

BOOK REVIEWS

Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton
A Survey of the Old Testament
Grand Rapids: Zondervan
1991, xviii + 461 pp., \$22.99

The two authors, teachers of Old Testament and Hebrew at Wheaton College and Moody Bible Institute respectively, have set out "to bring together the most significant data from Old Testament historical and literary backgrounds, critical and technical introduction, biblical commentary, and Old Testament theology." They have done so in an admirable and readable manner. It sets out to provide a companion to Robert H. Gundry's A Survey of the New Testament (1981).

The first of the six major divisions of the text deals with such general introductory matters as the nature of the OT as revealed scripture and how to study and apply it (including a very abbreviated introduction to some different critical methodologies), its transmission and growth (writing, text criticism, canon--with an introduction to extra-canonical literature), and an overview of OT history, geography and archaeology. Each chapter here, as well as all subsequent ones, include useful discussion questions as well as suggestions for further reading. The latter contain works from as recently as 1990.

The next four major sections deal with the biblical books in Protestant canonical order, i.e. the Pentateuch, historical books (Former Prophets), poetic books, and the prophets. The headings play somewhat fast and loose with some of the books, since Lamentations, occurring after Jeremiah under prophets formally should fit under poetic books, while in actuality almost all of the prophetic books are poetic in form as well. The last section looks forward to the New Testament and also provides an encapsulated theological and ethical summary of the Old Testament.

The book is thoughtfully laid out, so will be easily navigated by the interested reader. Each chapter (the author of which is identified by initials in the table of contents) discusses, always in this order, the book's composition (authorship, form, date, etc., including brief discussions of some critical issues), background in the ancient near eastern world, an outline of the book, its purpose and message, structure and organization, and major theological themes. There are helpful maps, time-lines, charts and figures interspersed within the book which help bring the written discussion into greater clarity. The volume achieves its goal as an introduction well, and will serve conservatives well in class-room and Bible study contexts. It deserves a place on church library shelves, as well as of those interested in starting a serious study

of the Old Testament.

David W. Baker

Rolf Rendtorff

The Old Testament: An Introduction

Philadelphia: Fortress

1985 transl. of 1983 original, xi + 308 pp.,
\$15.00

Rolf Rendtorff is Professor of Old Testament at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, and one of the leading OT scholars active today. This new paperback edition of his translated introduction is thus most welcome, especially since it breaks new ground than regularly worked by scholarship. For example, in his view of the composition of the Pentateuch, the history of tradition as being more productive than a standard source critical approach (see his previous work The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch, 1990, which has caused quite a stir among OF scholars).

The volume is divided into three sections: "The Old Testament as a Source of the History of Israel", in which he looks at historical sources and then a survey of Israel's history from the Patriarchs through the restoration; "The Literature of the Old Testament in the Life of Ancient Israel", in which he studies the social sphere of the OF including family, law, cult, politics, and prophecy; "The Books of the Old Testament", where each of the books is introduced, and

the concept of canon is encountered. Each section, and many of the subsections, have their own bibliography, which, by the nature of the publication history of the volume, are somewhat dated and show a natural, though not exclusive, tendency toward German scholarship.

The layout of the book is quite useful, with subheadings given clearly in the outside margins, along with cross-references to relevant discussions elsewhere in the volume itself. A very useful feature is hidden among the index at the back of the volume--a listing of the differences between Hebrew and English biblical verse reference numberings, a constant source of confusion for students. It is important to remember the subtitle, since an introduction can only be allusive, leading one into major areas of discussion and debate, but not having adequate room to resolve these, nor to delve into some of the equally interesting, though more minor, areas of concern. This book would serve well as a supplementary textbook, illustrating good, mainline scholarship, as well as being a foil to try and test one's own theories of composition, historicity, etc. It should be in all seminary libraries, and serious students of the OF should consult it in the course of their studies.

David W. Baker

Stuart Briscoe
Mastering the Old Testament: Genesis:
A Book-by-Book Commentary by Today's Great
Bible Teachers
Dallas: Word
1987, 414 pp., \$12.99

This is the first of a series of Old Testament commentaries based on the New King James Version. It sets out to be neither an exegetical nor a devotional commentary, but rather one seeking application for daily living. The volume contains useful insights from a seasoned pastor, but the format is quite annoying. The entire text of the passage is printed prior to any comment, so the actual content for which one buys the book is only about 50% of the total. One would have appreciated much more of Briscoe, since we already have our own biblical text.

