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Book Reviews and Notes

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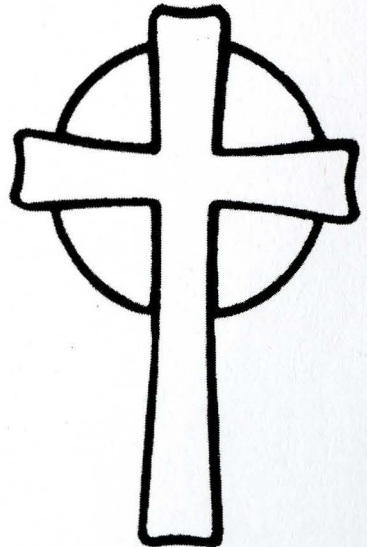
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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

Preaching Like Paul: Homiletical Wisdom for Today, by JAMES W. THOMPSON. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2001. 177 pp. \$19.95.

Nearly a quarter century ago James J. Murphy, the lucid authority on ancient and medieval rhetoric, bemoaned, "While Paul's career has drawn intensive study, there has been little systematic rhetorical analysis of his communicative process. Paul's rhetorical contribution is ignored." (*Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 280). Murphy was not the first to suggest that Paul might be an exemplar for preaching. More than six centuries earlier Robert of Basevorn, the full-blown representative of the university style ("thematic") homiletic, encouraged his students, "It would be quite praiseworthy to try to imitate the methods of any of the five great preachers: Christ, Paul, Augustine, Gregory, and Bernard." (*Forma Praedicandi*, 6). And nearly a millennium before Robert, Augustine repeatedly cited the apostle Paul as a prototype for the speaker's style (*Doctr. chr.* 4, vii, 11-15, 38-44). With the publication of James Thompson's *Preaching Like Paul*, the ignored ancient rhetoric finally receives the honor of close analysis for preaching.

Thompson, however, does not claim to answer the requests of ancient homileticians. He says, instead, that he has been driven to this work through the imperfections of the New Homiletic and the limitations of narrative preaching. Joining forces with recent protests against Fred Craddock, Eugene Lowry, and especially their imitators, Thompson argues that today the church's deepest needs demand something more than story and an inductive sermonic form to communicate the reflective dimensions of the faith. Thompson believes that Paul is a forgotten mentor who addressed Christian communities in a pre-Christian culture much like our post-Christian setting.

Thompson's book is careful and intelligent. He honestly sets forth potential objections to his theses, and the entire work is loaded with footnotes, including German sources and other secondary source works. Thompson's characteristic care shows him a perfect product of the now retiring generation of scholars from the Churches of Christ: Everett Ferguson, Abraham Malherbe, Tom Olbricht, and Jack Lewis, for example, who have worked within the parameters of scholarship and maintained allegiance to their fellowship. Like his mentors, Thompson has spent his career building a bridge between the academy and the church. Long a participant in the popular Sermon Seminars around the country, Thompson

has spent his career unpacking his New Testament scholarship for preachers' use in the church. This book augments his life's consequential work.

Thompson begins by establishing that Paul's epistles provide a window to the apostle's preaching and that the letters repeat and continue Paul's prior conversations. Thus when one considers that Paul often wrote of future interactions with the recipients of his correspondence, the epistle is the middle part of a larger and living narrative. An epistle is like a still photograph implying a related and larger story. One reason we have avoided Paul, claims Thompson, is that we have missed the narrative behind his letters. Thus while Paul's epistles are not sermon transcripts or even the preferred means of communicating with churches, they do offer essential records of Paul's preaching ministry.

Thompson further argues that Paul's preaching was both evangelistic and pastoral. For the former ingredient, 1 Thessalonians provides the clearest relationship between Paul and one of his churches. Against Thompson's understanding of today's popular mega-churches, "Paul's evangelistic preaching is a challenge to his listeners' story, for his evangelistic preaching always culminates in a call for the listeners to turn from the old existence to a new plot that is determined by the story of Jesus." Paul stands apart because his message does not affirm cultural values. Instead, Paul challenges pluralism and sets forth a message that cannot be programmed.

