

BOOK REVIEWS

Miller, Patrick D. *The Religion of Ancient Israel*. Library of Ancient Israel. Douglas A. Knight, editor. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press. 2000.

Patrick Miller's contribution to the revitalized field of the study of ancient Israelite religion takes a unique approach. Rather than analyzing Israel's religion as a historical process, the book views five topics that the author feels are vital in reaching a coherent construct of the religion of ancient Israel. This thematic focus does not mean that matters of historical development or dating are completely ignored. But, those matters are given secondary consideration, and many questions of chronology or origin of certain features of religion are left unresolved.

After a brief introduction of purpose and methodology, the book begins with a consideration of Yahweh, the deity of Israel, and "the center of ancient Israel's religion" (p. 1). The author details the critical facets of the vital relationship between deity and Israel, as well as the relationship between Yahweh and the divine world, and the deities of other ancient Near Eastern religions. The feminine dimensions of the conceptions of the deity, in the forms of goddesses, the presence of a female consort of Yahweh (supported, perhaps, by the blessing inscriptions from Kuntillet Ajrud), as well as the role of women in various cults, is given treatment as well. Through this discussion, Miller notes that the conception of Yahweh, though rooted in local ancient Near Eastern practice and culture, was also distinct. Of further significance is the author's demonstration that there were various expressions of the worship of Yahweh, evidenced again by the presence or absence of the feminine element in Israel's religion. This fact of variety provides a segue into chapter 2, which discusses the various forms of religion in ancient Israel. Miller notes that in addition to the categories of orthodoxy and syncretism was what he calls heterodoxy. He defines this as an amalgam of orthodox religion with certain practices that were rejected by orthodox Yahwism, which Miller states is best expressed by biblical literature and the character of Israelite religion "had as it moved into its two primary and immediately continuing streams." Syncretism, then, is defined as the incorporation of elements that were specifically derived from the worship of other deities. The bulk of the chapter, though, focuses on expressions of orthodox religion in the various spheres of Israelite society, ranging from family religion and local/regional cults to the state sponsored religions of the Northern and Southern kingdoms. Though

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FALL 2001 SPRING 2002
VOL 56 NO 2 VOL 57 NO 1

each religion type had unique practices, Miller notes that the family religion and national religion were linked by the persistence of kinship categories throughout all levels of society. Thus, national religion, was in essence, an expression of family religion on a broader scale. One may wish, however, that the author had clarified the relationship between the state religions of Israel and Judah, given, in particular, the condemnation of the religious innovations of the Northern kingdom. Further, it is vague as to how conflicting practices between the types of religion, such as the existence in family/local religion at local sanctuaries and the later Deuteronomistic abolishment of those sanctuaries, was understood by Israel, or how we, as modern readers and interpreters, are to understand those developments.

Having discussed deity, and the various forms of worshipping the deity, the author moves on to three foundational elements to the cult—sacrifice and offering, holiness and purity, and the practice of religious leadership. Each of these themes is given extensive treatment, covering not only the forms and categories of each cultic element, but also the manner in which they are related. Thus, Miller discusses the various types of offerings and sacrifices and a possible sequence in which they functioned to provide full fellowship between the human and divine. Similarly, he discusses not only the role and legacy of leadership positions like the priest, prophet and sage, but also how they functioned together within society.

The conclusions of this work are based on strong interpretive observations from biblical and extra-biblical sources. Miller's ability and willingness to derive social and cultural data from theological texts, which others are not apt to do, is definitely refreshing to see in a construction of an ancient social institutions. A great example of this is deriving the role of monarchs in the cult from the Ahaz narrative of 2 Kings 16 (pp. 193-94). Rather than being put off by the textual presentation of heresy, the author presents credible evidence for the religious role and authority of the king in Israel. The incorporation of solid evidence with evenhanded interpretation is also seen in Miller's willingness to tackle controversial issues, such as the argument for Yahweh's consort and the role of women in various practices of the cult. Again, Miller reaches strong, helpful conclusions on the basis of the religious literature rather than vain speculation or excessive eisegesis. The use of biblical literature, however, is tempered by its limitations, particularly regarding questions of dating or chronology. In general, Miller does not over-extend the effectiveness of any piece of evidence. More attention could be given, however, to evidence based on social processes or developments within ancient Israel and its effects on the religion and religious institutions of Israel. Historical and social context is given a measure of attention in considering the types and forms of Israelite religion, but this developmental factor in religion is not given much treatment in the rest of the work, despite the intentions of the author (p. xv).

In general, there is a unifying flow to the text. The movement of the discussion, from deity to the expressions of worship of the deity to the central institutions of the religion, is helpful as one piece of the construct is built upon and adds to what was presented before. Thus, it seems that the entire book is based on Yahweh's centrality in the various forms and practices of Israelite religion. Miller begins and ends his work with the hope that the three major religions which grew out of the ancient Israelite religion will be able

to benefit from a better understanding of their predecessors, not only to know more about the self, but to have more respect for the other. This work is a comprehensive, concise and solid contribution to this endeavor.