David W. Baker

Anthony F. Campbell
The Study Companion to Old Testament Literature: An Approach to the Writings of Pre-Exilic and Exilic Israel
Old Testament Studies #2
Collegeville: Liturgical, Michael Glazier
1989, 504 pp., \$19.95

John J. Scullion

Genesis: A Commentary for Students, Teachers, and Preachers

Old Testament Studies #6

Collegeville: Liturgical, Michael Glazier
1992, 366 pp., \$19.95

These two volumes are examples of this series, and its sister New Testament series, which provides a serious introduction to the biblical literature from the perspective of contemporary Catholicism. It is interesting to observe Catholic biblical interpretation as evidenced in these volumes. The trends in post-Vatican II scholarship seem to have homogenized those of a more critical Protestant and Catholic persuasion to such a point that discernible differences between viewpoints are no longer on the Catholic-Protestant axis, but rather on that dealing with the view of the inspiration and authority of Scripture which is espoused. The division concerns whether the Bible is a record of divine revelation, faithfully reflecting events and words as they actually transpired, or is it only a noble human product, noble in intent but definitely flawed in its execution as regards such items as historical accuracy and continuing normative expectation. This series, as regards such matters as the dating of the composition of texts, is definitely reflective of the more liberal perspective.

Campbell's book is divided into four

major sections. Each of these is looking more at methodology and issues than at content matters, an approach which is fitting for this kind of volume. In section 1 (Genesis to Deuteronomy), we are introduced to the literary nature of the Pentateuch with such concerns as source and form criticism receiving major attention. Then the purported source documents P and J are studied in more detail. Section 2 (Deuteronomy to 2 Kings) introduce the concept of the Deuteronomistic History and explores its intent and constituent elements. Campbell's third section is entitled "The Pre-exilic Prophets", though why discussion of Ezekiel and "Second Isaiah" is included here in a chapter so entitled is not clear. The fourth section (Jonah and Job) is simply representative of the Writings, since the majority of them are not discussed in any detail at all in the book.

An eye is kept on the reader throughout the book, since representative and important Scripture passages are suggested for reading at the head of each chapter. These help the novice with little or no biblical background and not enough time to read the whole Old Testament. There are also frequent, though short, sections called "Today", which look at contemporary application, as well as brief list of further readings on the chapter's topic.

Fr. John Scullion, S.J., did not live to see his commentary in print, since he

passed away in 1990, following a career as teacher, author and translator.

Scullion provides a useful, concise overview of the critical position of Julius Wellhausen concerning the composition of the Pentateuch, a study of the discussion of the issue as it preceded Wellhausen, as well as a sketch of subsequent research, including that which eschews Wellhausen. He presents his own approach also, looking firstly at the structure of the larger units within Genesis, then their constituent elements, noting in particular matters of literary and theological import. He also provides useful and interesting historical and linguistic insight, and shows awareness of the scholarly literature. Conservative writers are not ignored, though the bibliography is slanted more toward the left. All in all, this is a very good overview of mainline understanding of this most important book, one which is readable and deserves to be read.

David W. Baker

Dale Ralph Davis

Such a Great Salvation: Expositions of the Book of Judges

Expositor's Guide to the Historical Books

Grand Rapids: Baker

1990, 227 pp., \$11.99

This is the second set of expositions (see ATJ XXIV [1992], 107-8) which Davis, a

Presbyterian pastor from Maryland, has published. Davis provides historical and philological comment on passages from the text, as well as applications and illustrations from his own ministry. It is not a commentary, but then it does not set out to be such. As with the previous volume, he mixes exegetical insight with homiletical skill to produce a work which will find a welcome place in a church library or on a pastor's desk.

David W. Baker

John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue, eds.
The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East
Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns
1990, xiv + 545 pp, \$42.50

Prophet, priest and king are functionaries familiar to students of the Bible. An equally important figure, not only within the life of Israel, but also elsewhere in the ancient Near East, and even through the time of Christ, was the wise person, the sage of the title of this excellent collection. In thirty-six chapters by thirty different authors, this culturally significant class is studied through the historical gamut from the ancient Sumerians through the rabbis in a very useful manner.

The book is divided into six sections. The first covers "the sage in ancient Near Eastern literature." It includes chapters

on the evidence for the function of sages in Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Ugaritic and Iranian cultures, along with a very interesting, and needful, chapter on the place of women among this group in texts from Mesopotamia (they were rare, but they did exist). A section of nine chapters explores "the social locations and functions of the sage." It has chapters on the court functions in Israel, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Canaan and Greece, and the significance of Solomon, the patron of wisdom in the Bible. The training and life of the wise in school and temple, in family and clan are also studied.

