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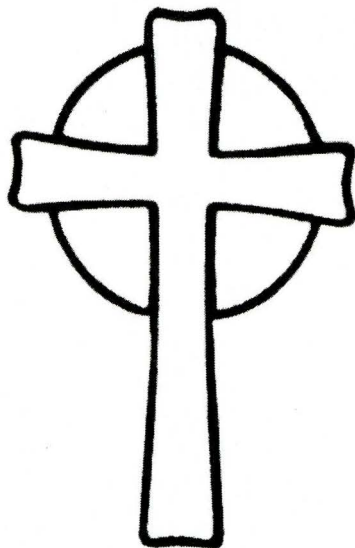
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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

Preacher and Cross, by ANDRÉ RESNER. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 205 pp. \$18.00.

What dominates homiletic theory and practice today: rhetoric or theology? With sights set on the preacher's *ethos*, André Resner notes that "a peculiar state of affairs" has existed in homiletics. Some, following Karl Barth, have bracketed the human component out of the equation. Others have honored rhetoric's interest in *ethos* but have nearly lost sight of the divine. Resner proposes a "bilingual" approach to this impasse. His label is borrowed from a friend in the field of pastoral counseling, but his method is Restorationism at its best. He turns to the biblical text, with all of the critical and imaginative tools at his disposal, to resolve the problem. Specifically, Resner looks to Paul in 1 Corinthians 1-4, where the Apostle works out the theological issue of the person of the preacher in a cultural context that is thoroughly rhetorical in the classic sense. Paul's strategy, Resner finds, is to reorient his readers to a theology of the cross. He calls the Pauline strategy "reverse-*ethos*." Paul's *ethos* argument is the reverse of the Aristotelian focus on audience expectations of honor and credibility. Paul proposes the cross-event as a new orientation, effectively reversing the Corinthians' interest in Paul's trustworthiness to create a new epistemology that looks to God's actions. Paul does not abandon rhetoric (as the Barthians), nor does he compromise theology (as the new homileticians, in Resner's view). Rather, "Paul engages rhetorical concerns but subordinates such concerns in view of the cross-event-proclaimed."

If Augustine, through his fifth-century *On Christian Doctrine*, baptized rhetoric into the service of the church, he practiced a kind of baptism by sprinkling. Resner's Paul practiced baptism by immersion, and Resner thinks the salvation of homiletics is dependent on the mode of the sacrament. His uncompromising emphasis on Paul's gospel of Jesus crucified makes *Preacher and Cross* a suitable sequel to Leonard Allen's *Cruciform Church*. However, Resner has more in mind with this book than a practical outgrowth of Allen's fine theology. Resner has initiated an intelligent discussion of *ethos* in homiletic theory.

Eerdmans has, in recent years, limited itself qualitatively and quantitatively in publishing books in the field of homiletics. Most of the Eerdmans corpus has represented an older and more traditional approach

to preaching. John Stott's *Between Two Worlds*, Sidney Greidanus's *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*, and Elizabeth Achtemeier's *Preaching from the Minor Prophets* represent the conservative perspective. The publisher has essentially ignored the new homiletics found in David Buttrick, Fred Craddock, Thomas Long, Eugene Lowry, and others. But in the last year or two, with the release of Charles Campbell's *Preaching Jesus*, Richard Eslinger's *Pitfalls of Preaching*, and now Resner's *Preacher and Cross*, Eerdmans has caught up with the academy and is providing an intelligent and heuristic challenge to the popular new homiletics. Using his considerable academic strengths, ability with languages, verve of working outside his discipline, and an instinct that turns to Scripture when problems arise, Resner may well become a leading voice amongst a select and respected cadre of writers.

The implications of Resner's work, articulated in the final chapter, push the book out of the academy and into the preacher's study. Resner provides well-documented and convincing critique of Buttrick's avoidance of the "I" of the sermon and, following Richard Thulin, advances a "biblical" use of autobiography in preaching. Resner advises that preachers be more discriminating in the use of non-neutral rhetoric and be clearer about the cross-shaped message.