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Stern, Ephraim. *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Volume II: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods (732-332 BCE)*. Anchor Bible Reference Library; New York: Doubleday, 2001.

In a previous volume in the same series, Amihai Mazar surveyed archaeological research of the biblical world from the first permanent settlements to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (*Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 BCE*, ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1992). Mazar's work is impressive for its breadth and has established itself as the standard text on biblical archaeology. Ephraim Stern's contribution may be seen as a sequel to Mazar's book, because it deals with a much more modest period of Israel's history allowing the author to treat the archaeological evidence more intensively. Furthermore, this volume has intentionally omitted introductory materials and definitions found in Mazar's volume, such as geographical background, the significance of stratigraphy, and the nature of a tell (p. xv), making it possible to go into much more depth on these four important centuries of biblical history. Together, Mazar and Stern form an impressive two-volume introduction to the sometimes convoluted discipline of Syro-Palestinian Archaeology.

Stern divides the presentation into three parts, corresponding to the three Mesopotamian powers controlling Syria-Palestine during these centuries: Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia. He argues that the material culture of the region was homogeneous during these four centuries due to Mesopotamian control politically, and to some degree culturally. But the conquest of Alexander the Great brought the Persian period to a close and marked the last time in the ancient world a native Mesopotamian power would rule Syria-Palestine. This cultural homogeneity gives Stern's volume a certain coherence. Paradoxically, he contends that each of the three periods – Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian – was characterized by differences dictated by the different policies of the occupying powers. First, during the Assyrian period (732-604 BCE), Syria-Palestine was characterized by ethnic diversity and foreign influences. Consequently the first portion of Stern's volume (pages 1-300) traces not only the Assyrian conquest of the region and the impact of its material culture, but also devotes chapters to several cultural entities present in the region: Arameans, Phoenicians, Philistines, Judahites, Greeks, Egyptians, Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites.

Second, during the Babylonian period (604-539 BCE), the region was plundered and left in ruins. Stern's second section (pages 301-50) outlines the familiar political developments of this period, and then surveys the results of excavations at Syro-

Palestinian sites relevant to the Babylonian period. An interesting contrast emerges from this picture when compared to the Assyrian period: the Babylonians apparently had no interest in governing the region, but merely in preventing its unification for purposes of dominance. As a result, there is a virtual vacuum from this period culturally. Such towns and villages as existed were very poorly populated, and all were poorly functioning. Third, during the Persian period (539-332 BCE), Syria-Palestine experienced a very different fate due to Persian tolerance. The area evinces two cultural regions: the coastal area characterized predominantly by the Greek culture that was becoming dominant in the eastern Mediterranean generally, and the central highlands, which displayed the material culture of the Jews and Samaritans of this period.

Stern's volume is an impressive accomplishment, and all who are interested in this topic, especially the archaeologically-challenged Bible students among us, are in his debt. Together with Oxford's recent encyclopedia, the Stern and Mazar volumes have given us the best introductory materials we have ever had for biblical archaeology (Eric M. Meyers, ed., *Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1997], see Brent A. Strawn's review in *Asbury Theological Journal* 55.2 [2000]: 101-103).

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Nicholson, Ernest. *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

More than a century has past since Julius Wellhausen changed Old Testament studies with his landmark hypothesis on the origins of the Pentateuch. In the volume under review, a leading Old Testament scholar reflects on the lasting legacy of Wellhausen at the close of the 20th century. Nicholson's stated purpose is "to re-evaluate the Documentary Theory in the light of the vast literature that has appeared on the Pentateuch since it was first put forward" (p. v). To this end, the volume summarizes the work of Wellhausen, examines the contributions of form critics and traditio-historical critics building on Wellhausen, and then turns to survey developments in the closing decades of the 20th century in which Wellhausen's work has been seriously challenged. Since most of these scholarly treatments are exceedingly convoluted and detailed presentations (and usually written in dense, technical German), Nicholson's goal is "to make these discussions available in a clear and readable way to students of the Old Testament" (p. v). This alone makes the volume valuable, and it will certainly become a staple among students preparing for advanced OT studies. However, a caveat should be offered at this point. Nicholson's overview of Pentateuchal research in the 20th century is presented from a perspective adamantly committed to the Documentary Hypothesis as "the securest basis for understanding the Pentateuch," though he admits the newer research has served as a corrective

and many of Wellhausen's conclusions need significant modification (p. vi). The latter concession, however, does not change the fact that Nicholson believes much of the current research as badly mistaken. His intent, therefore, is not simply to provide a survey of the various twists and turns in Pentateuchal criticism in the 20th century, but also to defend the Documentary Hypothesis against its many detractors during the past 30 years. As helpful as his survey is, many readers will be left wondering if he has adequately understood, or at least engaged, the newer approaches of recent decades.

