

Book Reviews

Miller, Patrick D. *Deuteronomy. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990. 253 pp. ISBN 0-8042-3105-2.

This is a well-written, clear and stimulating commentary on the book of Deuteronomy by Patrick Miller, professor of Old Testament theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. This work is, in many parts, a compilation of the author's classes, lectures and publications and has therefore been developed over an extended period of time. It is interesting to note that Patrick Miller is not only the author of the Deuteronomy volume, but also the Old Testament editor of this series of commentaries. Consequently, one might expect that this particular volume should be a model meeting the expectations and the objectives set forth for the series.

The intention of this commentary is that it will be a primarily theological exposition for the church catholic. Its purpose is not to supplant the historical, critical or homiletical commentaries and aids; rather, it is intended to be a supplemental resource for the ultimate goal of preaching.

As a result, the brief introduction (scarcely seventeen pages) reflects this aim and does not lay out any apologetic for a particular position regarding historical-critical issues, i.e., authorship, date, and so on (cf. Craigie's *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT). The author does, however, reveal his own position from a traditional historical-critical point of view. Miller maintains that since the composition of Deuteronomy has taken place over several years, then the question is not who wrote the book, but rather, what circles or groups of persons were responsible for collecting and editing.

Miller posits three major proposals for the source of Deuteronomy. The first proposal is that it has arisen from prophetic circles. He cites E. W. Nicholson as identifying a relationship between Deuteronomy and the prophets. The second proposal is that Deuteronomy originated in Levitical priestly circles, a position that he claims is advocated by Gerhard von Rad. The third proposal is that its source is from the wisdom and scribal circles, a position that he perceives is taken by Moshe Weinfeld. Miller's conclusion to this search for authorship is that for one to be able to identify a particular author is not as important as the information that one uncovers during the process of investigation.

Miller claims that Deuteronomy fits its literary context, picking up the narrative where Numbers concludes. At the same time, however, he admits that it does not so easily fit. He accounts for Deuteronomy's distinctiveness by indentifying material of a different genre (which he calls "speech") from the preceding books which are primarily carried by "narrative." This new genre, along with the repeated material from the Pentateuch, and the distinctive character of the language and style of Deuteronomy compared with the preceding books and its similarity with the succeeding books, leads Miller to conclude that Deuteronomy should be understood as a "boundary" book both in its literary and its presumed historical setting. On the one hand, it is shaped and understood by the preceding material. It serves as closure for what has already happened. At the same time, it is instruction for the future, inherent in the book's homiletical nature.

Miller suggests three clues to understanding Deuteronomy. First, he emphasizes the explicit literary structure of a series of speeches by Moses. These are indicated by four editorial superscriptions introducing the material to follow. This structure emphasizes the preaching character of the book and the role of Moses. Second, Miller proposes a recognition of the substructure of Deuteronomy as covenant document. This perception of the book, Miller states, adds a political trait to the hermeneutical and homiletical nature of the book. It focuses on issues of allegiance and loyalty. The third clue that Miller proposes to understanding Deuteronomy is found in the theological structure identified and capsulized in the Shema (Deut. 6:4-5) and the Decalogue (chap. 5). This is the hub of Deuteronomy. The whole book could be capsulized in these statements and specified with its implications. The author concludes that these characteristics are particular to Deuteronomy and signal the import and intention of this book, i.e., to give the reader an understanding of the past, to direct the reader in the future, to call the reader into covenant with God "this day," and to choose life.

When one reads this commentary, one is impressed by the theological prowess of the author. Although the author admits his theological presuppositions (a privilege which should not be denied), one finds within his exposition a flexibility for understanding. Miller does not suppose his understanding is the only legitimate one. His comments, posited in an expository essay format, provide a substantial theological synthesis of the text being considered. After reading *Deuteronomy*, one discovers that the author meets his objectives in producing a theological exposition of the literary units within the book. Although one might wish for more detailed material concerning textual, literary and historical aspects, one must acknowledge one's indebtedness for this comprehensive theological treatment of a book perhaps central to Old Testament theology.

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Klein, Lillian R. *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 68/Bible and Literature Series, 14. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988. 260 pp. ISBN 1-85075-100-5.

The acceptance of synchronic analysis within OT studies has opened up the substantial interpretative resources of literary criticism and comparative literature to biblical scholarship. The subject of irony, for example, has received extensive systematization. Here Lillian R. Klein analyzes the role of irony in the book of Judges. Klein does not attempt a comprehensive reinterpretation of the book, but defines the role of irony in shaping its structure. The author also employs plot theory, particularly as understood by Meir Sternberg (*Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978]) to establish a general literary structure within which to analyze the role of irony. She thus understands 1:1-3:11 as "exposition" and 17:1-21:25 as "resolution," with the intervening material understood to explore the judges in light of the two paradigms, major judge and minor. The role of irony in the narrative is progressive. The exposition section is virtually free of irony, but establishes the framework within which irony can move. The resolution sections are deeply ironic. The intervening material displays an ever-deepening ironic structure. The book of Judges, according to Klein, is a "tour de force of irony" (p. 20).

The hopes one brings to a book such as this are quickly and consistently disappointed. Instead of a disciplined analysis of the incidence and kinds of irony found in the book, one finds exegesis of an extremely questionable sort. Problems are immediately foreshadowed in the preface where the author names as "standard" Hebrew lexica the work of Brown-Driver-Briggs and Benjamin Davidson. The latter is an analytical lexicon used by students who have trouble parsing their verbs! This fateful choice reverberates through the rest of the book. The author tends to work with "root" meanings of words, often playing alleged translational alternatives (usually derived from Davidson) against one another and against the context. Often the philology is simply wrong, such as referring to *wēyēš* in 6:13 as an example of the *waw* conversive (p. 53), or worse, in the discussion of Judges 9:22 where the verb *wayyāšar* is said to derive from the root *šûr* which is said to mean, per Davidson, primarily "contend, strive" and secondarily "to be prince, have dominion." Abimelech is then shown to have both contended and ruled, which is said to be ironic (p. 70). The verb, however, is simply derived from the noun *šar* which means "prince" in West Semitic dialects and "king" in East Semitic dialects. The artificially generated verbal "root" is actually *šārar*. The usage, however, is, in fact, ironic! Abimelech pretends to be a king (*melek*) but when the narrator generalizes about him, he says Abimelech "acted as prince." This typical example could be multiplied.