Thompson emphasizes that one cannot distinguish evangelistic preaching from preaching to the community of believers as if Paul had two separate audiences. *Paraklesis* ("appeal") is Paul's summary term for his ministry of the word. Thompson rightly observes, "The missing dimension in the contemporary understanding of preaching is this dialectical relationship between evangelistic and pastoral preaching." He advises that, given our pluralistic culture, the preacher should never assume the congregation has already been converted.

Borrowing from three of the five ancient canons of rhetoric, Thompson analyzes Paul's letters for invention, arrangement, and style. He finds that Paul has a distinctive and deductive mode of expression, created primarily to form communal identity and provide specific instruction on concrete living. The audience for Paul's letters (the church) and Paul's unique relationship to his listeners (parent, apostle) are the most distinctive features of Paul's correspondence.

Against the New Homiletic, Thompson ascertains that Paul provides a model for pastoral preaching that shapes and builds communities. The author focuses on the pastoral efforts reflected in 1 Thessalonians, where Paul shapes the community by first developing a corporate consciousness (chaps. 1-3) and then providing specific theological and behavioral instructions (chaps. 4-5). Corporate identity comes, in part, with use of insider language (election, parousia, and sanctification, for example). Similarly, the task of

contemporary preaching is to guide the congregation to become competent speakers of its own language.

At the heart of Thompson's project is his chapter on theology and preaching. Acknowledging that folk today have little appetite for "reasoned discourse" and that few come to church to hear elaborations on Christian themes, Thompson, nevertheless, convincingly argues that Paul's preaching required clarification through continued conversation and that his often dense theological arguments serve as a model for reflective preaching today. Paul's theology is not abstract but rather interwoven with pastoral concerns that lead the church to reflect on its own story and create the capability of speaking in theological terms to various issues that will arise. Thompson's unmistakable warning is thus the apology for his book: Without critical theological reflection the church will mistake gospel for popular cultural ideologies.

The book closes with eight helpful sermonic sketches. Choosing not to provide one or two carefully crafted literary sermons (as in collections by Barbara Brown Taylor or Fleming Rutledge) or one full manuscript complete with critical observations (as in Eugene Lowry's *How to Preach a Parable*), Thompson opts instead for sermon briefs that represent his keen exegetical skill and include justification for plot development and other homiletic decisions. These samples perfectly fit the book by illustrating the author's nuanced text.

Preaching Like Paul will not only be applauded by a chorus of patient homiletic witnesses like Robert of Basevorn and Augustine but will also be devoured by all who hunger for substantive preaching. With the recent focus in the academy upon biblical story, we are certainly ready to turn our homiletic appetites to other genres and models. Thompson proves the perfect candidate to prepare Paul and his preaching for our consumption. This book will embolden preachers to lead the church, the ultimate benefactor, to a better self-understanding and create the theological tools for life in a non-Christian world.

A serious work such as Thompson's, however, fosters serious criticism. Rhetoricians, for example, will be discomforted by Thompson's rhetorical reductionism. Augustine, implementing Cicero, maintained that the sermon has a three-tier purpose: to please, to teach, and to persuade. The first two purposes are in service to the last, which, when accomplished, produces "victory." Thompson, true to his Restoration tradition, finds "entertainment" anathema and frequently silences persuasion, thus reducing rhetoric to the single and truncated purpose of teaching. Thompson claims a "continuity between preaching and teaching" that succeeds at the expense of persuasion. At times Thompson seems to favor a Barthian understanding of the preacher, a *kerux* who speaks for God. "Preaching," writes Thompson, "is a trust and . . . the preacher's task is to act as trustee of the message on God's behalf."