The volume is divided into two parts. Part one has three chapters tracing developments from Wellhausen to Martin Noth. Chapter 1 surveys events of the 19th century leading to Wellhausen, and traces the details of the Graf-Wellhausen, four-source Documentary Theory and its triumphant reception in the world of scholarship. Chapter 2 examines subsequent research, which was devoted to the "pre-compositional" stage of the sources, particularly in the movement known as *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule* ("the History of Religion School"). Pride of place in this chapter, of course, goes to Hermann Gunkel, who led the way in the traditio-historical method of interpreting Old Testament literature generally. Chapter 3 takes up the contributions of Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth, who "may legitimately be described as marking the climax of Pentateuchal research" in the 20th century (p. 60). Von Rad's isolation of an ancient Israelite credo, expressed best in his opinion in Deut 26:5b-9, became the framework for the work of a 10th century Yahwist during a so-called "Solomonic Enlightenment" (pp. 89-90). For Noth, an important common base-text (or "G" for *Grundlage*) of many Pentateuchal sources came into existence in the pre-monarchic period and established the decisive stages of the formation of the Pentateuch. Each of the subsequent non-Deuteronomistic sources (J, E, and P) was, in Noth's opinion, the work of individual authors relying on G for the nucleus of their content. Though differing in several details, these two (von Rad and Noth) set the agenda for research for decades to come. Even the newer phase of Pentateuchal research in recent decades has been a process of engaging and reacting to von Rad and Noth. The details of Nicholson's survey in these three chapters are well known and he makes no claim to present anything new in this section. But familiarity with these developments is necessary for a proper understanding of subsequent work done during the past 30 years, which is the subject of part two of the volume.

Part two, then, offers six more chapters under the rubric "the problem of the Pentateuch in current research." Rather than simply supplement Wellhausen's hypothesis, work during the past quarter century has tended either to challenge most of his conclusions regarding the nature of the sources, or to jettison his hypothesis altogether and start investigating the Pentateuch from entirely new perspectives. Chapter 4 takes up the important work of Rolf Rendtorff, who argues that the tradition-critical approaches of his predecessors in Germany (especially those of Noth and von Rad) were incompatible with source criticism and its classical expression in the Documentary Theory. He argues instead that form criticism, when freed from a connection to older source critical conclusions, results in a view of the Pentateuch understood on the analogy of the Deuteronomistic History, meaning both are results of a combination and redaction of originally independent narratives. In the case of the Pentateuch, large strands of material have been joined end to end. The primeval history (Genesis 2-11), the exodus history (Exodus 1-15), the Sinai materials (Exodus 19-24), and the various cycles of ancestral narratives were brought together during the time of Solomon.

This process leaves no room for independent literary sources such as J, E and P, so that the classical formulation of the Documentary Hypothesis must be abandoned. In contrast to Rendtorff's complete rejection of the Documentary Hypothesis, a number of scholars have re-dated the J document (assumed to be the oldest of the sources in the Documentary Hypothesis) to the exilic period or even later. Chapter 5 surveys the work of these scholars, some of whom have argued that J was composed as a "prologue" to the Deuteronomistic History. Chapter 6 is devoted to reviewing two scholars who have argued that the pre-Priestly Tetrateuch (essentially JE) was not only exilic or early post-exilic, but was based on earlier pre-exilic written sources. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with scholars who question, respectively, whether P and E ever existed as independent narrative sources, as is commonly assumed for J. The concluding chapter acknowledges that Pentateuchal studies from Wellhausen to Noth failed to examine sufficiently the new context arising from the combination of sources and to ascertain the effects redactors intended in selecting and uniting the sources as they did (pp. 249-253). Nicholson concludes the volume with the charge that current "synchronic" approaches fail to consider adequately prior stages of the final text. Just as the older source critics and form critics erred in their quest for "original" or earlier stages, so now Childs, Clines, Whybray and others err in according absoluteness to the final form reading of the text (pp. 253-268).

As a survey of scholarship, this volume will take its place alongside other important volumes serving similar purposes.¹ Unfortunately Nicholson's focus is narrow, so that his assessment of developments over the last three decades fails to engage critically the objections of scholars writing from a discourse analysis or rhetorical critical position.² But even among source critics, Nicholson fails to grasp adequately the weight of the linguistic evidence for the antiquity of P and H, especially in the work of Avi Hurvitz, Israel Knohl, and Jacob Milgrom.³ If these new studies are correct, and both P and H are pre-exilic, is this not more than a "modification" of Wellhausen? In his reconstruction of the history of Israelite religion, Wellhausen's assumption was that the Pentateuchal law was the starting-point of Judaism (that is, in the post-exilic period) rather than that of early Israelite religion; law was not early and foundational for ancient Israel, but late and restrictive of Jewish faith.⁴ If the newer views of P and H are correct, this is a return to the pre-Wellhausian positions of certain early source critics (such as Eichhorn and Ilgen in the 18th century and Ewald in the 19th), and constitutes in fact a rejection of the classic Wellhausen position.⁵

NOTES

1. John R. Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century* (London: SPCK, 1984); idem, *W. M. L. de Wette Founder of Modern Biblical Criticism: An Intellectual Biography* (JSOTSup, 120; Sheffield, 1992), Ronald E. Clements, *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976).

2. Such as, for example, Gary A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1986), or Herbert Chanan Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

3. Avi Hurvitz, *A Linguistic Study of the Relationship between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel: A New Approach to an Old Problem* (CahRB 20; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1982); Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); and now the completion of Milgrom's magisterial commentary on Leviticus (*Leviticus*, 3 vols., AB 3-3B [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1991-2001]).

4. Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 1-13; repr. of *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (trans. J. Sutherland Black and Allan Enzies, with preface by W. Robertson Smith; Edinburgh: Adam & Charles Black, 1885); trans. of *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (2d ed.; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1883).

5. For more on Wellhausen, see John Barton, "Wellhausen's *Prolegomena to the History of Israel: Influences and Effects*" in *Text & Experience: Towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible* (ed. Daniel Smith-Christopher; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 316-29, and Douglas A. Knight, ed., *Julius Wellhausen and His Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Semeia 25; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983).

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Larsson, Göran. *Bound for Freedom: The Book of Exodus in Jewish and Christian Traditions*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999.

In some circles, it may be seen as a criticism to say that an academic work reads more like a novel than a scholarly treatise; but to say that of Göran Larsson's *Bound for Freedom* is to offer sincere praise. This commentary — the author's own translation of his original 1993 publication in Sweden — is an interesting, readable, and theologically compelling work. Larsson has rendered an invaluable service to Jewish and Christian communities alike in his study of this ancient text. The play on words in the main title taps into multiple meanings of liberation and destination that inform the story and theology of the Book of Exodus. Larsson is sensitive to the paradox behind the redemption of Israel from Egypt: that the freedom to which God's people are headed is a freedom experienced in relationship to their redeemer's claim on them. The boundaries which God's covenant and law will establish for their lives are no less real than the slavery that bound them in Egypt, only now the boundaries will truly set them free for the fulness of life God intended. Thus, Larsson sees it as no surprise that the Sinai event stands at the center of the book as "the peak moment in the history of Israel," that to which the liberation from Egypt had been pointing (p. 126).

The opening "Word from the Author" provides an excellent summary of the philosophy behind Larsson's theological exegesis. Methodologically speaking, the subtitle of his work hints at its guiding intellectual force. Although *Bound for Freedom* is rightly regarded as a commentary by virtue of its format, it succeeds in probing deeply into the theological reflection of Jewish and Christian traditions upon the biblical book. In some ways, then, Larsson offers us a theological history of the interpretation of Exodus. It is fair to say that the approach is more canonical than redactional, and inductive rather than deductive, as Larsson lets the text raise questions of introduction, history, and the like. Nevertheless, the book itself is deeply sensitive to the historical, linguistic, and religious contexts of every passage. The goal, therefore, is to bridge historical and theological questions by treating Exodus as "an integrated narrative" (p. xi). Many portions of the commentary might be given as expressions of the method, but an especially fine example of Larsson's handling of texts is the discussion on the Sabbath commandment (pp. 146-148), drawing on

insights from ancient Near Eastern backgrounds, rabbinic sources, and New Testament interpretation.

Perhaps one of the best measures of a commentary on Exodus is its treatment of chapters 25-40, with their attention to the details of God's sanctuary. Where there might be the temptation to pass over this section quickly — especially in a theological commentary — Larsson gives no meager discussion of these passages. Instead, by attending to the way the story of the golden calf occurs in the midst of these chapters, his discussion reveals what is at stake in Israel's proper worship of Yahweh. Particularly lucid and suggestive are his comments justifying the rubric of "fall and new covenant" for the episode with the calf (pp. 245-247) as well the indictment of our own setting: "Applying the text to ourselves, perhaps we ought to consider that the people of Israel were on that occasion ready to give up their gold to make a god. How many people today willingly give up God to make money and achieve earthly success" (p. 247).

Given Larsson's explicit concern for both Jewish and Christian exegesis, it is fitting to make some comment about his handling of these traditions. A long association with the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies and Research informs his understanding as he seeks to promote Jewish and Christian reflection. His emphasis on rabbinic traditions will be especially helpful to the Christian reader. There are several indications throughout his work of Larsson's sensitivity to the inter-textual conversation on liberation in the Old and New Testaments. Two examples from his discussion of the legal material will suffice. First, he offers a challenge to the Christian audience of Exodus not to reduce the Decalogue to a system of laws that merely uphold some sort of legal order. God's relationship with Israel is the heart of these commands (p. 139). Second, his reading of the Lex Talionis (Exod. 21:18-27) in its context contains a warning for Christians not to misunderstand the New Testament use of Exodus in the Sermon on the Mount (167-169). Jesus does not present "antitheses" but rather "supertheses" that press home all the more the significance of God's law for our lives (p. 169).

On the whole, the commentary is accessible to the lay person as well as the scholar. An 11-page Glossary guides the reader through several technical terms related to Rabbinic literature, while extensive notes refer the scholar to other resources. One wishing for a more technical approach to so-called critical issues may be disappointed, but the gifted literary readings and the variation of methods used to treat the materials prove the worth of this commentary. Preachers especially will appreciate Larsson's pastoral approach to spiritual concerns that may arise in the text (e.g., note his mention, on p. 56, of readers' sensitivity to the issue of hardening of heart). My own understanding of the Book of Exodus was enriched by reading this commentary. I heartily recommend it.