The interpretation usually becomes highly speculative and fanciful. For example, the author notes that the spirit of Yahweh does not come upon Deborah, and that the name "Deborah" means "honey bee." So far, so good. She then suggests that the OT's paucity of references to bees derives from the fact that bees are a society dominated by a female who castrates the one male who is allowed to impregnate her, and that the bee figures heavily in Cretan paganism. Thus the OT's male bias and pagan associations of bees make it impossible for the spirit of Yahweh to be brought into contact with Deborah (pp. 41-42, 216-217, n. 11; pp. 129, 227-228, nn. 37, 38).

At other times Klein appears simply not to have read the text. At least five times (pp. 65, 69, 89, 125, 180) the author claims Ehud was not "raised up" by Yahweh, and this observation is important to the argument. But the text of Judges 3:15 clearly states: *wayyāqem yhw h lāhem mōšīa' 'et 'ēhūd* ("and Yahweh raised up for them a savior, Ehud..."). Similarly, the author claims Tola does not deliver Israel, flatly contradicting 10:1 which says he did (p. 101). A more complex chain of error emerges in the discussion of Samson. The author uses the reference to renaming the Judean city Kiriath-Jearim as "Camp of Dan" (18:12) to suggest that, since the spirit is said first to stir Samson "in the camp of Dan" (13:25), Samson is therefore depicted ironically as outside his inheritance from the beginning. But here the author has not read the text at 13:25 correctly. There the "camp of Dan" is placed explicitly "between Zorah and Eshtaol," towns only a mile or so apart and within Danite territory. A similar geographical lapse causes Klein to identify the city of Dan in the far north with Shiloh, 90 miles to the south (p. 189).

Most impressive is the author's analysis of the annunciation story in Judges 13. She rightly compares and contrasts it with other OT annunciation stories, but argues that, in these accounts, "an intercourse—a wonderworking deed, a graciousness—between divinity and man seems implicit. It is important to note an active, if nonspecific verb, *as'* [sic] 'to do' enacts a wonder that renders a barren woman pregnant" (p. 112-113). After noting the Bible's tendency to assume that failure to conceive points to female infertility, the author suggests that, in fact, Abraham is infertile in Genesis 21. Of course, concubinage normally enabled the ancients to rule out male infertility, and Abraham's fertility is clear from his having had a child by Hagar, and later, several by Keturah. Nevertheless, Klein moves on to imply that Manoah was not just infertile, but impotent: "...it is not too far-fetched to interpret him [Manoah] as 'unmanned' as well" (p. 114). This is very far-fetched.

This book also suffers from inadequate editing. There are many typographical errors (e.g., Gideon's name comes from the root *gd'* not *gdy*, p. 54) and the Hebrew transliteration is inconsistent, often with no distinction being made between 'ayin and 'aleph, and often omitting these consonants within words (e.g., *šor'āh* is transliterated *šorāh*). At other times the transliteration is inexplicable (*kh'rt* for *krt* on p. 54).

It is sad that such an important subject has received such poor treatment, and that in such a distinguished series. We still need a rigorous analysis of irony in the book of Judges. We shall have to wait.

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Webb, Barry G. *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, 46. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987. 280 pp. ISBN 1-85075-034-3 (hardbound), ISBN 1-85075-035-1 (paper).

This revised 1985 Sheffield doctoral dissertation directed by David Clines with support from the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research admirably contributes to studies on the book of Judges. Although scholars have long focused on the book's diachronic, traditio-historical problems, its synchronic literary problems remain inadequately addressed. Webb's study brackets out questions of sources and redaction in order "to understand the work as an integrated whole" and "to demonstrate...that the work in its final form is a more meaningful narrative work than has generally been recognized." He defends treating Judges as an integrated, distinct whole and briefly defines his own approach (chap. 1), moving next directly to a discussion of the Jephthah story, which he considers a "sounding" (chap. 2). Webb finds here confirmation of his basic methodological principles, spelled out on pages 76-78 in slightly greater detail than previously. The next three chapters take up 1:1-3:6 (chap. 3), 3:7-16:31 (chap. 4) and 17:1-21:25 (chap. 5). These three sections are understood structurally, along a musical metaphor, as "overture," "variations" and "coda" respectively. The "overture" states the essential theme of the book: Israel's failure to possess the whole land, despite Yahweh's sworn promise to Israel's ancestors, is due to apostasy. The central section (3:7-16:31) develops this and other related themes at length, drawing them all to a climax in the Samson narrative (Judges 13-16). The last five chapters "resonate with these themes, and, by picking up elements from the introduction, form the work into a rounded literary unit" (p. 208). A final chapter gathers together the conclusions and develops a few of the study's implications for further research. A bibliography of works cited, Scripture and author indices round out the book.

This first monographic treatment of the literary structure of the book of Judges is an excellent one, despite occasional significant gaps. Webb's analy-

sis is a straightforward quest for the plain grammatical and literary sense of the text with ideology and theory taking a secondary role to setting out the text's structure. Webb often productively rethinks familiar passages and offers suggestions which are usually convincing. Where needed, the author provides diagrams to clarify his proposals. There is much solid literary exegesis in the four central chapters of the book. His analysis of 1:1-36, for example, unearths coherence where scholars have normally spoken in terms of archival fragments. Whatever one thinks of his music analogy, Webb has moved beyond the dysfunctional structural nomenclature of "fragmentary preface," "main body" and appendices" so characteristic of the commentaries.