Resner's work, the fruit of his doctoral dissertation, is a significant and muscular contribution to homiletical thought. It is not, however, without its faults. The book is sometimes dense and slow moving, creating the appearance of a collection of book reviews or, worse, the stiffness of the requirements of a dissertation. Resner's summaries of the works of other theorists are clean but mechanical, and seemingly endless. Resner is not light on his feet. He seems always to be summarizing chapters and sections and on one occasion (chap. 4), runs one summary on the heels of another. His rendition of Augustine, for example, is accurate and useful, but sluggish when compared to the weighty but deft writing of Garry Wills in *Saint Augustine*.

However, this criticism needs some qualification. Before Bo Jackson broke into the majors, one sports writer described him as "[h]aving all of the right muscles in all the wrong places [for a baseball player]." That reviewer was proved wrong. In contrast, Resner's musculature is in all the right places, even overshadowing his lack of speed.

Richard Lischer, past president of the Academy of Homiletics, declared a short time ago that a lacuna exists on the subject of the *ethos* of the preacher. Resner's *Preacher and Cross*, if it is not the very book requested, has successfully launched the discussion.

The Theology of Paul the Apostle, by JAMES D. G. DUNN. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 808 pp. \$45.00.

After writing comprehensive commentaries on Paul's letters to the *Romans* (1988), *Galatians* (1993), *Colossians and Philemon* (1996), James D. G. Dunn has taken upon himself the formidable task of writing a theology of Paul. Though others have undertaken the task of exploring various theses in relation to Paul, Dunn is the first to do a complete treatment of Paul's theology in light of "the new perspective on Paul."

Dunn sees his approach as dialogical rather than sifting through the sand for a static relic from the past. Moreover, this dialogue takes place on three levels rather than just being the sum of Paul's letters. The first level is Paul's inherited convictions or traditional life patterns (Saul, the Pharisee) within the stream of his Jewish heritage. The second level is the sequence of transformative moments in Paul's growth and development; namely his conversion and initial experience with the risen Lord Jesus (Paul, the Christian). The third level is the immediate issues and current reflections that engage Paul, evidenced in his letters (Paul, the Apostle).

These levels have their own internal dialogue. Paul's native Judaism is in dialogue with the wider culture of the Hellenistic and Roman world. "His Pharisaism was in dialogue with its religious and national heritage. . . . His zealotism was in a kind of dialogue with the alternative understandings of that heritage current within late Second Temple Judaism." Paul's new Christian faith was also in dialogue with his Jewish heritage because he was in fact joining a new Jewish sect. And most clearly, Paul is in dialogue with the churches to which he writes. "The theology which came to expression through such a dialogue was bound to be dynamic, a process of theologizing, not a settled state."

Dunn has no illusions that this dialogical model is adequate for the task, but he thinks it can bring out the richness of Paul's theology. The most critical point in Dunn's dialogical methodology is the basic framework from which he will build a theology of Paul. In contrast to looking for a center of Paul's theology, Dunn sees development taking place in Paul's thought. As a result, he wants to find Paul's more mature reflections. Therefore, the letter to the Romans is the template over which Dunn will engage Paul's theology. He writes, "Romans is still far removed from a dogmatic or systematic treatise on theology, but it nevertheless is the most sustained and reflective statement of Paul's own theology by Paul himself."

Dunn believes there is a focal or pivotal point of Paul's theology and theologizing. "Christ functioned as the fulcrum point on which Paul's whole theology pivoted, the key which unlocked so many of Scriptures' conundrums (though setting up others), the light which illuminated its

dark places (though setting up fresh patterns of light and shade).” However, this center, or fulcrum, is not a static center but a living center of Paul’s theologizing.

After tackling methodological issues, Dunn organizes the book under the fairly predictable headings of God and humankind, humankind under indictment, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the beginning of salvation, the process of salvation, the church, and how believers should live. A helpful epilogue rounds out the work, providing conclusions, summaries, and areas for future consideration.