The third and fourth sections deal with the Old Testament texts themselves, namely "the sage in the wisdom literature of the Hebrew Bible" (on Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, as well as the female sage in Israel), and "the sage in other biblical texts" (the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic history of Samuel through Kings, the prophets and the Chronicler, with which the author groups Ezra and Nehemiah). The fifth major section discusses "the sage from before the close of the Hebrew canon to post-biblical times" includes studies of Greek and Roman literature, apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic literature, including separate studies of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) and the Wisdom of Solomon, Qumran, the early rabbis, and Jesus. The last entry is very sketchy (only 17 pages), and you will want

to consult the book on this subject by Ashland's Ben Witherington, Jesus the Sage (Fortress, 1994).

The sixth and final section covers "the symbolic universe of the sage", comprised of chapters on "from scribalism to rabbinism"--emerging Judaism, "cosmology and the social order," and "from prudentialism [or traditional wisdom] to apocalypticism". There follows a fourteen page bibliography which is subdivided into twenty sections which do not follow exactly layout of the volume itself. Included are works from as recently as 1989. There follow indexes of modern and classical authors, of ancient Near Eastern writings, and of Scripture and related writings. In all the book is very well put together and commendably produced, standing as a credit to the technical skill of the editors and publisher.

The coverage within the volume is broad, beyond the interest of all but the most immersed in the topic, but there will be for the finding material which will benefit the scholar as well as the pastor, teacher and student. All seminary and college libraries should have the book available, and all readers of this journal will do well to be aware of it and to consult it, for they will find much of interest. The scripture index will probably be the most efficient means of access for most readers to the treasure house which awaits them when they consult this work. David W. Baker

John Pilch

Introducing the Cultural Context of the Old Testament: Vol. 1 Hear the Word

New York/Mahwah: Paulist

1991, xiv + 212 pp., \$14.95

This is a useful workbook for those interested in moving toward understanding the Old Testament in its cultural environment, while also seeking its relevance to today. It is thus a very necessary introduction to cross-cultural interpretation. The book will be useful in small group settings, but it is also accessible for individual study. It can well be used for those with little or no biblical knowledge, as well as by those who have done previous study.

Catering to the very elementary needs of beginning students, Pilch very carefully gives instructions on the use of the book as well as to biblical interpretation itself. He also is not afraid to use aids from today to help illustrate his points. For example, to illustrate the difficulty experienced at times in cross-cultural communication, he asks that the reader watch and think about the movie 'The Gods Must be Crazy' in the light of obstacles to intercultural understanding.

The author is Catholic, and some of the readings he suggests are from Catholic documents, e.g. the Vatican II Document on Divine Revelation, or from the Apocrypha, a

number of readings coming from Ecclesiasticus. This could add a useful ingredient for Protestant study, leading to even greater understanding not only of the biblical, Mediterranean context but also of our own contemporary society. Where current documents are suggested, relevant sections are quoted, since they will be less accessible to most readers than would biblical or apocryphal passages, which are referred to but not quoted.

Each chapter involves three sections. "Preparation" gives preliminary homework for evaluation and discussion, the movie mentioned being an example. The lesson itself has numerous scriptural passages and questions which are to be read and answered, there generally being space left in the workbook for comments, though extra space will at times be needed. The "follow-up" involves suggestions to continue on in the theme after the lesson has been completed.

The text is divided into seven sessions. Following the introduction to interpretation, there is an "overview of the wisdom literature in a Mediterranean cultural perspective" (an introduction to Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus [Sirach], Ecclesiastes, Job, Wisdom of Solomon, Song of Songs, and the Psalms), "core cultural values" (honor and shame/guilt), parenting (discipline), "human relationships" (U.S. individualism versus Mediterranean group solidarity), "status and roles" (age and

gender), "time: a chronological framework of the Old Testament" (where some more critical views, e.g. late-date Daniel and the Documentary Hypothesis creep into a discussion of the placement of the biblical events and books on a time-line) and "why believe the Bible?" (discussing spiritual beings as well as revelation and inspiration).

While some of the material will find disagreement among many readers of this review, the concept of the book is a sound one. Judicious use of it, with an adequately prepared group leader, will undoubtedly help to make the Old Testament more understandable and interesting to the beginner. Why don't some of you work on a similar concept and format from an Evangelical perspective?

David W. Baker

Avraham Gileadi, ed.