This excellent study almost succeeds in distracting the reader from the contemporary debate over method and hermeneutic. The brief methodological discussion is disappointing. The sample questions to be asked of the text (pp. 39-40) and the supplemental suggestions on pp. 76-78 do not provide adequate parameters and controls for interpretation. What is needed is not a metaphor and questions, but a precise, comprehensive taxonomy of the phenomena and logical relationships, explicit and implicit, which constitute essential structure. More serious is the avoidance of the contemporary question of whether the coherence inheres in the text or is an act of construal by the reader.

The book's procedure is also curious. Following the introduction is a "sounding," a preliminary study of the Jephthah narrative (10:6-12:7) which provides a microcosmic portrait and, presumably, a defense of the approach. So many points in the Jephthah narrative derive their meaning from their place in the progressive movement of the book that one wonders how fruitful it is to begin the presentation here. It would be better to begin where the reader begins, with the hotbed of textual, literary, redactional and historical problems in 1:1-3:6. A method capable of sorting out this difficult passage would be a candidate for dealing with the rest of the book.

The author's initial division of the book needs greater discussion. Most commentators, proceeding redaction-critically, see 2:6-3:6, with its quasi-cyclical pattern and explicit mention of *šôpěťim*, as an early introduction to the "main body" of the book. A later editor is thought to have added 1:1-36 as a preface to the whole with 2:1-5 as a transition, thus giving a "double" introduction to the book and a problem to interpreters: Should the first book-level division occur after 2:5 or 3:6? Webb's analysis of 2:1-5 and the literary relationship between 1:1-2:5 and 2:6-3:6 contributes substantially to redactional analysis. Unfortunately, the possibility of interrelating redactional and rhetorical interpretations of 1:1-3:6 in a truly integrated reading is not realized. One wishes Webb engaged in more dialogue with diachronic critical analysis.

A further problem comes with the designation of the last five chapters as "coda," suggesting primarily mere thematic resonance, not substantial thematic and discursive development. This does not advance far beyond the

“appendix” nomenclature. Moreover, the book is left with a “climax” (the Samson narrative) occurring with a quarter of the book yet to come. The relationships between chapters 1-16 and 17-21 need deeper probing. Is it possible that the climax of the book comes, as we would expect, at the end? The relationship between these two sections could have been clarified by a form- and redaction-critical analysis of the refrain at 17:6, 18:1, 19:1 and 21:25, particularly its temporal function. This, however, would entail diachronic and comparative analysis, which lie outside the purview of a strictly synchronic literary study.

Failing to see substantive thematic advance in chapters 17-21 is also related to Webb’s dismissal of claims that Judges expresses a programmatic position regarding the monarchy. It is striking that the first sixteen chapters of the book show a deteriorating Israel and the steady collapse of the role of judge, while the last five chapters deepen the portrayal of Israel’s deterioration and point out the absence of a king. Much in chapters 1-16 is best construed as foreshadowing advocacy of the institution of dynastic Judean monarchy. Webb’s approach reflects the ahistorical character of a purely synchronic method. The text is not seen in the concrete context of Israel’s struggle to understand its mutation from tribal confederation to monarchic state in the light of its covenantal traditions, particularly the failure of premonarchic Israel to inherit the whole land.

This book provides the best literary analysis of the book of Judges to date. On the other hand, the flattening which results from avoiding questions of sources, editing and historical context raises serious questions about the book’s subtitle.

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Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. 326 pp. ISBN 0-19-826180-2.

This volume is the third in a trilogy of works written by Bruce Metzger dealing with various facets of the origins of the New Testament. It follows his treatments of the text and of the early versions of the New Testament.

The present volume is divided into three parts. In Part I Metzger surveys the literature on the canon, tracing scholarly discussion on the canon from the mid-seventeenth century to the present. Metzger identifies almost every work that deals directly with the New Testament canon, and thus provides a storehouse of bibliographic data. In opting for this exhaustive ap-

proach, however, Metzger is unable to present the main lines of development in this history of investigation into the canon or to give much attention to the most significant contributions. The works of von Campenhausen and Childs, for example, receive a mere sentence or two.

Part II tracks the development of the New Testament canon in the Church. Here Metzger deals, in turn, with the apostolic fathers, the various influences that led to the development of the canon, the emergence of the canon in the east and west, the Christian apocryphal literature, early lists of New Testament books, and the closing of the canon in the east and west. This is probably the most careful, complete and balanced presentation of the New Testament canon to be found anywhere in English. Although most of the influences which Metzger identifies as standing behind the canon are rather predictable (Gnosticism, Marcion, Montanism), he does give some attention to influences not often cited, for example, the role of persecution, the emergence of the codex, and the appearance of other types of canonical lists (in addition to the Hebrew scriptures, he identifies lists of Greek poetry and even texts dealing with magic).

In Part III Metzger turns from a historical orientation to a more theoretical one. Here he discusses various types of problems the Church confronted in the process of establishing the canon: the criteria the Church employed for canonicity, the relationship between inspiration and canonical authority (the Church regarded as inspired many books and persons beyond the biblical books and their authors, so that the canon was not grounded in a view of unique inspiration), the problem of four different Gospels, and the tension between the historical specificity of the Pauline epistles and their use as canon within the large Church.