Dunn’s reflections on the Law are helpful in understanding “the new perspective on Paul.” His comments on Paul’s understanding of baptism will provoke as well as encourage those from the Restoration heritage. His penetrating insights on Paul’s view of the Spirit offer a much needed corrective. His comments on the preexistence of Jesus are some of the sanest and most reasonable within the context of monotheistic Judaism. And his contribution to what Paul knew or cared about the life of Jesus is a welcome addition to the ongoing conversation.

The benefit of Dunn’s massive compendium is not some surprising new discovery or flashy insight, but rather a careful, engaging, and mature reflection on Paul’s theology. Those already familiar with Dunn’s previous writing will be disappointed if they are looking for something radically new or different. For those not well acquainted with Dunn, or Paul for that matter, this is a great place to dive into the deep end.

North Haven, CT

MARK MANASSEE

Soul Survivors: An African American Spirituality, by CARLYLE FIELDING STEWARD III. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997. 146 pp. \$15.95.

In the midst of devastating dehumanization, African Americans have not only survived but triumphed by what Carlyle Fielding Stewart names “soul force.” African American spirituality has woven together the best of Anglo and African cultures to creatively form their own African American identity. While blacks have not been politically, socially, or economically free in the past, the practice of spirituality has enabled the development of various forms of spiritual and cultural freedom by interpreting, embracing, and transcending the constraints of an oppressive society. Furthermore, the development of their own norms, forms, beliefs, structures, and practices has given rise to a life and culture that is a unique form of human existence, survival, and, most of all, freedom.

Stewart identifies the black church as the center of freedom which most influenced the praxis of African-American spirituality. It became a safe place where blacks gathered to embrace their collective concerns as

a community of faith. Steward states, "It has been the only institution in the African-American experience that has maintained relative autonomy from the domesticating influence of white oppressors and overlords." It is such a context that allows Calvin Bowers, "Creating the Black Church," *Gospel Advocate* (January 1990, 17-18), to argue that some black churches may be the last place to see integration due to the desire to maintain a power base not available to them elsewhere. After reviewing several aspects of worship as the context for spiritual and cultural freedom, Steward notes that black preaching in and out of the black church is "one of the most powerful idioms of freedom for black people in America."

Stewart describes the concept of "double consciousness" as an aspect of the attempt to maintain freedom in the African-American community. W. E. B. Du Bois defines the term as looking at oneself through the eyes of oppressors and thereby devaluing the self as inferior to them. However, double consciousness has led to alternative ways of viewing and acting in the world. By viewing the world through their own as well as through others' eyes, they were able to survive as they developed a creative ability to adapt and escape the limitations imposed upon them.

The ability to create a soul language that defines reality into systems of meaning gives power and purpose to people. Subsequently, they successfully adopt and adapt the structures of the larger culture for their own purpose. This process comes from a double consciousness that Stewart calls "translating." African Americans translated the experience of one kind to that of another, leading them to liberation. Therefore, African-American spirituality gave freedom to the mind and spirit that the external situation could not take away. The spirituality is due to a deep belief in the sacredness of life that reaffirmed in blacks a personal dignity that resulted in the practice of mercy and nonviolence. Therefore, order was recreated in the midst of chaos because, as a whole, blacks determined for themselves how they responded to oppression.

Language is the key in ordering the chaos. Steward discusses language under the categories of rap, signify, and testify. These modes of oral communication symbolize "the capacity to think intelligently, act decisively, and express creatively and courageously the feelings black people harbor about life in America."

Various forms expressing innovation and improvisation arose from black soul forces that constitute black culture. Steward discusses these forms under the subtitles black music, folk tales, literature, humor, art, sports, and dance; and he discusses worship forms under the headings of prayer, healing, shouting, praising, dancing, singing and instrumental music, deliverance/conversion/transformation, and preaching and teaching. These forms express that what is true, beautiful, and valuable will be

determined by black people themselves and will defy and subvert attempts of the larger culture to discern.

Steward recognizes that he offers an interpretation of the development of black spirituality. He refers to, but does not delineate, alternative perspectives. He is not debating but advocating a convincing and thought-provoking account of the survival of a people during the American holocaust.