Another concern is Thompson's entree to the Pauline corpus: his perception of the inadequacies of the New Homiletic. One of Thompson's problems with Craddock's "indirect" speech is that, while appropriate for the Christian society Craddock addressed, we now live in a post-Christian land. Thompson's assessment of our culture is certainly true, but Craddock's plea for indirect discourse is not dependent on the belief system of our culture. Søren Kierkegaard, Craddock's theoretical source, claimed that indirect discourse is a way of coming to understanding. The problem with direct appeals, argued Kierkegaard, is that they fail to liberate listeners from their immediate and unreflective existences. "An illusion," claimed Kierkegaard, "can never be destroyed directly" (*The Point of View for My Work as an Author*). The need for indirection is not lost with the transfer of cultural power in America. Indirection is inherent in our canon and in us. While Thompson makes a strong case for the appropriate use of direct discourse, he need not do so to the neglect of indirection, which is native to much in literature and much of life.

These disappointments aside, *Preaching Like Paul* will be the one book every congregation should hope their preacher buys, reads, and enacts.

Rochester College

DAVID FLEER

The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences, edited by RICHARD BAUCKHAM. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. 226 pp. \$22.00.

On occasion, books or articles appear that are truly groundbreaking or paradigm shifting. One thinks, for instance, of J. Louis Martyn's *History and Theology of the Fourth Gospel*, or E. P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. These books set the stage for subsequent scholarship, redirecting the emphasis and providing a fertile ground for research and argumentation. The collection of essays in *The Gospels for All Christians*, edited by Richard Bauckham, is one of these foundational works. It will be cited and referred to extensively in the years to come because of the far-reaching implications of its simple thesis. It is a book every student of the gospels should read.

The heart of the book is contained in the lead essay by Bauckham, "For Whom Were the Gospels Written?" The thesis of the article and book is that the gospels were intended for a universal audience and broadly distributed almost immediately.

The revolutionary aspect of this thesis must be seen against the virtually ubiquitous assumption of modern gospel scholarship that the gospels were written for, and often from within, fairly self-contained groups of Christians. One assumes, then, a geographical and social distance between the groups that produced distinctively different gospels, which are themselves, then, responses to the special situations that have arisen within each group. This

was the thesis of B. H. Streeter, and it has maintained a major influence on gospel criticism since then.

One can see the influence the current view of gospel audience has had on a major strain of gospel criticism: the attempt to locate the meaning of the gospels in terms of understanding the special social circumstances within localized communities. Thus critics have sought to identify the local communities in which the gospels have arisen and have then used these reconstructed communities as a basis to understand the special contingencies and particularities that produced the gospels. Certainly the interest in social scientific criticism, not to mention the strong paradigm of Pauline studies, has helped drive this approach.

Bauckham, however, raises serious questions about the whole enterprise. He begins by examining the basis for the assumptions and develops a history of recent gospel scholarship. He proceeds to question whether the assumption that the gospels were written in and for separate communities has been useful in providing a clear picture of the purpose of the gospels. His overview of current scholarship raises serious questions about the usefulness of this approach. There is little consensus about the nature of the communities or the purpose of the gospels, a surprising result if the gospels were written for and in localized communities.

Bauckham proceeds in the latter part of his essay to develop cogent reasons to suppose that the gospels were indeed written for very broad audiences. I will briefly touch on two of these arguments. The first is that, most frequently, the very nature of written communication was to present information to individuals who were separated in time or distance from the writer. The primacy of oral communication in antiquity would tend to value speaking as the primary basis of transmitting information. Why would a gospel writer have written, then, to his or her own community? Bauckham concludes that it is more likely that gospel writers would have written to groups separate from themselves, not to their own communities. Secondly, Bauckham emphasizes the remarkable mobility of early Christian leaders, seen in Paul's letters and the book of Acts. This mobility in the early church undercuts the importance of the localized and separate nature of Christian communities. Moreover, the mobility of early Christians would provide a ready means of communication and transmission of written documents over extensive geographical distances.