Metzger also addresses several theological questions the canon raises for the Church today. To the question, "Which form of the text is canonical?" Metzger answers that there was no concern in the early Church to link canonicity to the best text; the fathers tended simply to assume the text they had. This leads Metzger to conclude, for example, that although the "long ending" of Mark did not originally belong to that Gospel, "the passage ought to be accepted as part of the canonical text of Mark." He does not raise the possibility that the Church's appeal to apostolic authorship may imply that canonicity must be linked to the best text (the one that came from the hand of the apostle, or the apostolic representative, as in the case of Mark). To the question, "Is the canon open or closed?" Metzger answers that although the canon is theoretically open (if, say, a fourteenth genuine epistle of Paul should suddenly appear), it is so unlikely that any serious challenge to the present contours of the canon should emerge that we can safely say that, for all practical purposes, the canon is closed. To the question, "Is there a canon within the canon?" Metzger responds that such a notion robs the New Testament of the richness of its diversity and is unnecessary, since no real contradictions or insurmountable tensions exist within the New Testament. To the question, "Is the canon a collection of authorita-

tive books or an authoritative collection of books?" Metzger argues for the former. Here he espouses the traditional Protestant view that these books had an inherent authority that the Church, in fixing the canon, simply recognized and affirmed. In this connection, Metzger argues for overruling providence. In fact, he goes so far as to say that this providence is seen in the fact that the Church sometimes accepted the right books for the wrong reasons, as when the Church accepted the book of Hebrews on the basis of an erroneous assumption of apostolic (Pauline) authorship. Although one might agree with Metzger's conclusion regarding the inherent authority of canonical books, his discussion on this point illustrates a recurring tendency to pass over some of the more difficult theological issues involved. Here, for instance, he fails to recognize the seriousness of the problem of dissonance between the principle employed in canonical selection (apostolicity) and the legitimacy of the selection itself (appropriately canonical, but not apostolic).

The book ends with appendices dealing with the history of the word *kanon*, variations of the sequence of New Testament books, the role of titles of New Testament books, and early lists of New Testament books.

As one would expect from a scholar of Metzger's stature, his book is a most significant contribution to the study of the New Testament canon. Metzger is, however, stronger in working with historical matters than he is in dealing with the theoretical and theological issues.

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Dunning, H. Ray. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology*. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1988. 671 pp. ISBN 083-411-2191.

A central task of theology is to interpret and communicate the kerygmatic content of biblical revelation in ever-changing contexts. *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* is a Wesleyan systematic theology that seeks to attempt to dialogue with contemporary religious and philosophical thought. H. Ray Dunning, professor of religion and philosophy at Trevecca Nazarene College, was commissioned by the Church of the Nazarene to write this work. Building on the foundation of H. Orton Wiley's three-volume *Christian Theology*, Dunning moves beyond dogma to interact with modern theological positions outside his tradition.

The title reflects the theological orientation of the book by positing Wesley's *ordo salutis* as foundational. Although a traditional trinitarian structure is adopted, the author does not relegate other doctrines (i.e., theological anthropology and biblical eschatology) to an addendum, but rather, integrates them into the whole. Fundamental to his theological explication is

a preference for relational ontology, in contrast to Aristotelian emphases on substantial modes of thought. Dunning grounds this approach to ultimate reality in biblical revelation, positing humanity's essence as being constituted by an internal relation to God.

In part one, "Prolegomena," the author investigates the nature and scope of theology, with special attention given to discovering the hermeneutical norm for interpreting biblical revelation. Dunning presents justification and sanctification by faith in the context of prevenient grace as the basis for doing theology from a Wesleyan perspective. Soteriological, ontological and epistemological dimensions of prevenient grace are explored in the author's quest to maintain a balance between grace and holiness. Sources of theology are discussed in relation to the Wesleyan quadrilateral. Dunning finds legitimacy in Wesley's paradigm, distinguishing between Scripture as the authoritative source, and tradition, reason and experience as subsidiary sources.

Part two, "Our Knowledge of God," examines the doctrine of revelation in relation to God's transcendence, His personal nature, and the falleness of humankind. The author sketches the historical tension between theologies of transcendence and immanence, and posits the need for balance in speaking of God as hidden, yet self-disclosing. Knowledge of God is not abstract, but mediated through relationship, which is made possible by prevenient grace and the restoration of the *imago Dei*. Thus, universal prevenient grace, epistemologically understood, forms the basis for a doctrine of general revelation. Dunning is careful, however, to distinguish between general and special revelation. The latter is not a mere addendum to the former, but is presented as the hermeneutical key for understanding the truths of general revelation.

Part three, "The Doctrines of God the Sovereign," deals with divine attributes, the Trinity and the doctrine of creation. The author grounds his discussion of the attributes of God in biblical categories. Appellations of "living" and "holy" thus reflect God's immanence and transcendence. The moral attributes of truth, righteousness and mercy are qualified by the activity of God in history. Of chief importance to Dunning, however, is the attribution of holiness. In fact, he claims that holy love, as the essential nature of God, qualifies all other attributes. The author restricts himself to evaluating soteriological perspectives of Trinitarian doctrine, with little attention given to ontological concerns. Theological exegesis is the starting point for Dunning's treatment of the doctrine of creation. The author interprets the creation narrative as poetic history, carefully distinguishing this from a mythological hermeneutic. The theological implications of *creatio ex nihilo* are investigated, especially in relation to the issues of theodicy, providence, eschatology and ethics.

In part four, "The Doctrines of God the Savior," Dunning treats the problem of sin and the solution found in the person and work of Jesus

Christ. A discussion of the *imago Dei*, understood relationally, forms the basis of the author's treatment of soteriology. Original Sin involves the loss of the divine-human relationship. In contrast to the Reformed position that allows for a relic of the image in fallen humankind, Dunning posits a restoration of the lost relationship by prevenient grace. The interpenetration of christological and soteriological concerns is reflected in the author's treatment of the Incarnation. New Testament functional Christology is emphasized as foundational to the emerging awareness of Jesus' ontological significance in the Early Church. Christological development through Chalcedon is briefly surveyed, as are the classical theories of the Atonement. Dunning critiques the penal substitution theory, proposing a Wesleyan model in its stead. Functional Christology is employed soteriologically as the author applies the work of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King to the doctrines of justification and sanctification.