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Martyn, J. Louis. *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997.

In the past two decades commentaries on Galatians have responded to the 1979 commentary on Galatians by Hans Dieter Betz in the *Hermeneia* series. That commentary analyzes Galatians according to the conventions of Greco-Roman rhetoric and philosophy. While being aware of Betz's commentary, J. Louis Martyn, Edward Robinson Professor Emeritus of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York, owes much of his thinking about Paul to Ernst Käsemann to whom he dedicates his commentary. In particular, Martyn understands Paul to be preaching a cosmic, apocalyptic eschatology. God is radically intervening or invading the world through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ to reclaim creation and humanity from slavery to the Law and powers that hold humanity hostage. From this perspective, rather than translate *dikaioō* and *dikaiosunē* as "justification" or "pardon" in a judicial sense, Martyn translates them as "rectify" and "rectification." God is making right what has gone wrong with the world.

Martyn argues that the situation prompting the Galatian letter is the coming of Jewish-Christian teachers to Galatia claiming to have the authority of the Jerusalem Church. They were insisting that the Galatians needed to observe the law of the Old Testament, particularly circumcision and observance of the Torah. They taught that Gentiles become children of Abraham only through circumcision, the Law, and obedience to Jesus. Jesus as Messiah is the authoritative interpreter of the Law that is the source of the Spirit and the means for victory over the flesh. These teachers are not so much Judaizers or "anti-Paulinists" as they are the heads of their own independent mission to the Gentiles. Paul responds by once more preaching the gospel to the Galatians in order to establish the truth of what he had preached and the error being preached by the teachers from Jerusalem. Unlike Betz who sees Galatians as Paul's defense of his gospel, Martyn sees Galatians as Paul's reproclamation of his gospel in the form of an evangelistic sermon.

Martyn uses disciplined imagination to reconstruct a viable historical and religious matrix that explains the details of the text of Galatians. He even ventures to imagine what Paul had said to the teachers and how they reacted to Paul's letter. Through great historical and literary acumen, Martyn has tried to elucidate how the original Galatian audience would have heard and understood every verse. The commentary is not just a catalogue of the views of other interpreters of Galatians from which Martyn selects the ones he espouses for each section. Rather, he provides a unified and fresh perspective with insights that will surely lead to future debate. For example, typically the allegory of Hagar and Sarah in 4:21-5:1 is understood to contrast the two religions of Judaism and Christianity. However, Martyn understands them to contrast two types of Gentile missions: that of the teachers from Jerusalem who enslave the Galatians to the Law and that of Paul's mission that frees the Gentiles from the Law (pp. 431-66). For another example, Martyn believes that angelic powers, acting without the authority of God, gave the law, seeking to incite transgressions of the Law (Gal. 3:19-22). Paul's gospel is not simply affirming that the promise to Abraham and his seed, Jesus, is superior to the

Law, but that the Law stands in opposition to the promise (However, this makes the translation of 3:19 difficult because Paul affirms that the law is not opposed to the promise).

The commentary is well-written and enjoyable to read. One very helpful feature of the commentary are the 52 extended "Comments" that provide more detailed discussion of historical and theological topics related to the portion of Galatians being interpreted. These weighty comments provide the theological core of the commentary. Pastors and students will find it accessible at every turn. In fact, many will find it so engaging that they just might keep reading beyond the passage being studied to delve more deeply into issues of the early church and Pauline theology.

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Powell, Samuel M. *The Trinity in German Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Powell, a professor of philosophy and religion at Point Loma Nazarene University, has produced a lucid survey of major schools of German Protestant thought, from Luther to the theologians of hope. He focuses upon Germany because it is identified as the place where the principal alternative to the medieval Roman Catholic view of revelation was born, and also as the home of modern historical consciousness, where the contemporary understanding of the self finds its roots.

Acknowledging his topic to be a daunting task, he organizes his survey around three concepts that he perceives to have governed modern German Trinitarian thought: the ideas of reflective selfhood, of revelation, and of history. Under the first, he includes all thinkers from the Reformation through the mid-18th century, when, in his view, "history" became an issue. The concern for revelation, in relation to the Reformation mantra "sola Scriptura," meant that the nature of the Godhead would be consigned to mystery, apart from a reliance on the ecumenical creeds, and focus would be placed on expounding God's revelation within the drama of redemption in Jesus Christ. This emphasis inadvertently relegated Trinitarian thought to a secondary concern – a tendency that became explicit in the era of liberal Protestant thought. Powell sees the work of Barth and his successors as countering this trend with the contention that Trinity *can* be "read off the surface of revelation," but this is done in a fashion that required new ways of conceptualizing revelation itself. At stake are the changing concepts of the self, which have provided the foil for Trinitarian thinking in each phase of German Protestant thought. The author credits Hegel for a view of the self that places greater emphasis upon the inherent relationality of persons – a theme that has come into prominence in the Trinitarian thought of Moltmann and Pannenberg. Finally, Powell examines the idea of history in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. He traces its development from being a tool for critically asserting the discontinuity between the New Testament and the doctrinal products of the Nicene

era (Reimarus), to the more thoroughgoing notion of historicity in Schleiermacher. Powell credits him with developing the notion that not only does the Bible develop historically, but so also does God's relation to the world. History becomes the vehicle whereby God becomes a Trinity. However, this view only addresses the relation of God to the world, and does not involve the divine essence itself, it remained for Hegel to extend the concept of historicity to the divine being per se.