Israel's Apostasy and Restoration:
Essays in honor of Roland K. Harrison

Grand Rapids: Baker Book House
1988, xiii + 325 pp., \$24.99

This belated review joins in honoring one of the leading Evangelical Old Testament scholars of this generation, Roland Harrison, emeritus professor of Old Testament at Wycliffe College in Toronto. Roland Harrison pursued his studies at the University of London but came to Canada in 1949, where he has taught and ministered ever since. He

is probably most widely known for his numerous publications, including his massive Old Testament introduction, and his editorial role with the New International Commentary on the Old Testament. He passed away in 1993.

Rare among Festschriften, or works in honor of a scholar or teacher, this endeavor asked the contributors to address an assigned topic, rather than the customary practice of allowing them to choose their own. Thus, for the most part, the contributors were not addressing areas of their primary expertise. The respect with which they viewed the honoree impelled the contributors to stretch themselves into these new areas.

Following are the topics and the contributors in the volume:

Peter C. Craigie - Forward; Avraham Gileadi - Preface, "The Davidic Covenant: A Theological Basis for Corporate Protection"; Frederick E. Greenspahn - "From Egypt to Canaan: A Heroic Narrative"; John N. Oswalt - "Golden Calves and the "Bull of Jacob: The Impact on Israel of its Religious Environment"; James R. Battenfield - "YHWH's Refutation of the Baal Myth through the Actions of Elijah and Elishah"; Daniel I. Block - "The Period of the Judges: Religious Disintegration under Tribal Rule"; William Sanford LaSor - "The Prophets during the Monarchy: Turning Points in Israel's Decline"; C. Hassell Bullock - "The Priestly

Era in the Light of Prophetic Thought"; James K. Hoffmeier - "Egypt as an Arm of Flesh: A Prophetic Response"; Paul R. Gilchrist - "Israel's Apostasy: Catalyst of Assyrian World Conquest"; John D.W. Watts - "Babylonian Idolatry in the Prophets as a False Socio-Economic System"; Bruce K. Waltke - "The Phenomenon of Conditionality within Unconditional Covenants"; William J. Dumbrell - "The Prospect of Unconditionality in the Sinaitic Covenant"; Gary A. Smith - "Alienation and Restoration: A Jacob-Esau Typology"; Alfred E. Krause - "Historical Selectivity: Prophetic Prerogative or Typological Imperative?"; Ronald Youngblood - "A Holistic Typology of Prophecy and Apocalyptic"; Wayne O. McCready - "The "Day of Small Things" vs. the Latter Days: Historical Fulfillment or Eschatological Hope?"; Joseph E. Coleson - "Israel's Life Cycle from Birth to Resurrection"; Duane L. Christensen - "A New Israel: the Righteous from among All Nations"; Eugene H. Merrill - "Pilgrimage and Procession: Motifs of Israel's Return"; Stephen D. Ricks - "The Prophetic Literality of Tribal Reconstruction"; Douglas K. Stuart - "The Prophetic Ideal of Government in the Restoration Era"; John M. Lundquist - "Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Hebrew Bible"; Victor H. Matthews - "Theophanies Cultic and Cosmic; "Prepare to Meet thy God!"; Herbert M. Wolf - "The Transcendent Nature of Covenant Curse Reversals".

We wish to join in honoring a great scholar and Christian gentleman.

David W. Baker

Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman
Amos, The Anchor Bible 24A
New York: Doubleday
1989, xlii + 979 pp., \$30.00

John H. Hayes
Amos-The Eighth Century Prophet: His Times
and His Preaching
Nashville: Abingdon
1988, 256 pp., \$13.95

Shalom M. Paul
Amos, Hermeneia
Minneapolis: Fortress
1991, xxvii + 409 pp., \$46.00

Gary V. Smith
Amos: A Commentary
Library of Biblical Interpretation
Grand Rapids: Zondervan
1989, xv + 307 pp., \$17.95

Recently there has been a bumper crop of commentaries on the prophecy of Amos. This is not inappropriate, since the book, though classified among the 'Minor' prophets, has major theological and homiletical importance. Each book comes from a different theological viewpoint and is directed toward

a different audience, but all are most welcome.

The earliest of the books under review, that of John Hayes, is also the shortest. The author, from Candler School of Theology, Emory University, is an authority on Israelite history, and represents the main-line of Protestant OT scholarship. Hayes' historical interest is clear throughout the book, but most striking in the first two chapters. The first places Amos firmly in his historical and geographical context. Hayes shows extensive interaction with ancient Near Eastern sources, claiming a pro-Assyrian position for the Israelite king of the prophecy, Jeroboam. He does play a bit loose with some of his sources (the OT in particular), in claiming, without substantiating argument, a change in 1 Kings 20 from an original narrative concerning Jehoahaz and Hazael to the present concern with Ahab and Ben-hadad. In general, however, the historical reconstruction will prove quite informative and necessary to the reader in placing the prophecies in their context.