Part five, "The Doctrines of God the Spirit," covers not only pneumatology, but also ecclesiology and sacramental theology. The author deals with the Spirit's activity from the perspective of "the synergism of grace" in both the preparation for salvation (awakening, repentance and faith) and the process of salvation (witness of the Spirit, regeneration and entire sanctification). In stressing holiness theology, Dunning makes a case for viewing the Wesleyan position as a synthesis of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Christian thought. Since sanctification is understood as renewal in the image of God, Christ as the true image is held out as the paradigm of holiness. The restored image is characterized by the love of Christ dwelling in the believer by faith, with both vertical and horizontal theological implications. Emphasizing the restored image as the goal of life, the author deals with ethical concerns from a teleological perspective. His treatment of the doctrines of the Church and the means of grace reflects the general tendency within the holiness movement to subordinate ecclesiology and sacramental theology to pneumatological priorities.

Two appendices follow, one on "Speculative Eschatology," and the other on "Hermeneutics." A bibliography of works cited and a good, two-tiered index conclude the work. Overall, *Grace, Faith and Holiness* is a well-written, contemporary articulation of the Wesleyan-holiness perspective. Dunning's intentional de-emphasis of speculative philosophical issues, his lack of historical precision, and his avoidance of certain contemporary theological trends may frustrate some readers. Nonetheless, this is a competent one-volume systematic theology, of particular value for undergraduate theological studies within the Wesleyan tradition.

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The sect type, as Ernst Troeltsch established, will often progress sociologically into the church type. Nourishing this development, and beholden to it, is an accompanying theology that is no longer merely self-referential but risks engagement with the modern world. For nearly half of a century, H. Orton Wiley's three-volume *Christian Theology* defined the landscape for those owning the "Wesleyan-Arminian" covenant. Rich in holiness tradition, and valuable for pastor, layperson and student, Wiley's work plowed familiar fields and at appropriate points polemicized against modernity and the dread Calvinism. In vain, however, does one look for any critical addressing of the burgeoning neo-orthodox theology, let alone existential thought. Barth and Tillich are completely absent, as is Brunner, a mild surprise in light of his perceived compatibility with John Wesley.

H. Ray Dunning's *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* blows a new wind, not of doctrine, but of theological sensibility and sophistication. While this ponderous volume frequently seems lost as to its readership, whether seminary professor or small-town preacher, one thing it knows: its readers are modern people asking modern (or even postmodern) questions. The very title, while firmly grounded in Wesley, sounds vaguely like Tillich's "method of correlation," for grace, faith and holiness are all terms of mediation, of the soul's connectedness to God through the Holy Spirit. Dunning's insistence, furthermore, that biblical revelation is personal and not propositional could not have been more forcefully put by the dialectical theology of neo-Orthodoxy.

For its shunning of narrow intramural theology, Dunning's work is to be applauded and esteemed and its spirit imitated. One cannot imagine Wiley, whom Dunning quotes almost as often as Wesley, ever citing a Roman Catholic theologian to good effect, but the philosophically astute Dunning finds much to like in Karl Rahner. After all, Wesley was a man of catholic breadth, if seldom Roman Catholic inclination. Even a postmodern thinker such as Langdon Gilkey is quoted by Dunning with clinching regularity.

Yet the true burden of *Grace, Faith, and Holiness* is read in its subtitle: *A Wesleyan Systematic Theology*. Judged by this more exacting criterion, Dunning's work is a large disappointment, one whose correction we hope will appear in much less than the fifty years between Wiley's work and Dunning's. Recently deceased Wesley interpreter Albert C. Outler said it best in his christening of Wesley as "folk theologian." Despite his organizational acumen, it may be a "category mistake" to put "Wesley" and "systematic" in the same sentence; he may be unable to bear the ontological weight of a systematic theology.

In fairness to both Dunning and Wesley, "ontological weight" could be an arbitrary noose around systematic theology's neck. Every systematic the-

ology can seemingly determine its own point of departure, its own first principles. Dunning is clear throughout what his will be: the order of salvation. The *ordo salutis* can fuel a revival and inspire a songwriter, but can it launch a systematic theology?

In his *Wesley's Christology*, John Deschner freely admitted that the christological material is embedded, one might say deeply, in soteriological affirmations. Dunning's much more ambitious project of a full-course systematic theology faces this problem in compounded form, and it is not clear that he conquers it. His repeated use of "prolegomena" suggests that he may also doubt soteriology's ability to sustain a systematic theology. Philosophy, largely alien to Wiley but pliable in Dunning's hands, is often marshalled to fill the gaps.

The radically pluralist situation of today's theology brings into question the very possibility of systematic theology on any terms at all. Of the three Protestant progenitors—Luther, Calvin, Wesley—the latter's children are arguably the most theologically various of all, especially the United Methodist Church. This could mean that a theology which is authentically Wesleyan and responsibly systematic is impossible.

One hopes, however, that it means a reinvigorated search for the center of Wesley's thought, a center colored but not exhausted by soteriology. Systematic theology today is obliged to wrestle massively with hermeneutics, which issue Dunning postpones to the book-ending second appendix. If John Wesley is best remembered as a preacher, and if from first to last hermeneutics informs the task of preaching, future investigators could well begin where Dunning ended, namely, with hermeneutics and theological method.

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Stegner, William Richard. *Narrative Theology in Early Jewish Christianity*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989. 141 pp. ISBN 0-8042-0265-6.

This book is *not*, the author is quick to point out, a study in "narrative criticism," at least not in the sense in which that term has come to be applied by contemporary literary critics. Rather, it is an extension of form criticism, a conscious application of a method devised by Birger Gerhardsson to four pericopes considered representative of Christianity's earliest social matrix.