Although Stewart claims outsiders are limited in their ability to understand, I would have appreciated a break in the discursive style by greater use of examples. I was left wondering how certain forms functioned to accomplish what he claims. For example, he uses jazz as a genre of music that expresses the soul of black people. His critical analysis of how jazz became a formative and communal force in black life is thick and cognitively complex. Some examples, a narrative, or perhaps an audio-visual could bring greater clarity. The same is true of most topics throughout the book (e.g., signification, rap, testifying, preaching, prayer, celebration).

Abilene Christian University

TIM SENSING

"You Have Stept out of Your Place": A History of Women and Religion in America, by SUSAN HILL LINDLEY. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996. 500 pp. \$35.00.

Recent studies of American women's history have evinced a deepening appreciation for the role of religion in the shaping of women's lives. Susan Hill Lindley's *"You have Stept out of Your Place": A History of Women and Religion in America* charts a decidedly middle course between the extremes of traditional and feminist approaches to the history of American women and religion. Indeed, Lindley's book combines comprehensive, original research and effective integration of monographs and articles to create an inclusive narrative exploring the importance of faith and belief in women's lives. Although admitting in the introduction her feminist leanings, Lindley avoids the temptation to focus only on those women who challenged male domination in forthright ways. Instead she presents the story of the majority of women who accept a traditional domestic role while working from within the home to make their own contributions. Women's benevolent societies, for example, allowed involvement in reform movements such as temperance and prostitution without requiring a wholesale rejection of domestic life for women.

Women's participation in American religion emerges as a complex story, a cloth woven from strands of every color, texture, and type of thread. Women of different ethnic groups often espoused disparate doctrines, pursued separate avenues of expression, and at times even clashed over the proper role for women in religion. Lindley looks closely at the

experience of women from groups as diverse as the Jewish, Native Americans, and Mormons. Yet despite the disparity, which is portrayed in broad and cogent terms, there were also commonalities. For instance, most American women considered religion an acceptable outlet from the relative drudgery of the domestic circle. There were also opportunities for leadership. From there, a strong faith often led women to social activism and an interest in politics when private reform efforts fell short. Thus the achievement of woman suffrage in 1920 was not as much a triumph of civil rights as it was the attempt to insure more morally concerned voters to support issues of reform.

Lindley's judicious treatment of women and religion in America offers an excellent introduction to the inextricably intertwined issues of gender and faith in American history. Anyone interested in exploring these issues will find *"You have Stept out of Your Place"* a useful introduction.

Abilene Christian University

LORETTA M. LONG

Walter Scott: A Nineteenth-Century Evangelical, edited by MARK TOULOUSE, St. Louis: Chalice, 1999. 150 pages. \$19.99.

Walter Scott, despite being a key leader in the Stone-Campbell Movement, has been understudied. This volume helps fill the lacuna. Not a conventional biography, the volume presents a foreword, an introduction, and six interpretive essays offering important interpretations of Scott (along with a sermon by Fred Craddock). The essays are revisions of two different lecture series devoted to the bicentennial of Scott's birth sponsored by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society and Brite Divinity School. Every essay in the volume makes a valuable contribution in understanding the importance of Scott. Two are particularly insightful.

David Edwin Harrell's "Walter Scott and the Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Spirit" sets Scott's religious ideas into the American context. Scott's optimistic "true gospel" offered a marketplace counter to the growing emotion-laden ideas of spiritualism and Methodism. As the optimistic reformist ideals of the 1830s were dashed by the time of the 1840s, Scott became a fellow traveler with the Millerite adventist movement. Crushed by the "great disappointment," Scott shifted again to evangelical Protestantism and a strong anti-Catholicism. By the 1850s Scott was still a "gradualist" Protestant, but his millennialist dreams of a united Protestant Christianity seemed far away. On the eve of the Civil War, Harrell concludes that Scott was an "old man who had dreamed impossible dreams and seen misleading visions"(35).