The second chapter gives a useful overview of the history of Amos research, highlighting areas of debate, especially as regards Amos' literary history, and the chief contributors to these debates. He himself holds to an Amos authorship of the collection, or possibly a compilation by one of the immediate audience.

The commentary proper, covering 200 pages, is brief, but packed with useful information. Its format can be seen using 1:1 as an example, since each section is much the same. There is an extensive bibliography, the author's translation of the verse, and then a word-for-word commentary discussing such things as ancient Near Eastern background, the words for 'vision' and the name 'Amos', as a person--where he lived and what he did, and the historical setting of the verse and the book. There is much very useful information here, though theological reflection is slight, and New Testament and contemporary reinterpretation and application is conspicuous by their absence. The book concludes with general, author and scripture indices.

Gary Smith's volume comes from the Evangelical side of the theological spectrum, he being a professor at Bethel Theological Seminary. It is part of an ad hoc series of occasional commentaries, unlike the one-off volume of Hayes and the established, regularly appearing series in which the next two commentaries fall. It was completed in mid-1986, so is somewhat dated, though this is partly due to the tardiness of this review! His introductory material is only about 50% of that of Hayes, even though the volume is over 25% longer.

Smith has an interest in theology, with a section on themes in his introduction as

well as in the course of commenting, but he sadly refrains from addressing the important issue of the use of 9:12 in Acts 15:17, where a very significant theological point for the readers of this review is made on the basis of a (mis?)reading by the Septuagint. While the commentary is on an OT book, a bit more discussion of its use in the NT and the church would have been welcome. Smith's tracing of development and themes in the OT is good, as is his interaction with both liberal and conservative scholars, the latter often lacking in more mainline works.

Each commentary section includes the following sections: introduction (restating the message of the section in its context in the prophecy), background (within the biblical and historical contexts), structure and unity (providing the author's translation with a parallel outline, textual notes, a discussion of the structure and the unity of the passage), interpretation (a verse by verse commentary), and theological development. Hebrew words, always in transliteration, are rare, and have accompanying translations in the interpretation section, so the volume is accessible to the non-specialist, as is that by Hayes.

By contrast, the other two commentaries are directed more toward the specialist, though pastor and student will find it worth the effort in using them. Andersen and Freedman's volume is a massive opus, much

like their previous Anchor Bible work on Hosea. Their collaboration is exemplary for the possibilities of Evangelical (Andersen)/Liberal (Freedman) cooperation by two of the more influential OT scholars.

In some ways their work might seem to be overkill, but at least very few, if any, stones are left unturned. For example, their introduction, at 178 pages, is almost as long as Hayes entire volume. Included here, among many other things, is a detailed reconstruction of the phases of the book's composition, a thorough analysis of its contents, an essay on Israel's God as shown in Amos, and another on the very important problem of the identification of 'Israel' in Amos.

The format of the commentary proper follows the standard for the series, with translation by the authors, at times an introduction, notes on the interpretation of the individual words and textual matters, and a comment section on the passage. There are also accompanying maps and even a set of 8 photographs providing geographical, religious and archaeological insight into the book. Due to its exhaustiveness, the authors have almost produced everything you need to know about Amos, the 'almost' arising again from a dearth of theological and applicational reflection (there are only 24 NT citations in the book, half of them on only two pages). Pastors will find a bounty of sermon preparation background material,

but will need to search for their own points to be applied to their congregation. This is probably not all a bad thing.

Shalom Paul teaches in Jerusalem and brings a Jewish perspective to the book. His volume is of interest since it is the second in the Hermeneia series on this same prophecy, the first, by Wolff, having been translated from the German original in 1977. The series is thus seeking to provide completely new studies of each of the OT books.

The bibliography, running to 68 pages, needs to be consulted by serious students of Amos even if nothing else were worthy of study, but that is not the case. Paul's interest and expertise in the ancient Near Eastern background of the Bible makes this a very vital part of his work as well, with citations of the literature covering 5 pages in his citation index. His Jewish background also has prepared him to be able to use the rabbinic sources to a greater extent than the other commentators, and his fluency in modern Hebrew allows him to cite Israeli sources not used by the others.

The Hermeneia format is familiar, with a translation by the author followed by a lengthy commentary on each verse, with copious footnotes to the secondary sources. The Hebrew and Greek are untransliterated, and also rarely translated. There is good interaction with other scholars, even citing a few Evangelical scholars. The rarity of

the latter citations is not due to an oversight on the part of Paul, but rather a real need for serious conservative scholarship on the book and its problems.