Gerhardsson developed his method, which he called "genetic analysis," in his 1966 study of the temptation narrative (*The Testing of God's Son*, Lund:

C. W. K. Gleerup). The method entails three steps: (1) discovery of words used in the pericope that come from passages in the LXX; (2) analysis of Jewish tradition regarding the latter passages; (3) explanation of how the Jewish Christians might have used the Old Testament passages and the Jewish tradition concerning them to explain and defend their faith. Obviously, such a method will work only with regard to what Gerhardsson called "Christian midrash" (Stegner avoids the term), that is, New Testament narrative developed with conscious reference to previous Old Testament accounts.

Stegner believes he has found four such narratives in the Gospels. The story of the baptism of Jesus in Mark 1 develops with reference to the story of the binding of Isaac in Genesis 22. The Matthean account of Jesus' temptation (Matt. 4:1-11) draws on the accounts of Israel's testing in the wilderness, especially as described by Moses in Deuteronomy. Mark's story of the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:35-44) is patterned after the story of the manna in Exodus 16. Mark's story of the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8) is built on stories about Moses on Sinai in Exodus 24 and 34.

In his application of Gerhardsson's first methodological step, Stegner cites numerous words in each of these Gospel accounts that are also found in the corresponding passages from the LXX. This part of the study was, for me, the least interesting and the least convincing. Citation of word statistics might have helped, so that we could have some basis for evaluating the significance of the parallel word choices. For instance, the mere fact that the Greek word for "eating" (*phagein*) is used in both Exodus 16 and Mark 6 does not prove that Mark derived the word from the Exodus account. The word is extremely common and both accounts are, after all, about meals.

Stegner's application of the second step proves much more fruitful. Even if some of the supposed word parallels are overdrawn, it is not hard to accept that parallels do exist between the Gospel texts and the Old Testament passages that Stegner has selected. Granting this, it is surely important to know how those Old Testament passages had come to be viewed in Jewish tradition by the time of the New Testament period. Dating of Jewish traditional materials is, of course, difficult, but Stegner draws convincingly on a wide variety of sources (Qumran scrolls, targums, apocryphal books, Pauline epistles) to indicate trajectories of interpretation. More than once, he notes that the relevant Old Testament materials had come to be regarded as eschatologically significant. In the great coming day of deliverance, people would again eat manna, the power of Satan would be broken, an apocalyptic revelation of the future would occur on Mt. Sinai, and so on.

Moving to the third step of Gerhardsson's methodological program, Stegner attempts to summarize the manner in which early Jewish Christians appear to have drawn on Old Testament accounts to interpret their own faith stories. Three conclusions are significant: (1) the early Jewish Christians took the Exodus/Sinai/Wilderness traditions as their starting point for understanding God's new work of salvation in Jesus; (2) the early Jewish

Christians were preoccupied with Christology, emphasizing in their adaptations of traditions that Jesus had succeeded where Israel had failed, that Jesus' identity as "Son of God" marked him as unique, and so on; (3) the early Jewish Christians preferred Old Testament stories that tradition had already marked as eschatologically charged because they viewed themselves as an eschatological community-in-waiting.

In drawing these conclusions, Stegner does not go beyond what is warranted by his most secure evidence. Such caution leaves many questions about this "lost chapter in church history" unanswered, but provides a stable nucleus of information, which Stegner invites others to assist him in expanding.

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Davies, Rupert E., ed. *The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*. The Works Of John Wesley, vol. 9, gen. ed. Richard P. Heitzenrater; textual ed. Frank Baker. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989. xvi, 607 pp. ISBN 0-687-46214-2.

Each new volume of the bicentennial edition of *The Works of John Wesley* is a welcome addition to this definitive project. For some time, students of John Wesley have used the fourteen-volume Thomas Jackson edition of *The Works of John Wesley* (1829-1831, revised 1872). The 1872 edition has been reprinted in facsimile by various publishers. Jackson's edition was confined to selection and arrangement of texts, and he did not offer commentary on Wesley's works. For commentary, students have relied upon Nehemiah Curnock's eight-volume *The Journal of John Wesley* (1909, reprinted 1938); E. H. Sugden's two-volume edition of *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley* (1921), and John Telford's eight-volume *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.* (1931). The new bicentennial edition of Wesley's *Works*, when completed, will become the standard and definitive edition. The other works mentioned above will continue as permanently valuable, of course.

The completion of this new edition of Wesley's works has been slower than anticipated (the work was planned in 1960). In 1984, Abingdon Press agreed to continue the publication of these volumes after Oxford University Press regretfully withdrew from the enterprise due to severe economic problems. This new "Wesley project," when completed, will contain all of John Wesley's original or mainly original prose works, with a volume devoted to his 1780 *Collection of Hymns*. An additional volume will focus on Wesley's extensive work as editor and publisher of extracts from the writings of others. Also, an essential feature of this project will be a bibliography

detailing the historical settings of the works published by John and Charles Wesley. The bibliography will offer full analytical data for identifying each of the two thousand editions of these 450 pieces published during Wesley's lifetime, along with a directory of their locations. Each volume is, of course, indexed, and a General Index for the entire edition is planned.

As the title states, this present volume deals with the Methodist Societies. The documents included principally pertain to the goals, polity and practices of the societies, bands and classes. Some of the pieces tell the sort of Christians Wesley wanted the Methodists to become (*The Character of a Methodist*, pp. 31-46; *The Principles of a Methodist*, pp. 47-66; *Advice to the People called Methodists*, pp. 123-131). Wesley defends the Methodist organization as the best prudential means to minister effectively to the people to whom God led him (*A Plain Account of the People called Methodists*, pp. 253-280; *A Short History of Methodism*, pp. 367-372; *A Short History of the People called Methodists*, pp. 425-503). A repeated theme is Wesley's firm conviction that a society belongs within the church and schism ranks among the gravest of sins (*Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England*, pp. 332-349; *Farther Thoughts upon Separation from the Church*, pp. 538-40). This volume also contains Wesley's response to criticism and to persecution of himself and of the Methodist people. These short, polemical tracts help give perspective. (I learned, for instance, that Wesley's detractor, "Philaethes," was The Rev. Mr. Baily of Cork.)