T. Dwight Bozeman shows that Scott's six principles of the "true gospel" (faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and resurrection) had a "downsizing effect" on spirituality in the Stone-

Campbell Movement. The true gospel cut down historic doctrines and practices of redemption: predestination and spiritual exercises (fasting, introspection, spiritual diaries, and daily devotional schedules). Objective aspects of the faith displaced feelings and enthusiasm. The role of the Holy Spirit in conversion was attacked. The true gospel was an instrument of conversion, and issues of ecclesiology and personal nurture were left to others. Sin played a largely unproblematic part in the Christian life. Bozeman shows that this was not the full story as Scott saw the Messiah and the resurrected life in heaven as key foci for devotional interest. Bozeman's essay gives some clues that certain peculiar practices and beliefs of the Stone-Campbell Movement regarding spirituality, evangelism, and redemption may owe their origin to Scott.

While mostly oriented to specialists in church history, this will be a useful and very readable book for persons interested in theology and in the Restoration heritage.

Pepperdine University

MICHAEL W. CASEY

Good News in Exile: Three Pastors Offer a Hopeful Vision for the Church, by MARTIN B. COPENHAVER, ANTHONY B. ROBINSON, and WILLIAM H. WILLIMON. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. 116 pp. \$12.00.

These three authors, all pastors, offer a vision for renewal especially among mainline churches in a North American ministry context they characterize as "exile." Today's churches minister in a cultural environment in which the norms of the gospel no longer function in ways that are authoritative or even meaningful. This "exile," while perhaps disorienting, is not ultimately something to despair. Following the lead of Walter Brueggemann, the authors find exile to be an exciting place where God's people learn to live in a distinctive way. This analysis of the contemporary ministry setting will be familiar to those who have read Willimon's previous books on ministry and preaching. The reader finds again Willimon's analysis of Constantinian and post-Constantinian Christianity. Willimon introduces an explicit postliberal perspective, especially as represented by the work of George Lindbeck.

The book begins by tracing the journeys of the authors from their dissatisfaction with the "liberal" assumptions of their traditions to their current postliberal understandings. It proceeds with chapters focusing on particular church practices that will sustain and enliven churches in exile. The authors point out that during the exile Israel became a textual community. This points readers not to a wooden patternism, but to a narrative appropriation of the world of the Bible. "We must immerse ourselves in the story and the world it creates" (p. 43). This perspective informs chapters on preaching, sacraments, teaching ministry, and mission. They hope

for converted churches that will live in faithful and distinct ways. Those of a restoration perspective will feel both confirmed and challenged by this call to be a textual community. In a time when many Restoration churches are pursuing evangelical options, conversations with postliberals may encourage us to remain more faithful to our tradition.

Gresham, OR

MARK LOVE

Belief in God in an Age of Science, by JOHN POLKINGHORNE. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. 130 pp. \$18.00.

Since Galileo's problems with the church, religious and scientific worldviews have been seen in the West as being at war. Historians of science have demonstrated that this view is unjustified. Various physicists/theologians (John Polkinghorne, Ian Barbour), philosophers/theologians (Ernan McMullin), theologians (Wolfhart Pannenberg, Hans Küng) have explored what is sometimes referred to as a dialog model. Science and religion have areas of overlap in which scientists and theologians should have a common interest; these "limit points" include ontological and ethical issues and questions of method. Albert Einstein put it succinctly: "Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind."

Sir John Polkinghorne is a well-known theoretical physicist, Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral, and the only ordained member of the Royal Society. He argues for a search for truth which is not dogmatic but is an open discussion. He believes that science strengthens rather than threatens faith and that natural theology is not only important but necessary. Among the topics he explores are theology of nature, divine purpose, divine action, and human destiny.

Polkinghorne writes for a general audience; anyone familiar with the basic nature of science and the primary theological issues in Christianity will be able to follow his arguments. He argues that, since science is the dominant intellectual influence of the modern era, any religious, but specifically Christian, person must come to some resolution of the problems which arise in reconciling the ideas of science and religion. Polkinghorne gives an excellent discussion of these issues. He would like to bring more theologians, biologists, and psychologists into the conversation.