Which of these works should you buy? To some extent, that depends on who you are. As a working pastor who seeks to preach from the OT, Smith will probably be the most help, but you will be disappointed in application. It might also well find a place in a good church library, while the other three commentaries will be for the more serious student of the OT. Pastor's will find much of interest in them, and should be aware of their existence, but scholars will need to consult them for important new insight and challenge. We are sadly short of excellent commentaries which cover the range of requirements of the average pastor--from text to sermon.

David W. Baker

Clayton N. Jefford

The Sayings of Jesus in The Teaching of
the Twelve Apostles

Leiden: E. J. Brill

1989, \$50.00

The study of early Christianity has too often limited itself to only the evidence one can derive from the canonical material found in the NT. There are, however, other sources, some of which likely were written

in the first century AD, which deserve close scrutiny for they provide us with a further window on the early days of Christianity. No document outside the canon more deserves such scrutiny than 'The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles', more often known to modern readers as the Didache.

In a meticulous form and tradition critical study of the Didache, C. N. Jefford has provided us with yet further evidence, if any were needed, that this document bears some relationship to both Q and the Synoptic Gospels (particularly Matthew), as well as to other early Jewish traditions, including both sapiential and eschatological traditions. Jefford maintains that there are two main portions of the Didache, 1.1-6.1a and chapters 7-15, which were composed by different persons at different times (the former perhaps as early as the 50s or 60s, the latter chapters during the last twenty years of the first century). The former section may in fact have originally been part of a purely Jewish rather than Christian source, while chapters 7-15 clearly bear some relationship to the Synoptics and Q. There are various signs of the primitiveness of the document including the material in chapter 16 about Christ's return.

As for provenance, Jefford suggests that the Didache in its final form must have come from the same place or region from which Matthew's Gospel originated, namely Syrian Antioch. We receive a salutary

reminder in Jefford's study that it is not merely the Gospel of Thomas, but also the Didache which bears witness to the fact that early Christians were making collections of the sayings of Jesus for a variety of purposes, mostly ethical, and thus that the theory of the existence of Q is not likely without substance, even though we have found no Q document.

Clearly enough the compiler of this remarkable document, was, much like the editor of 2 Peter, more of an editor rather than a creator of his source material, drawing on a variety of sources that were widely available to early Christians. The nearly exact parallels between the Epistle of Barnabas and the Didache in the handling of the two ways material (cf. Barnabas 18-20) shows the use of such source material. Jefford posits that the sayings in Did. 1.3b-2.1 and in 6.2-3 were added to the document at the point when the two major portions of the work (the Jewish early chapters in 1-6, and the Christian later ones in 7-15) were blended together. This may be so, but it would be well to keep in mind that in the similar wisdom document of James we have the blending of Jewish wisdom with the specific teaching of Jesus (favoring the Matthean Sermon on the Mount form of it) not in two stages but in all likelihood in one stage by a Jewish Christian author. What both James and the Didache suggest is the influential Gospel of Matthew seems to have been widely

circulated in the early Church, in particular in the eastern end of the Mediterranean. This conclusion is also suggested by traces of Matthew in some of the early Church Fathers.

Jefford is to be commended for again bringing to our attention this fascinating document called the Didache. Whether one accepts his tradition history analysis about the stages of growth of the work or not, the placing of this document once again within the first century must force on NT scholars the necessity of giving this material its due. Early Christianity was considerably more complex than we often realize, and if the Didache is any indication, it would be wrong to underestimate the number of Jewish Christians even at the close of the first century AD for whom this sort of document would be especially germane.

Ben Witherington, III

R.J. Coggins & J.L. Houlden, eds.

A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation

Philadelphia/London: Trinity /SCM

1990, xvi + 751 pp., \$49.95

This dictionary is not a Bible dictionary per se, where one is introduced to all of the biblical characters, places and themes, but rather a dictionary of the interpretation of the Bible, as the title states. We do meet biblical characters,

e.g. Abraham, but mainly as a catalyst for a hermeneutical discussion of, for example, theology and history. Important interpreters (e.g. Barth, Calvin, Erasmus, Westcott, Lightfoot and Hort), interpretational approaches (e.g. historical-critical method, psychological interpretation, reader-response criticism), genres (e.g. law, poetry, but not history or narrative), and other categories (e.g. calendars, commentary, harmony [of the Gospels], resurrection, Septuagint) are covered.

The contributors to the dictionary are a diverse lot, coming from Australia, Canada, Germany, Eire, Israel, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the US, but mostly from the UK, and include theological liberals as well as those who are more conservative, Protestants, Catholics and Jews. In all, this will be a very useful volume for seminary libraries, and students of the Bible and its study will do well to consult it regularly.