In addition to Bauckham's lead essay, a number of significant supporting articles are independently important, but also undergird the major thesis of the book. Michael Thompson, in "The Holy Internet," explores the nature of travel and communication in the first-century church and concludes that communication was extensive and relatively quick. The data on travel times in the first century alone are worth a close look. Loveday Alexander presents a very thoughtful article, "Ancient Book Production and

the Gospels," on the nature of early book production and its relationship to the spread and transmission of texts. In particular, drawing heavily on Harry Gamble's recent *Books and Readers in the Early Church*, Alexander examines the particular role of the codex in antiquity and its unique place in the early church. More importantly, Alexander notes the informal nature of much of early book production; books were often copied by individuals for private use, not "produced" in large quantities.

Richard Burridge, following his monograph that argues that the genre of the gospels is biography, explores whether the genre of biography assumes a broad audience instead of a private audience (i.e., the community of the author). Stephen Barton, in "Can We Identify Gospel Audiences?" raises a number of serious methodological concerns about the effort to locate from textual references the communities to which the gospels were written. In particular, he notes that the existing method of reading assumes a congruence between the gospel message and the community, that the gospel is never written to correct or oppose the sociological situation of the intended audience. Other essays include a second one by Bauckham on the relationship of the gospels Mark and John and one by Francis Watson, which asserts that reading a gospel against a presumed community is a form of allegorical interpretation.

This book does not prove that the gospels were written to a broad audience. It does, however, seriously challenge a strongly entrenched approach towards gospel interpretation. By questioning the consensus, Bauckham and his co-authors have challenged gospel critics to reexamine their presumptions or to explore new approaches to reading the gospels. At the very least, this book will provoke extensive research and analysis. Hopefully, it will lead to significant new insights into the intended meaning of the gospels.

Milligan College

MARK MATSON

Last Rights: Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia Debated, edited by MICHAEL M. UHLMANN. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. 677 pp. \$35.00.

This attractively produced volume covers the whole spectrum of issues related to its title. It could be employed as a textbook in health care ethics, and at the same time it is accessible for the informed nonspecialist to read profitably. Indeed, any interested reader will be able to use this book.

The book has four parts: I. Classical, Christian, and Early Modern Thought, which gives a philosophical overview in one chapter by the editor, "Western Thought on Suicide: From Plato to Kant"; II. Contemporary Moral and Theological Perspectives; III. Medical Perspectives; IV. Legal Perspectives. The book as a whole has an introduction; then each part except the first begins with its own introduction; the book concludes with endnotes and indexes of names and court cases. In the preface the editor states that all the

essays in the book have previously been published elsewhere, except his own in the first part. Each essay includes information about its author and where that essay was first published. In short, the whole book is extremely well laid out, and top marks must go to its editor for this.

The essays in part two are "The History of Suicide" (A. Alvarez), "Do We Have a Right to Die?" (Robin Dworkin), "The Right to Die—Again" (Hadley V. Arkes), "Ethical Issues in Physician-assisted Suicide" (Margaret Pabst Battin), "Always to Care, Never to Kill: A Declaration on Euthanasia" (The Ramsey Colloquium), "Jewish Views on Euthanasia" (Byron L. Sherwin), "Rethinking Life and Death: A New Ethical Approach" (Peter Singer), "Death with Dignity and the Sanctity of Life" (Leon R. Kass), "The Gospel of Life" (Pope John Paul II), and "Euthanasia and Christian Vision" (Gilbert Meilaender).

The essays in part three are "Rethinking the Hippocratic Oath" (Edmund D. Pellegrino), "A Fail-safe Model for Justifiable Medically Assisted Suicide" (Jack Kevorkian), "Why Doctors Must Not Kill" (Leon R. Kass), "The Case for Rational Suicide" (Derek Humphrey), "It's Over, Debbie" (Anonymous), "Death and Dignity: A. The Case of Diane; B. Criteria for Physician-Assisted Suicide; C. The Case of Diane Revisited" (Timothy E. Quill), "Active Voluntary Euthanasia: Opening Pandora's Box" (D. Alan Shewmon), "Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia: The Dutch Experience" (Herbert Hendin), "Aiding the Death of Young Children: Ethical Issues" (H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr.), and "A Statement of Physician-assisted Suicide: Excerpt from Code of Medical Issues" (American Medical Association).