Following this schema of interpretation, Powell has to a large extent achieved his goal of demonstrating the principal contours of German Trinitarian thinking. His treatment of individual theologians is overall balanced and thematically interwoven. However, with his interest in fitting figures into the historical contours of his three major themes, he occasionally overlooks writers who articulate ideas before they were supposed to have surfaced. For example, the federal school of Dutch and German Reformed Pietists (particularly Johannes Cocceius, 1603-1669, and Friedrich A. Lampe, 1683-1729) had already, in the century before Schleiermacher, worked quite intentionally with the concept that God's relationship to the world developed historically. Also, the author's observation that German Protestantism almost "uniformly ignored" the analogical method of deducing the doctrine from the relation between the Trinity and the structure of the self (p. 7), with their preference for developing doctrine upon biblical exposition, may point to the need for broadening the study of modern Trinitarian thought beyond Germanic borders. After all, such an analogical method was at the forefront of the thinking of America's pivotal theologian, Jonathan Edwards.

With its breadth and clarity, this work is certainly to be recommended as a survey text for seminarians and others, and its usefulness as a reference work is enhanced by extensive footnotes citing German texts, and also by the inclusion of an extensive bibliography and index.

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Lächele, Rainer, editor. *Das Echo Halles: Kulturelle Wirkungen des Pietismus*. Tübingen: Bibliotheca Academica Verlag, 2001.

This anthology from Rainer Lächele, who teaches church history at the University of Marburg, is representative of the renaissance in Pietism research that is currently in progress on the Continent. As the title suggests, it seeks to assess the reverberations of the reform impulses emanating from the productive center of Lutheran Pietism in the early 18th century, the University of Halle in Germany. The particular focus for the study is the impact of Pietism upon culture, both in Germany and North America, in the 18th and 19th centuries. To achieve that purpose, it brings together 13 essays from prominent continental scholars, who explore a diverse range of cultural expressions of Hallensian Pietism and its representatives. Most of these are younger scholars, who are cumulatively adding their contributions to the growing documentation of the

extent to which Pietism was a positive force in the making of modern Western culture. In so doing, they are also helping to correct the negative impressions of the movement left by Albrecht Ritschl's monumental 19th-century study, *Geschichte des Pietismus*. His assessment of the movement as being inherently otherworldly and ethically non-engaged in its asceticism held uncritical dominance throughout much of the 20th century.

The contributors to this volume explore the paradoxical implications of a movement that was at once a renewal of supernatural, personal Christianity and also a force for extensive social and communal transformation. This paradox is examined in the areas of the Enlightenment, politics, the arts, hymnody, poetry, architecture, furniture, and community organization. A feature that holds special significance for Americans is the chapter by Hermann Ehmer on the exportation of Pietism to North America, which includes an examination of major Pietist community projects in Pennsylvania and the Midwest. Each of the chapters is well documented, and the book is enhanced with plates and color photographs. Subject and name indices enable the volume to serve as a useful reference work, as well.

Here is a work that commends itself to all serious students of the religious roots of modern Western culture, and it may even inspire its would-be readers to acquire proficiency in the German language.

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Webber, Robert E. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1999.

Convinced that Jesus Christ is the Good News for each generation, most evangelical Christians acknowledge the importance of engaging contemporary culture. The difficulty, as Robert Webber sees it, is that we are offering answers to questions people are no longer asking. While much of evangelical thought has been shaped around modern emphases on "individualism, reason, and objective truth," the culture has shifted to a postmodern perspective and its presuppositions, questions, and delights have changed. Webber challenges his evangelical brothers and sisters to recognize the shift, free ourselves from our "enmeshment" with modernity, and respond to our new context in creative ways.

The crucial response is to recover the ancient Christian tradition. As Webber explains, "the burden of *Ancient-Future Faith* is to say that the road to the future runs through the past." By the past, he means the first several centuries of the church, and "what the church has affirmed from its beginning." In particular, the early church's understanding of Jesus as *Christus Victor* offers a "new starting point for an evangelical witness in a postmodern world: the centrality of Christ and his victory over the powers of evil" (48). For Webber, this ancient or classical understanding of Christ addresses two postmodern concerns: the search for a unifying principle and a more adequate answer to the problem of

evil. In fact, "the *Christus Victor* message provides the Christian with an interpretation of all reality. It speaks to the origins of all things; it deals with the problem of evil; it affirms a God who is involved in the created order; it answers the human quest for meaning; it provides a hope for the future" (61).