David W. Baker

Peter Cotterell and Max Turner
Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation
Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press
1989, 348 pp., \$19.99

God chose to reveal himself to humanity firstly through the written word of Scripture, and then more completely through the living Word, his Son. Since God chose

to speak, using such mundane things as propositions consisting of words, sounds and grammar, it behooves those who would hear him to study not only the words, but also how they mean. This is an aspect of linguistics, which Cotterell and Turner readably present to us in this volume.

Linguistics is the study of how language works, and it is briefly introduced in the first chapter. Then the authors turn to semantics and hermeneutics, the study of meaning and interpretation respectively. They especially spend time discussing the author's meaning, and problems in determining it, but the necessity of doing so since revelation's meaning must first of all originate from the ultimate Author of Scripture. Also related to these areas are meaning and significance, what the words mean in themselves and their context, and the importance or significance they have for the hearer or reader, 'what do they mean to me'. The latter is not to be a subjective, "anything goes" kind of interpretation, but must find a tie with the actual meaning intended by the author.

The authors discuss meaning on its lowest level, that of the word, how word studies have been misused, but also the necessity of doing them, using the tools of 'lexical semantics' or how words mean. Ultimate meaning does not lie in a simple understanding of each word, however, but how they are combined into higher levels such as

clauses, sentences, paragraphs and discourses. Analysis at these levels involves, among other things, careful note of such seemingly minor connectives as 'but, however, etc.', which provide clues as to the relationship between these units. It is in these higher levels that some of the newer insights in linguistics are taking place. As the authors state, "a new kind of commentary is needed which can place lexical studies in their appropriate place but can give to larger structures more careful consideration".

The book closes with a discussion of figurative or non-literal language. This topic is of extreme importance in particular to Evangelicals in their theological discussions of inspiration, authority, inerrancy and infallibility. How does one understand the concept of truth in a text which is not literal? Finally the reader is provided with a nine page bibliography and indices of authors and Scripture.

Students as well as pastors should make it a point to read this book, which could also well be on the shelves of church libraries. If God stooped to reveal himself in words, and we preach and teach in words, shouldn't we become familiar about how they work and how we can better understand them?

David W. Baker

Thomas F. Torrance

The Christian Frame of Mind: Reason, Order
and Openness in Theology and Natural Science

Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard

1989, \$22.95

How often have you heard, "Religion is about faith, science about facts"? This misunderstanding about the historic relation of science and the Christian faith has motivated an increasing number of scholars, scientists, pastors and interested lay people to study and discuss the actual nature of this relation. Thomas F. Torrance, Professor Emeritus of Christian Dogmatics at the University of Edinburgh, as one of the prime interpreters and leaders of this movement, has spent his career interpreting the Christian roots of modern science. For the student or Christian lay person not acquainted with issues of the relation of theology and natural science, Torrance, in the book, *The Christian Frame of Mind: Reason, Order and Openness in Theology and Natural Science*, provides an introductory guide for understanding what the relation of scientific inquiry to the Christian faith and ultimately the God of creation is.

Many of Torrance's works are densely worded, tightly argued treatments of what he terms, "Theological Science". The scope of his thought demonstrates the historical continuity of both the church's thinking on

the natural world since the early centuries of Christianity and the development of science within the context of a biblical understanding of creation. His writings range from investigations into the early church's understanding about the relation of God to creation in the context of science and philosophy of the Greco-Roman world to interpreting and outlining the similarities between theology and modern science. Recurring themes in Torrance's writing concern the character of creation as a unified whole, which is rational, orderly and integrally related through its divine creator, and humanity's God-given role as steward or mediator of creation.

The Christian Frame of Mind, written for an educated lay audience, provides a good introduction to Torrance's thought and this growing field of inquiry. Each chapter is a self-contained treatment of one aspect of the larger field of the relation of theology and natural science. Chapter One, "The Greek Christian Mind" examines the ideas of three early church fathers, St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus and St. John Chrysostom, demonstrating how important the Hellenistic mindset was to the early church and how fundamental it was in the formation of Christian doctrine and ultimately the rise of modern science. For the reader unfamiliar with the Patristic theologians, this chapter will give a taste of the significant riches that are found

here.