The essays in part four are "Foregoing Life-sustaining Treatment: The Legal Consensus" (Alan Meisel), "Are Laws against Assisted Suicide Unconstitutional?" (Yale Kamisar), "The Constitution and Hastening Inevitable Death" (Robert A. Sedler), "Three Court Decisions: A. 'Compassion in Dying v. Washington' (1995) (Judge John Noonan); B. 'Compassion in Dying v. Washington' (1996) (Judge Stephen Reinhardt); C. 'Quill v. Vacco' (1996) (Judge John Miner, Judge Guido Calabresi)," "Assisted Suicide in the United States: The 'Compassion' and 'Quill' Decisions" (Victor G. Rosenblum), "A Model State to Authorize and Regulate Physician-assisted Suicide" (Charles H. Baron et al.), "The Legalization of Physician-assisted Suicide: Creating a Potemkin Village" (Daniel Callahan and Margot White), "The Supreme Court Decides: Washington v. Glucksberg" (1997) (Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist; Others: O'Connor, Stevens, Souter, Ginsburg, Breyer), and "Vacco v. Quill" (Chief Justice Rehnquist; Others: Souter).

The issues with which these essays deal are not just academic because few of us, whether in the United States, Canada, or other countries, do not know of heart-rending situations where individuals have sought legal permission to end their suffering by death or of family members who have

taken matters into their own hands or of doctors who have been charged with killing in the course of alleviating suffering. In Canada, as in the United States, these cases have highlighted the need for some new legal framework. At the same time, there are grave concerns in change, as anyone must have after reading the essay on the Dutch experience in this volume.

McMaster Divinity College

CLAUDE E. COX

Prophecy and Inspired Speech, by CHRISTOPHER FORBES. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997. 377 pp. \$15.00.

The doctrines of speaking in tongues and biblical prophecy find much support in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church. Paul discussed the value of these gifts in a congregation that was misusing them. The context of how congregations understood these gifts has been debated—Were the Corinthian Christians using inspired speech, or were they copying pre-existing methods of prophecy? Forbes's book explores the background of speech and prophecy in Greco-Roman literature.

Forbes begins with the hypothesis that "the dispute between Paul and his converts in Corinth over inspired speech is best explained in terms of the pre-Christian religious experience of some of the Corinthians." He also examines the hypothesis that "some among the Corinthians brought with them from their pre-Christian background a view of the nature and status of inspired speech with which Paul found himself in conflict." He contends that the hypothesis is false. Through a very extensive study of Hellenistic texts, he concludes that speech and prophecy in the Christian church were different.

Concerning early Christian glossolalia, Forbes claims that "no convincing parallels have been found within the traditions of Greco-Roman religion." Early Christian glossolalia was considered to be human language that one had not learned rather than obscure or archaic language. It was interpreted revelation given for the benefit of others. Early Christian prophecy was slightly different from that in the Hellenistic world. This form of speech was conceived of as inspired, charismatic, and unsolicited.

I recommend this book for anyone wanting to do further studies in I Corinthians. The lengthy discussions of Hellenistic texts would make this book too heavy for ministry but would be an excellent tool for graduate students and those wishing to pursue Corinthian studies.

Cascade College

RON CLARK

The Heart of Black Preaching, by CLEOPHUS J. LARUE. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2000. 260 pp. \$14.95.

Many have written on the subject of black preaching, seeking those distinctive elements that make it powerful and effective. Some of the char-

acteristics LaRue reviews in the works of others include strong biblical content, creative use of language, appeals to emotion, ministerial authority, celebration, performance techniques, and homiletical musicality. Yet none of these have examined the interpretive process that informs the conception and organization of the content of the sermon. This is not a "how to" book for sermon design and delivery but an in-depth hermeneutical analysis of the black preaching tradition.

Following the lead of David Kelsey's *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*, LaRue argues for a master interpretive lens that guides the hermeneutical and homiletical processes for African Americans. Prior understandings and social location of the interpreter determine how a particular community of faith will read Scripture.