At least two concerns might be raised about this book. First, there is the complaint with interdisciplinary work that some of the included disciplines (in this case science, theology, and philosophy) will be shortchanged, that is, that no person can be an expert in that many areas. Polkinghorne realizes this but also thinks that the subject is so important that someone must tackle it. The second problem is whether trying to explain divine action in terms of current science removes the mysterious

element from our religious life. Polkinghorne would respond that the removal of one mystery generally opens up an even deeper mystery and that our religious life has the possibility to become even richer.

Abilene Christian University

PAUL MORRIS

Thinking Through Our Faith: Theology for Twenty-First Century Christians, by C. DAVID GRANT. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998. 128 pp. \$17.00.

This book asks its readers to rethink their faith, not to settle for the "old-time religion" in the contemporary world. Part 1 surveys three aspects of contemporary thought that call for a reassessment of traditional faith: the rise of historical thinking, the development of science, and the recognition of pluralism. Part 2 applies these perspectives to the faith issues of what one thinks about the Bible, about Jesus, and about God. The author's intended audience seems to be biblical literalists brought up on traditional church teachings.

Although Grant makes much of contemporary reality, his surveys of historical consciousness and the rise of science sound old-fashioned—an introduction to modernity rather than to post-modernism. The underlying assumption (probably correct) seems to be that biblical literalists have not yet caught up with Troeltsch and Darwin, let alone Pannenberg and Planck. Grant spells out Troeltsch's principles for historical study (probability, analogy, and correlation), showing the implications of these for understanding the biblical writings as historical documents. He traces developments in cosmology, physics, and biology that bear on our understanding of the biblical narratives about creation and the natural world. The chapter on pluralism moves into postmodernist thinking with its emphasis on the demise of foundationalism and its insistence on irreducible diversity in human belief and practice.

Part 2 outlines what Grant considers to be a truly contemporary faith. Such a faith (Grant's own) sees little or no historical foundation in Scripture, views the gospels as solely the proclamation of the church's post-Easter faith, understands the significance of Jesus to be the presence of his spirit in the hearts of believers, and believes God to be an idea rather than a person. Moreover, the only "doctrine" Grant commends to the reader is the all-embracing grace of God.

Grant simply tackles too much for any 128-page book. Because the issues in part 1 are consequential, the reader deserves to see the variety of ways biblical scholars and teachers have responsibly incorporated these insights into their work. Instead of this carefully nuanced approach, the author sets up false antitheses (either the gospels are eyewitness accounts *or* they are post-Easter sermons; either God requires the blood sacrifice of Jesus *or* God is freely gracious and forgiving; either the Bible is direct

revelation from God or human reflection about God). A book intended for seminarians and lay persons needs to acknowledge that many well-informed scholars do not accept the minimalistic and radical proposals Grant puts forth as the scholarly consensus on various issues. He seems surefooted when dealing with philosophy and language theory, but out of his depth when discussing contemporary biblical criticism. Except for an approving footnote on the Jesus Seminar, he scarcely advances beyond the era of Bultmann and Dibelius in his treatment of the Gospels.

Readers of this journal will find little to celebrate in Grant's book. Those of us who teach and preach have constantly to help our "publics" develop a faith mature enough to wrestle with the implications of historical study, science, and human diversity. But if the faith we have left is not recognizably continuous with the "faith once for all delivered to the saints," why should we bother to commend it to anyone in the twenty-first century?

Emmanuel School of Religion

ROBERT F. HULL JR.

Jesus of Nazareth: Message and History, by JOACHIM GNILKA. Translated by Siegfried S. Schatzmann. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997. 346 pp. \$24.95.

In the last ten years, the United States has witnessed a flurry of research activity regarding the "historical Jesus" and the logia source of the Gospels. The news media have taken an interest, and so has the general public. New books for the non-specialist are now available more than ever. Gnilka's *Jesus von Nazaret: Botschaft und Geschichte* has the German nonspecialist in view; Hendrickson now makes it widely available to Americans.