Webber structures the book by beginning with ancient church understandings of the work of Christ and then addresses aspects of Christian response as they would unfold in any community of faith—"the church, its worship, its spirituality, its mission to the world." He includes an appendix addressing questions about the relations among scriptural authority, ancient creeds, and more recent confessions. Writing for church leaders, pastors, college and seminary students, he suggests that the book can also be read as a "primer" on the Christian faith; it lays out the "most essential truths of traditional Christianity" and suggests "ways these truths can function in a postmodern world."

Webber is optimistic that a recovery of the emphases and wisdom of the early church will help us give priority to the common teaching of the church. By reconnecting with sources that predate major church divisions, Christians can recover a unity rooted in our common adherence to the apostolic tradition.

He succinctly summarizes his argument in the following statement:

The postmodern world is a rich cultural context for the recovery of a classical view of the church. The scientific emphasis on the interrelationship of all things allows us to speak intelligently of the interdependence of the church historically and globally. The philosophical shift from reason to mystery provides an opening to the discussion of a supernatural view of the church connected with the work of Christ. The shift from individualism to community is a cultural change that permits us to speak once again of the significance of the church as a reflection of the eternal community of God expressed in the Trinity; the emphasis in communication theory and a language of images and metaphors allows us to recover the biblical images and historic marks of the church, which can be mined for their rich variety of meanings; and the notion that communication best occurs through participation invites us to experience the church and to be interpreted by its meaning not as an abstract idea, but as a present reality (91).

Some of the strengths of this book turn out also to be weaknesses. *Ancient-Future Faith* is brief, accessible, and readable. It is no small accomplishment that a book on ancient traditions and postmodern issues is relatively free from jargon. However, because the book deals with substantial time periods, major theological debates, and extensive traditions, the necessarily sketchy treatment of some major issues can occasionally be frustrating.

A book suggesting how Christians can engage postmodern society in redemptive ways is most encouraging. However, except for brief acknowledgements that postmodern views and Christian faith will encounter serious tensions around "the universal claim for the Christian narrative" and Christianity's "mission mandate to convert others and bring them into the Christian faith and perspective," Webber does not give much attention to additional difficulties evangelical Christians might face in proclaiming an ancient faith in a postmodern context.

In the book's brief section on the mission of the church in the world, the difficulty of relying exclusively on the ancient tradition becomes apparent. While a recovery of the insights and practices of the early church will be helpful in a postmodern context and as a corrective to weaknesses within evangelicalism, the ancient church does not offer an adequate model for Christian engagement with the institutions of postmodern society.

Christian leaders in those first centuries did not have to sort out the institutional complexities we face. Despite some commonalities with the postmodern cultural context, relations among the early Christians, the state, and other institutions were very different from ours. In contemporary U.S. society, individual Christians have significant power and responsibility and many resources. So, in addition to the importance of recovering an ancient appreciation for the church as a countercultural community, we need a fuller understanding of Christian responsibility and stewardship in the various spheres of life. On these issues, we need help beyond what the church fathers can offer—we need the wisdom of later traditions.

A related feature of this and other discussions of evangelicalism, the ancient tradition, and postmodernity is the silence on gender issues. While the legacy of the ancient church is ambiguous on this matter, ignoring the issue will not help evangelicals engage the complex concerns about gender identity and relations raised by postmodern thought and society.

Overall, readers will find the book deeply thought-provoking and informative. Webber's insights on evangelism and discipleship, spirituality and worship are very helpful. He writes as an evangelical insider, identifying weaknesses in evangelical thinking and practice, and offering alternatives that are true to the larger tradition. In moving toward a more broadly shaped orthodoxy, Webber argues that the core of evangelical commitment can still be preserved. The book models a generous embrace and appropriation of the riches of various traditions, particularly those drawn from the early church.

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Callen, Barry L. *Clark H. Pinnock: Journey Toward Renewal*. Nappanee, Ind.: Evangel Publishing House, 2000.

Clark Pinnock has been one of the most prominent and provocative theological voices in North Atlantic evangelical Christianity since the 1960s. His long and distinguished career has found him present in and greatly impacting the evangelical scenes in Canada, the United States, England, and the European continent. His special status is grounded in his responsible scholarship and his ability to communicate Christian theology with clarity and cogency. But his influence also has been heightened because he has been ever ready to engage contested theological issues within evangelicalism and to revise his views on these issues when he found the evidence for change compelling. In the creative and sometimes turbulent process, he has helped to clarify what is at stake in the debates and has scouted a way forward for others who share his evangelical background and his questions about cer-

tain reigning assumptions within this large and diverse Christian movement known as evangelicalism.

Of course, one person's "scout" is another person's "drifter." Change in one's central convictions is not always viewed positively, particularly within the theological academy. Since the truth we deal with is grounded in and concerns the steadfast God, there is a subtle temptation to view negatively any change in our conceptions of this truth. Ironically, this temptation is as prevalent among Protestants—who emerged with a call to reform continually inadequate theology—as anywhere else. But whatever its object, the discipline of theology is fundamentally a human enterprise, and our human fallibility makes change not only possible but often desirable. The legitimate concern is not whether there is change, but whether this change is only mindless drifting or the mere pursuit of novelty instead of an honest and faithful quest for better understanding of Christian truth.

