beyond dispute as well as the fact that he gives his own “story” in the first two chapters of Galatians. The more tantalizing question is whether one can trace an underlying story that lies beneath the surface of the Pauline text and controls his thought, a “deep” narrative, to use the language of the structuralists. R. B. Hays has attempted this in his treatment of the *pistis Christou* phrase, as has N. T. Wright with his

thesis of a return-from-exile motif lying beneath Paul’s theology. This volume offers nothing so adventurous, and it is probably just as well that it does not. The overall impression with which one is left is that a narrative approach to Paul is at best extremely limited.

John B. Polhill

A Simple Guide to the Way Back Home. By Jerry Sutton. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2002, 81 pp., \$4.99 paper.

Often the best ideas are not the newest fads but those which have been proven by the test of time. This book by Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, offers an extended homily on the parable of the prodigal son, one of Jesus’ most beloved parables. Sutton invites those who have wandered away from God to come back into fellowship with Him. In a kind spirit arising out of his extensive pastoral experience, Sutton offers scriptural principles and godly counsel for those who have lost their way.

Within the two major parts of the parable narrative — the prodigal’s journey to and return from the far country — Sutton traces the path of the prodigal with eleven “R’s” – restlessness, rebellion, reversal, regret, repentance, return, reception, restoration, rejoicing, rebuilding, and reconnecting. Out of the narrative, Sutton recommends eight steps as the most direct path toward restoring one’s relationship with God — being honest with yourself and God, confessing

to God, disengaging from the world, never doubting God’s unconditional love, rejoicing in your restored fellowship, rebuilding the broken walls of behavior and belief, and reconnecting with and reinforcing right relationships. The concepts presented are not novel, but they are powerful enough to help transform a life.

Although Sutton writes in a sermonic style, the chapters are smoothly interconnected, woven together like a seamless tapestry. He writes in a down-to-earth, approachable style, utilizing a number of personal illustrations. His sharply focused application masterfully drives home the truths of this parable to contemporary life in a way reminiscent to this reader of that in Helmut Thielicke’s sermon on this parable in *The Waiting Father*.

The persons for whom this book is intended may not be consciously seeking such a book, but it would be a great book for Christians to give as a gift to friends who are struggling in their lives. But the message of returning to God is also profitable for sinners such as you and me!

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Doctrine Twisting: How Core Biblical Truths Are Distorted. By H. Wayne House and Gordon Carle. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003, 267 pp., \$16.99 paper.

In this helpful new book by House and Carle one can find documented information about how various cults, heresies, and sectarian groups distort

Christian teaching. The book is divided up according to the various *loci* of theology, though not in the order they are normally found in systematic theology texts (God, Jesus, the Spirit, humanity, sin, atonement, second coming, heaven and hell). In each section the authors give an exposition of the contours of the orthodox tradition, with biblical citations and references to key historical discussions from the church's heritage. They then feature several examples of deviation. Under the doctrine of God, for instance, they show how mind science, "A Course in Miracles," Church Universal, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the United Pentecostal Church deviate from orthodoxy. They then give suggestions about how believers can respond to each group. They follow the same pattern under each doctrinal heading.

In some ways this is a companion volume to James Sire's older work, *Scripture Twisting*, also a book on how heresies and cults deviate from the truth. The difference of course is that the book by House and Carle speaks specifically to doctrinal aberrations, while Sire's book is on hermeneutics. The selections in this volume are well-chosen, and they are handled fairly and accurately by the authors, one of whom is a seasoned veteran of these kinds of discussions.

I recommend this little book wholeheartedly. It is a great tool to give to those who minister to cults or to those who are coming out of a cult. (It might help to keep them from going into a different one!) It would also be a fine supplemental text to a course on

systematic theology.

Chad Owen Brand