Gnilka initially acquaints his readers with the history of research, then with the political, economic, social, and religious landscape of Jesus' Palestine. The remaining chapters deal with the details of Jesus' life and the contours of his authentic teaching. Gnilka argues that the reign of God functions as the center around which Jesus' historical instruction and behavior radiate; he develops this thesis in his examinations of the parables, miracles, and prophetic utterances. The reign of God likewise plays a dominant role in the selection of the disciples, Jesus' understanding of Israel, his ethical instruction, and his self-perception as bearer and subject of the message. Throughout the book Gnilka explores individual episodes of Jesus' ministry and lays groundwork for the historical narrative of the final visit to Jerusalem, including the trial and crucifixion. He concludes with a few remarks about Easter.

Gnilka presents the results of his comparative and historical analysis in a summary fashion. He then weighs the implications of his findings in

greater detail. As noted above, he locates Jesus' ministry in the present and future reign of God. The problem with viewing a single theological idea as the fundamental basis of a tradition as diverse as that of the Gospels lies in the inevitable oversimplification and in the impression that the alleged theological foundation and the critic's theological interests coincide. Gnilka, for example, assumes that the Gospel's "apocalyptic" traditions emerge as a whole from the post-Easter church. Jesus' authentic eschatological teachings thus "degenerate" into subsequent Christian "apocalypticism." Gnilka's perception of apocalypticism as degeneration in the Synoptic traditions leads him to overstress the distinction between it and eschatological thought.

In the final analysis, however, Gnilka does not mask a pursuit of "authentic Christianity" with historical research. His faith is evident throughout, but not in a way which substantially interferes with the credibility of his analysis. For those unfamiliar with historical Jesus research, interested in recent Continental scholarship on the subject, or desiring fresh reflection on Jesus' ministry, Gnilka's Jesus is worthwhile reading.

The University of Chicago

ROBERT MATTHEW CALHOUN

Contours of Old Testament Theology, by BERNHARD W. ANDERSON with STEVEN BISHOP; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999. Ix + 350 pp. \$27.00.

A friend of mine recently asked me to recommend a book that introduced the OT to educated readers in an inviting and yet professional way. This book, by veteran public intellectual Bernhard Anderson, deserves consideration. Reflecting his decades as a teacher, he arranges this book in thirty-six short chapters that cover the entire OT. After discussing the theological integrity of the OT in the Christian Bible (chaps. 1-4), Anderson begins his presentation with a portrayal of Yahweh, "the Holy One of Israel" (chaps. 5-9), drawing on Otto's notion of the holy to elucidate the text. Chapters 10-26 argue that the core of the biblical witness is the interaction among the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants, each of which informs narrative and prophetic texts. Chapters 27-34 discuss wisdom and apocalyptic texts, and the final two chapters move from Israel to Jesus Christ.

This book exhibits many strengths. Anderson positions his work well in the midst of contemporary theological debates on, for example, inclusive language about God, the revision of hymnody, and the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. He proves to be progressive yet respectful of the tradition. Moreover, his command of the historical and textual issues in the biblical corpus is strong. All of these factors make this book useful for the Christian public.

In a work as sweeping as this, one may observe a few flaws, mostly technical. First, the treatment of "Yahweh and the Gods" (chap. 8) is very dated and overemphasizes the contrast between Israel and its neighbors; Anderson retains the antiquated notion that sexual excess was the prime characteristic of Canaanite religion. Similarly, his claim that biblical law was more "humane" than Mesopotamian law (162) is over-generalized. Second, the middle sections of the book seem more sermonic than the beginning and end, as evidenced by a shortage of footnotes. Third, at times the author strains the evidence to suit his overarching thesis, as when he cites Psalm 89 as "typical" of the Psalter's use of the Davidic covenant as a basis of lament (245). This psalm is actually very atypical in several ways. Fourth, a glossary might help the intended reader. Fifth, the notion that three covenants inform the whole OT is very tempting, but does it work? Some of the covenants are absent altogether from large stretches of the Bible, and one cannot help suspecting that the covenantal notion impresses Anderson because it allows him to find a major early Christian theme in the Scriptures of Israel. Is this appropriate? That depends upon how one thinks OT theology should work.

To conclude, despite technical flaws, this work deserves consideration by school and church groups. It might even be the book my friend seeks.

Harvard University

MARK W. HAMILTON