

in an exegetical and theological analysis of the apostle's letters is imperative.

The foregoing criticisms do not detract from the overall usefulness and quality of Green's commentary. Conspicuous interpretive benefits are derived for modern readers by his social-scientific readings of the Thessalonian letters. Indeed, when one situates the letters of Paul within the context of the ancient world's social values, economy, political structures, demography, and religion, new horizons and understandings of the letters and early Christian communities are opened up. Green's evangelically oriented commentary is an excellent contribution to Thessalonian scholarship.

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Hagner, Donald A. *Encountering the Book of Hebrews: An Exposition*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 213 pp. Paper, \$21.99.

Donald A. Hagner is George Eldon Ladd Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. His writings include: *Hebrews*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995); *Matthew*, WBC, 2 vols. (Dallas: Word, 1993); and *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: An Analysis and Critique of Modern Jewish Study of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1984). He is also the coeditor of the New International Greek Commentary.

Encountering the Book of Hebrews is a section-by-section assessment of the arguments and issues of Hebrews. The central and unique theological emphasis in Hebrews, according to Hagner, "is the presentation of Christ as high priest" (180). This high priesthood leads to the "atoning work of Christ" (180), which stands in dramatic contrast to the work of the high priest in the earthly tabernacle because "what Christ offers as priest is his own blood" (182). Christ's atoning work, then, is intentionally connected with the subject of the old and new covenants (182). Another important emphasis for Hagner is the practical treatment of faith in chapter 11 (182).

The commentary consists of four parts: an introduction, which treats issues such as authorship, readers, date, purpose, structure, and genre; thirteen chapters, which parallel the chapters in the book of Hebrews; a conclusion; and a glossary and Scripture and subject indices. At the beginning of each chapter, there is a succinct outline, a statement of objectives, and suggestions for supplemental reading. Each chapter ends with a bibliography of the topics addressed. There are also sidebars and charts that address some of the questions that a modern reader might ask in regard to the text. Charts are included that provide excellent summaries of otherwise long excursions. What impressed me most was Hagner's excursion on the entry of Hebrews into the NT canon (191-195). It is a short, but well researched and documented, piece of work.

Hagner distinguishes himself especially in his attention to the context and background of the letter, the interpretation of the OT in Hebrews, and the letter's distinctive contributions to Christian theology and life. He also remains

thoroughly conversant with recent scholarship.

Concerning the addressees of Hebrews, Hagner discusses the pros and cons regarding Gentile or Jewish readers, but fails to mention the possibility of a mixed ethnic background. He simply states: "Assuming that the readers were Jewish Christians who seem to have been attracted back to their Judaism, we cannot conclude much more about them" (23). With this assumption in mind, he interprets the reader's need to learn the "elementary teachings about Christ" (86), mentioned in Heb 6:1-2, as "basic beliefs that Christianity shares with Judaism" (86). While I agree with Hagner that Christianity shares many basic beliefs with Judaism, I question his assumption that the original readers were necessarily attracted back to Judaism. The six "doctrines" mentioned in Heb 6:1-2, I believe, are better understood in the context of the book of Hebrews within Christianity rather than Judaism. Hebrews 6:1 literally speaks of "the beginning of the word of Christ," which gives this elementary teaching a specifically Christian initiation.