If there is one thing that this book makes clear, it is that Clark Pinnock's entire adult life has been devoted to such an honest and faithful quest. This is reflected in the book's very form as an "intellectual biography" rather than a systematic survey of Pinnock's theology. It is reflected as well in the coherence that Barry Callen demonstrates within the changes he chronicles. In fact, one could argue that there is more real coherence found in the journey of Clark Pinnock than exists in some (supposedly) systematic theologies! But the most striking thing that emerges from this study is the holistic nature of Clark's quest. He has not limited his search to merely a better understanding of key theological issues. He recognizes that Christian faith involves more than just *right belief*—it also necessarily involves that overall orientation of the person that we call the *heart* and the *actions* toward God and others that flow from and nurture this orientation. As Callen has aptly titled it, Pinnock's life as a theologian has been a "journey toward renewal." Those who read this book will not only learn much about Pinnock's specific theological proposals; they also will be challenged to consider what such a journey might look like for themselves.

To be sure, not all Christians will be (or have been) happy with the direction that Clark's journey has taken. Some in the evangelical community can view it only as a lamentable deviation from his original "orthodoxy" within the fold. This has been particularly true for those who take classic Princetonian Reformed theology as the exclusive standard for "evangelical" theology. But many others within the broader evangelical tent—Anabaptists, Wesleyans, Pentecostals, and the like—have long protested this standard and have argued the biblical warrant for their alternative stances on such issues as predestination, general revelation, and the nature of biblical authority. As Callen shows, some of the most significant moves Pinnock has made (based particularly on his reconsideration of Scripture!) are toward positions long affirmed by these "other" evangelicals. As one of these "others," Callen provides a chronicle of Pinnock's journey that is sympathetic while remaining very reliable.

In effect, Pinnock's insistence on Scripture as the primary basis for reconsidering some of the assumptions that framed his earliest theological work soon embarked him on a journey into the broader Christian community of biblical interpretation. It led him to appreciate other dimensions of persons who were already important to him, like F. F. Bruce, C. S. Lewis, and Sir Norman Anderson. It led him to consider the broader

“Arminian” wing of evangelicalism. It led him to engage the renewed emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal movements. It led him to an appreciative dialogue with “liberal” theology. And it led him into the recently renewed appreciation of some of the distinctive theological emphases of Eastern Christianity. Overall, it has led him into becoming an “ecumenical evangelical” who now weds a strong commitment to the importance of the gospel with a recognition of the importance of listening to, and learning from, how others read this shared gospel.

We in the Wesleyan tradition have often characterized John Wesley as an “ecumenical evangelical.” Many of us in the evangelical wing of this tradition have watched Clark’s long journey with great interest. Having a prominent evangelical voice publicly shift toward positions for which we have taken much chiding from the evangelical establishment has been refreshing, to say the least. But it can also pose a temptation toward unholy smugness. The best way that we Wesleyans can welcome a fellow journeyer who has come to share some of our deepest convictions is to be willing to listen to, learn from, and dialogue with him when he poses thoughtful challenges to our traditional framing and application of these convictions. I am thinking particularly of his insightful and provocative work on the possibility of truth and salvation in other religions, the nature of God’s relationship to temporality, and the need for restoring pneumatology to a fully equal role within our theology.

Clark laments at one point in this volume that his journey might have been easier if he had started out as a Wesleyan. While that may be true, there are sufficient examples of Wesleyans now caught up in the militant rationalist apologetics that Pinnock has struggled to transcend to show that it is not inevitable. In any case, I for one have been instructed and enriched as a Wesleyan theologian by Clark’s work precisely because of the specific journey he has taken, and the integrity and grace with which he has taken it. His story, as told here, is an especially valuable one for any serious Christian ready to listen and learn.

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Taken from the Foreword from Dr. Callen’s book. Used with permission.

Kinghorn, Kenneth Cain. *The Heritage of American Methodism*. Nashville, Tenn: Abingdon, 1999.

At last we have an insightfully written and richly illustrated historical study of American Methodism, which is designed for laypersons as well as for clergy. In a day when many Protestants in general, and United Methodists in particular, suffer from spiritual amnesia, such a study can be expected to make a significant impact in raising the historical consciousness of numerous present and prospective members and clergy.

Its noteworthy features include both its format and content. In terms of the former, the author has taken great pains to include a large number of photographs (both black/white and color) and art reproductions of key figures and historic structures. The text which

accompanies these illustrations provides important supplemental information to the main narrative. The latter is written with lucidity, empathy, and insight, and with focus upon the ways in which Methodism has been a contagious evangelistic movement.

The author locates the movement within its original British context and adeptly demonstrates transitions to the North American scene, as Methodism developed there from humble origins to national prominence. The account is further strengthened by the attention given to educational institutions, worship patterns and hymnody, as well as evangelistic strategies and "classing." Another strength is the inclusion of the parallel stories of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church, as well as the heritage of African American and German Methodism. A rather complete index of subjects and persons has been included as a supplement to the first edition.

Finally, with its concluding chapter on "The Whole Gospel for the Whole World," this work is to be commended to all who are serious about recovering the missional vision of the movement launched by John Wesley.

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