LaRue examines nineteenth- and twentieth-century published sermons that transcend sociological, educational, and denominational affiliations, seeking to identify what elements they have in common. He reviews the historical conditions under which blacks embraced the Christian religion. This inductive study concludes that the distinctive power of black preaching is tied directly to what blacks believe about God's participation in their experiences. Due to the conviction that God is acting on the behalf of dispossessed and marginalized people connected to an awareness of the lived experience in black culture, black preachers will create a sermon that speaks a relevant word.

LaRue chose five domains of experience as a secondary rubric for examining the sermons: personal piety, care of the soul, social justice, corporate concerns, and maintenance of the institutional church. Not only do these domains provide a construct for categorizing broad areas of black life; they also yield a resource for relevant content in black sermons.

LaRue's final chapter offers a pattern for the beginnings of an African American sermon. This proposal is not about crafting and delivering sermons but about the hermeneutical processes necessary for informing the content of the distinctive black sermon. The preacher must have an understanding of how God's sovereign power connects to the listeners' story. Furthermore, the preacher will need sensitivity to the history and culture of black life combined with the ability to relate these domains of experience in the sermon. His triangulation of belief, context, and experience is a worthy dynamic for any preacher to imitate.

The Heart of Black Preaching is the best critical analysis of sermons I have read. Although many may not agree with the interpretive lenses LaRue wears, I believe he has successfully applied Kelsey's thesis in the African American context. LaRue's methodological clarity gives the reader confidence. His use of Buttrick's "moves" and his keen awareness of hermeneutical and theological processes make this book a rich resource. The appendix of eleven classical sermons is worth the price of the book. The

endnotes and extensive bibliography provide a rich resource for further research.

Abilene Christian University

TIM SENSING

The Author of the Apocalypse: A Review of the Prevailing Hypothesis of Jewish-Christian Authorship, by ROBERT K. MACKENZIE. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997. 208 pp. \$89.95.

Since the third century C.E., interpreters of the Apocalypse have debated the identity of "John," inquiring whether he is also the author of the Gospel of John and whether he was an apostle. Debate has most often centered around the distinctive style of the Apocalypse's Greek and alleged Semitisms. Current discussion often begins with R. H. Charles's seminal commentary of the late nineteenth century that posited that "John" was a Jewish Christian from Palestine. Charles based his opinion on a list of linguistic and sociological characteristics exhibited by the text's language and argument.

Though many today suspect Charles was over-exuberant in his assessment, until this work by MacKenzie, no one has given a point-by-point response to Charles's data. MacKenzie thoroughly surveys each argument presented by Charles and concludes that the "internal evidence points instead to a Greek-speaking Gentile-Christian author who exercised a prophetic ministry in largely Gentile churches" (3). In addition, MacKenzie catalogs and surveys the numerous and notorious solecisms in "John's" Greek and compares his work to the Evangelist's.

This text is essential for any serious academic study of the Apocalypse's origins or language by professional scholars and advanced students. MacKenzie's work requires a proficiency with Greek well beyond that of beginning students. This text is also useful for advanced students interested in the textual history of the Apocalypse and socio-cultural backgrounds of the NT documents.

Springfield, N.J.

ROBERT PAUL SEESGOOD

John's Gospel and the Renewal of the Church, by WES HOWARD-BROOK. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1997. 179 pp. \$14.99.

According to John: The Witness of the Beloved Disciple, by JOHN F. O'GRADY. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1999. 174 pp. \$12.95.

Both of these authors are from the Catholic tradition and work from within their theological heritage. Howard-Brook offers an approach to John that follows the Lent and Easter readings of the Fourth Gospel. He states the need for a reading method when approaching John or any other biblical text. In the first chapter Howard-Brook suggests aspects of a good reading method for John. His interpretation of John witnesses to his following his own advice. The material presented in his book demonstrates his knowledge

of Johannine studies as well as his use of literary criticism to interpret this text. Each chapter is followed by suggestions for preaching themes, small group discussions, and questions for personal reflection.