The six "doctrines" in the context of the whole epistle seem to support Christian beliefs more than Jewish ones. First, "repentance from dead works" is reviewed in Heb 9:14, where Christ purifies the reader's conscience from dead works through his redemptive accomplishment. Christ is the actor. Second, "faith toward God" has God as its object in Heb 6:1, but in Heb 12:2 Christ enables the faith of Christians as the "pioneer and perfecter of faith." Christ is the focus of faith. Third, βαπτισμῶν διδασχῆς does not refer to "washings" or "purifications" (86) as Hagner insists—baptism in the plural demands a plurality of baptisms—but rather to teachings about the distinction between Christian baptism and the baptism of John (P. Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 315). Connecting the "teaching of baptisms" with the fact that the readers "have once been enlightened" (Heb 6:4) presents a clear reference to Christian initiation (Ellingworth, 316). Fourth, "laying on of hands" seems to be associated with the confirmation of the gift of the spirit that followed baptism, as in Acts 8:17. This is supported by Heb 6:4, where the readers have tasted the heavenly gift and "have shared in the Holy Spirit" (NRSV). Fifth, "resurrection of the dead" is a phrase that appears again in Heb 11:35, where it is connected with the "better resurrection" that seems to be broader than the Jewish understanding. It is the climax of Christian hope. Sixth, "eternal judgment" (κρίματος αἰωνίου) is not used elsewhere in the NT; however, the same concept is expressed in Heb 10:27-29, for those who sin willfully by spurning the Son of God, profane the blood of the covenant and outrage the Spirit of grace. Christ is again the focus.

In spite of my criticisms, I do not deny that all these "doctrines" have forerunners in Judaism; but I do not agree with Hagner's statement that there is "nothing in the items mentioned in Heb 6:1-2 to which a non-Christian Jew could not subscribe" (86). Consequently, I doubt Hagner's assumption that the intended audience is Jewish Christians in danger of falling back into Judaism. I would argue instead that the intended audience is Christians of unidentified cultural or ethnic backgrounds, who are in danger of falling into indifference toward faith.

In spite of this critique, the book is a solid commentary on Hebrews, with an inviting presentation and format. It is ideal for college students, whom the author targets for readership.

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Lee, John A. L. *A History of New Testament Lexicography*. Studies in Biblical Greek, vol. 8. New York: Peter Lang, 2003. xiv + 414 pp. Paper, \$39.95.

One of the few certainties of life is that a lexicon or dictionary of the language under consideration will furnish the meaning of any word in question. This is especially true in the case of a modern lexicon covering a discrete corpus of literature such as the Greek NT where the words have been studied for centuries. Such volumes are the rock of Gibraltar, the north star to guide scholars as they navigate the biblical text. Until now, no one has systematically traced the history of lexicons for the Greek NT, and the results are surprising. For instance, the author notes that “when Tyndale was preparing his English Translation of the New Testament in 1525, there was no Greek-English lexicon to assist him. A century later when the revisers of 1611 did their work, there was still no such lexicon” (83) in the traditional sense. However, a work lay readily at hand to assist the translator in the form of the Latin Vulgate.

John Lee is well-qualified for the task of narrating the history of NT lexicography. In 1966, he graduated from Cambridge University, and his dissertation was published in 1983 as *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch* (SCS 14). He taught classical and Koine Greek at Sydney University for 30 years, and is presently associated with Macquarie University in the same city. He has been working for some time now with Greg Horsley on a replacement volume for Moulton and Milligan’s *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 traces the history of Greek NT lexicons from earliest times to the present. In ancient Greece, lists of words are known to have been compiled (15), perhaps to assist in learning vocabulary. However, credit for the first known, printed Greek lexicon goes to Joannes Crastonus, whose Greek-Latin *Dictionarium graecum* was published in 1478. The first Greek-Latin NT lexicon was printed in 1514 in volume 5 of the *Complutensian Polyglot*. Those who subsequently contributed to the field include Stephanus, Pasor, Leigh, Cockayne, Reyher, Parkhurst, Schleusner, Wilke, Preuschen, Abbot-Smith, Lampe, Bauer, Danker, and Louw and Nida.

In the five centuries since the first lexicon was created, much has been learned about the Greek language—this is especially true during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; however, lexicographers have not kept pace with developments. In chapter 2, Lee suggests that the source of the problem is the failure of lexicographers, except in a few instances, to move beyond the use of simple glosses to definitions (in this context “glosses” are the words in a foreign-language dictionary/lexicon that explain the meaning of the headwords as opposed to providing actual definitions; a “glossary” is a collection of “glosses”).