This volume's editor, Rupert Davies, is a noted British Methodist scholar and leader who formerly served as the principal of Wesley College, Bristol, England. Davies' scholarship is impressive. His work is balanced, clear and always presented with an economy of words. He achieves the aim of the series which is "to enable Wesley to be read with maximum ease and understanding, and with minimal intrusion by the editors." Davies' references to secondary literature will be easily recognized by Wesley scholars (who among them could not add scores of additional titles to the works mentioned in the footnotes?). A major strength of Davies' work as editor is his deft and accomplished ability to set the stage for each piece and his concise commentary, always apropos. The variant textual readings at the back of the book will interest primarily those specialists who wish to trace the evolution of the text of one of Wesley's pieces which was reprinted over several years in new editions. This volume contains a splendid index.

A future volume (vol. 10) will continue the focus on the Methodist Societies, containing material from Methodism's governing body, the Conference. In the meantime, those interested in the history, nature and design of the Methodist Societies will find volume nine a rich source of valuable material. For generations, this scholarly accomplishment will benefit students of John Wesley.

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Erb, Peter C. *Pietists, Protestants, and Mysticism: The Use of Late Medieval Spiritual Texts in the Work of Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714)*. Pietist and Wesleyan Studies, No. 2. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1989. 329 pp. ISBN 0-8108-2281-4.

Professor Erb is well known to readers and scholars who are familiar with the study of Protestant spirituality in Europe. Now serving as professor of English and religion and culture at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, as well as associate director of the Schwenkfelder Library, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, Erb has made a major scholarly contribution in his translation, editing and publication of important sources for the study of European Protestant religious expression. Probably best known of these publications are his contributions to the Paulist Press series, *Classics of Western Spirituality*, for which he has edited volumes on Jacob Boehme, Johann Arndt and Pietism. The present volume is the second to appear in a Scarecrow Press series, *Pietist and Wesleyan Studies*, edited by Professors David Bundy and J. Stephen O'Malley, both of Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky. This work focusing on the Pietist church historian Gottfried Arnold is an updated revision of Dr. Erb's Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Toronto (1976). Gottfried Arnold, largely neglected by English-speaking scholars, offers an intriguing challenge to late-twentieth-century interpreters of Christianity. Erb provides a substantial introduction to the context and career of this important figure.

Erb presents the impact of late-medieval mysticism upon early Lutheranism and Pietism in general and Arnold in particular. He is interested to depict the significant impact of writers like Tauler and Ruusbroec on Protestant figures from Luther and Caspar Schwenckfeld onward. At the same time he drives home the transformation of the medieval mystics' intent as their writings were translated, edited, published and interpreted by their Protestant admirers. Erb shows how the Catholic mystics were being "Lutheranized" as Arnold and his fellow admirers were subjecting themselves to potent doses of late-medieval mystical thought and practice.

In this volume we have an excellent introduction to the role played by late-medieval mystical writings in the emergence and development of the sixteenth-century Reformation, directing attention in particular to Luther and the so-called Radical Reformers. The author continues his well-researched and lucid account through the period of Protestant Scholastic Orthodoxy and onto the stage of German Pietism at the turn of the eighteenth century. Erb traces Gottfried Arnold's thought in its development through the evolution of his unfolding massive scholarly production. The presentation is exact and accurate and the analysis acute. Arnold's thought is exceedingly complex in its progress. Following Erb's account is a formidable challenge even to readers for whom the titles and chronology are somewhat familiar and to whom their archaic German is at least a casual acquaintance. For many readers the patterns will prove very difficult to nego-

tiate. The trip is, however, well worth the fare. Erb demonstrates a masterful command of the sources and the data. The greatest delight to the scholar in the field is the way in which the author deals not only with the sources for Arnold's thought but also with the very translations and editions with which he was working.

Erb is not deceived by Arnold's laudatory references to the mystical writers in question but ferrets out the specific sources for these references in the texts from which Arnold was working, whether primary or secondary. Arnold's progress from a hearsay awareness of these writers to an immersion in their texts is carefully chronicled in Erb's pages. We have here as masterful a piece of intellectual biography as one is likely to find. From beginning to end Erb restrains any impulse to make Arnold into a medieval Catholic mystic or those mystics into Arnold. At no point is resort made to a simple influence or causation with regard to Arnold in his engagement with the mystics. Erb pronounces and defends Arnold's identity as a Lutheran throughout and shows the ways in which he therefore transforms the mystics in his use of their reputations and writings. The importance of this differentiation between Arnold and the late-medieval mystics in the midst of their connection is demonstrated most strongly by the unfortunately rather "inconclusive" conclusion of the book. The final narrative chapter is a detailed and pointed demonstration of the connection and difference in question which ends rather abruptly, with no argument or even statement of the historic significance of the matter. One is here forced to suspect that the hard hand of abridgment is to blame for this infelicity in an otherwise pleasing production.

The volume is graced by an excellent bibliography and a very helpful index. As useful as these will prove, they pale in the presence of the seventy-five pages of learned endnotes that support the text. These notes alone provide an unexcelled treasure for the student of late-medieval and early modern Christian spirituality. It can only be regretted that they are "endnotes" and not "footnotes," as their arrangement by chapters at the end of the text minimizes their usefulness and maximizes the frustration of the reader. If footnotes are impossible, why not carry at the head of each page of endnotes, the numbers of the pages covered by those notes?