O'Grady offers a study of John that he believes "fits" the learning style of most adults. He states that the reading of commentaries for a verse-by-verse study of any biblical book is not appealing to adults. O'Grady organized his book around themes such as Jesus, individuals, eschatology, and the Beloved Disciple. These themes are grouped into two sections: (1) the Gospel of John and (2) the Johannine community and its theology. The first section offers the passages to be read for an understanding of the accompanying interpretation. The second section presents information based in and building on the study done for the first section. At the end of each chapter, O'Grady gives a list of suggestions for reflection. He believes this approach to study invites the adult student to read and study John with a sense of understanding the purpose and direction of this gospel. Both books offer direction for small groups and personal reflection.

Lubbock Christian University

CHARLES B. STEPHENSON

Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 B.C.). (RIMA 3), by A. KIRK GRAYSON. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 285 pp. \$150.00.

This book will prove an invaluable resource for OT scholars and others wanting to read primary historical sources from this period of the ancient Near East. The University of Toronto continues its commitment to publish the royal inscriptions of Mesopotamia. The inscriptions of the following kings appear in this volume: Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), Šamši-Adad V (823–811 B.C.), Adad-narari III (810–783 B.C.), Shalmaneser IV (782–773 B.C.), Aššur-dan III (772–755 B.C.), Aššur-narari V (754–745 B.C.). Grayson employs a standard format for the presentation of each royal text: brief introduction; commentary regarding the provenance and physical dynamics of the tablet; secondary bibliography, where available; and transliterated texts with translations that are lucid and fluent. Perhaps of most interest to biblical scholars will be the references to Israel, its near neighbors, and its kings (e.g., references to Damascus, Hazael, Ahab, and [perhaps] Jehu in the Shalmaneser III inscriptions). The cost of volumes in this series (\$150) makes buying these books prohibitive for many scholars and laypersons interested in their contents; however, this volume will be very valuable for seminary and university libraries.

Pepperdine University

RICK R. MARRS

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES

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Nearly a quarter century ago James J. Murphy, the lucid authority on ancient and medieval rhetoric, bemoaned, "While Paul's career has drawn intensive study, there has been little systematic rhetorical analysis of his communicative process. Paul's rhetorical contribution is ignored." (*Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 280). Murphy was not the first to suggest that Paul might be an exemplar for preaching. More than six centuries earlier Robert of Basevorn, the full-blown representative of the university style ("thematic") homiletic, encouraged his students, "It would be quite praiseworthy to try to imitate the methods of any of the five great preachers: Christ, Paul, Augustine, Gregory, and Bernard." (*Forma Praedicandi*, 6). And nearly a millennium before Robert, Augustine repeatedly cited the apostle Paul as a prototype for the speaker's style (*Doctr. chr.* 4, vii, 11–15, 38–44). With the publication of James Thompson's *Preaching Like Paul*, the ignored ancient rhetoric finally receives the honor of close analysis for preaching.

Thompson, however, does not claim to answer the requests of ancient homileticians. He says, instead, that he has been driven to this work through the imperfections of the New Homiletic and the limitations of narrative preaching. Joining forces with recent protests against Fred Craddock, Eugene Lowry, and especially their imitators, Thompson argues that today the church's deepest needs demand something more than story and an inductive sermonic form to communicate the reflective dimensions of the faith. Thompson believes that Paul is a forgotten mentor who addressed Christian communities in a pre-Christian culture much like our post-Christian setting.

Thompson's book is careful and intelligent. He honestly sets forth potential objections to his theses, and the entire work is loaded with footnotes, including German sources and other secondary source works. Thompson's characteristic care shows him a perfect product of the now retiring generation of scholars from the Churches of Christ: Everett Ferguson, Abraham Malherbe, Tom Olbricht, and Jack Lewis, for example, who have worked within the parameters of scholarship and maintained allegiance to their fellowship. Like his mentors, Thompson has spent his career building a bridge between the academy and the church. Long a participant in the popular Sermon Seminars around the country, Thompson