This book, written by one of the few scholars capable of producing it, provides a long-needed introduction of the progenitor of truly critical Church history, Gottfried Arnold, to the English-reading public. True, many have no doubt heard of Arnold's *Non-partisan History of Church and Heresy*, and some may have been aware of his depiction of primitive Christianity in his *The First Love*. But even accomplished historians of Protestantism seldom could muster more than a few slogans about his asceticism and separatist tendencies.

We may thank Professor Erb and others involved with this publication for bringing a seminal and exciting as well as profoundly learned historic figure out of the shadows at last. To be sure, only one side of his personal

makeup has been dealt with—and as the author points out in the introduction, that only very partially—omitting any treatment of the role of Arnold's ancient mystical mentors. From this beginning, however, it is to be hoped that other historians will engage the massive literary corpus of Gottfried Arnold.

The reviewer has long been puzzled at the general neglect of Arnold by feminist historians. Beyond his preoccupation with *Sofia* as against *Logos*, one will find a very thorough engagement and an enthusiastic appreciation for the role of women in Christian history in the writings of this scholar from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even should others take up the study of this Pietist historian, for whatever purpose, it is still devoutly to be wished that Peter Erb himself may at last get back to his expressed desideratum of a full-orbed intellectual biography of this most learned of the Pietists and most creative of the historians—Gottfried Arnold.

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Rack, Henry C. *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989, xvi, 656 pp. ISBN 0-334-01378-X.

Henry C. Rack, a Methodist minister and lecturer in ecclesiastical history at The University of Manchester, England, has produced a major achievement. *Reasonable Enthusiast* contains the results of Rack's research on Wesley mined over a lifetime of professional study. Wesley scholars will note with appreciation that this new biography contains the results of fresh research which draws upon material seldom or never used in prior studies of John Wesley.

Rack's work does not pretend to be as detailed a personal biography as Luke Tyerman's three-volume *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley* of nearly 1,900 pages (1870), although Rack's book earns its place in the rare bracket of such superior works. Tyerman quoted generously from Wesley's journal, letters and sermons, as well as anti-Methodist authors—thus leaving the reader to draw her or his own conclusions (notwithstanding Tyerman's scarcely veiled polemical mission). By contrast, Rack summarizes Wesley's views and seeks to balance *historical narrative* with *critical analysis*, at times revealing his onerous awareness of the difficulty of achieving good symmetry. The author avoids some of the tendencies of earlier Wesleyan propagandists.

Rack knowledgeably discusses persons and movements contemporary to John Wesley, thereby giving us fuller insight into the people and forces which helped shape Methodism's founder. The work discusses, with equal competence, the historical, cultural and theological aspects which pertain to the development of John Wesley as a person and to the movement he founded and led. A major contribution of Rack's book is its attention to the larger British culture of which Wesley was a part, a society whose changes deeply affected Methodism. His division of the work into distinct historical periods illustrates this concern. Also Rack shows how people influenced Wesley, even as Wesley influenced people.

After his introduction and prelude, Rack arranges the book under three divisions: (1) "Primitive Christianity": The Young John Wesley (1703-38); (2) John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism (1738-60); and (3) John Wesley and the Consolidation of Methodism (1760-91). The year 1738, of course, marks the beginning of the Wesleyan revival in England. By the year 1760 British Methodism's basic geography had been established, its main problems had been faced and its structures had been formulated. Part I deals with the traditional themes in Wesley's pre-Aldersgate development. In part II Rack's discussion of John Wesley includes the eighteenth-century history of Welsh, Scottish and Irish Methodism. In the final division of this biography the author incorporates some discussion of early American Methodism—although the major focus of the book appropriately concentrates on England. One can scarcely think of a pertinent Wesley topic which is not treated; the book contains sixteen well-developed chapters that cover almost every theme of interest to students of Methodism's founder. The "Interludes" which separate the divisions deal with the nature of revival and the relationship between revival and the contemporary culture. The "Postlude" deals with John Wesley's personality and piety along with a summary of his achievements and legacy. The documentation is superb.

Other books on Wesley have emphasized particular aspects of Wesley in greater depth, because they are, by intention, more focused, and accordingly more limited. To illustrate, Rack does not offer the breadth of ecumenical reference as did Maximin Piette's *John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism* (1937). Nor does Rack claim this goal as a part of the purpose of his book. Vivian H. H. Green's *The Young Mr. Wesley* (1961) and *John Wesley* (1964) continue as precise and concise factual biographies, again not the sole purpose of Rack's work. Rack's study understandably lacks the continental dimension and sometimes tedious detail of Martin Schmidt's three-volume *John Wesley* (1962). A. Skevington Wood's *The Burning Heart: John Wesley Evangelist* (1967) masterfully stressed Wesley's evangelistic message and passion; Rack's work does not so concentrate its focus. Richard Heizenrater's two-volume *The Elusive Mr. Wesley* (1984) seeks to correct legends about Wesley by probing contemporary documents of Wesley along with those who supported and opposed his work. Once more, *Reasonable Enthusiast* targets a different goal.

The major thesis of Rack's book is that John Wesley lived as a man of reason and a man of the Spirit; a cool head and a warm heart made the man. Rack takes no particular pleasure in debunking the sometimes glowing accounts of Wesley's life which present him as a stained-glass figure (as Wesley sometimes presents himself in his *Journal*). But the book paints us a realistic picture of Wesley—a leader with weaknesses and strengths. As a title, *Reasonable Enthusiast* fits the book.

This monumental biography of John Wesley joins the relatively small cluster of superior works which rank at the top of the numerous biographies of Methodism's founder. If one had to chose only one biography of Mr. Wesley (perish the thought!), this book is probably the one to choose.

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