Issues in the relation of science and theology comprise the focus of chapters two through six, with particular emphasis on order in creation and the nature of scientific inquiry. Chapters two and three discuss the concept of order in theology and science, with humanity as the mediator of order. The concept of order is fundamental for both Christian theology and natural science, because for the Christian it points to a divine creator who formed creation reflecting his love. It is this understanding of the orderliness of creation which enabled the Western world to understand that the material world was real, and that the God of creation discovered in the Incarnation was like-wise real and loving towards all that he created. On the other hand, natural science was able to be born because the natural world was understood to be real, not being a vague reflection of some divine idea, and could be studied, analyzed with conclusions brought, because the orderliness of nature made their observations meaningful.

Torrance, in chapters four, five and six, more explicitly addresses the nature of science as an outgrowth of the Christian world view which came during the early centuries of the church. Both natural and theological science are essentially creative sciences, looking to understand what is observed, rather than arguing theories with

proof texts. Science, in both kinds, looks to discover that which is unseen. Torrance finds agreement in the philosopher of science, Michael Polanyi, who demonstrated how often scientific advancement comes from intuitional leaps of judgement, not pure rational observations. This creative science, for Torrance, is how humanity relates to the unseen God, who is discovered in the observations of daily life in the light of the wisdom and revelation of the Word of God. Torrance's perspective is specifically focused upon the similarities in theological and natural science's methods of discovery. But the broader implication for the Christian is a perspective on how faith is nurtured in the real and contingent orderliness of human life.

The Christian Frame of Mind concludes with a chapter on "The University within a Christian Culture", providing an important defense of Christian Higher Education, and an appendix which consists of a sermon entitled, "The Theology of Light." One of the great benefits of this book as an opening to Torrance's thought is that it includes an introduction by W. Jim Neidhardt which provides an excellent overview of the distinctives of his writings. Any pastor who has engineers, scientists or teachers in his or her congregation would be served well with a richer understanding about the relation of science and the Christian that Thomas Torrance has to offer. *The Christian*

Frame of Mind will be a good beginning point for understanding. Edwin R. Brenegar, III

Timothy George
Theology of the Reformers
Nashville: Broadman Press,
1988, 337 pp., \$21.95

Timothy George is Dean of the Beason Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. He previously taught church history and historical theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. The book reflects both his careful scholarship and his knowledge of the teaching profession. Consequently it serves well as a text book on the Reformation period.

The first two chapters provide a context for the study of the reformers. Chapter one probes interpretive questions about the Reformation itself in light of recent historiography. Chapter two sets the events of the Reformation into the European developments that were part of the transition from Medieval society to the modern one.

Chapters three through six comprise the bulk of the book. Successive chapters are devoted to Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, and Menno Simons. Each study traces key events in the life of the reformer, followed by an analysis of his theology, noting both characteristic emphases

and unique positions. Similarities among the reformers are noted and helpful contrasts are cited to help one grasp the stance of each leader. Good use is made of the primary writings of these figures.

One of the strengths of the theological sections is the relation of theological arguments to the larger history of dogma in the Christian church. Ideas are traced to patristic sources, doctrinal formulations of the Western church, and to the mystical writers of the late Medieval period. The author does not hesitate to probe technical phrases, particularly the Latin expressions of Medieval scholastic theology. Each expression is clearly explained when used, and a five page glossary at the end of the volume assists the reader who is unacquainted with these terms.

The author is to be commended for providing sympathetic treatments for each of the reformers. This is particularly appreciated in regard to Zwingli and Simons, who often get less space in such books and thus come across as somewhat second rate reformers. George gives them each the same length of attention that he gave Luther. Calvin obviously serves as a personal favorite of the author, seen by the fact that he gets about forty pages of text above what each of the other three received. The final chapter of the book considers the points at which the Reformation made helpful and lasting contributions to the life and

thought of Christianity.

I have one major criticism of the book from the standpoint of its usability as a course textbook. There is no theologian to represent the English reformation! If another edition is to be forthcoming, this would be a welcomed improvement.

Luke L. Keefer, Jr.

Russell E. Richey

Early American Methodism: A Reconsideration

Bloomington: Indiana University Press

1991, 137 pp., \$25.00

Russell Richey is recognized as a careful scholar of American history, and the Methodist share of that history in particular. His position as Research Professor of Church History at the Divinity School of Duke University affords him the opportunity to write thoughtful volumes such as Early American Methodism.

The words "A Reconsideration" in the title were lost in the publication process, though the author's introductory chapter clearly assumes them. He writes: "As the titles indicate, this is self-consciously a revisionist endeavor." (p.xi) Without those crucial words one is apt to misjudge both the subject and the intention of the book. This is not a history of Methodism in America from 1770 to 1810. It is an exercise in the methodology of American Methodist

history. Richey wrestles with the issue of a Methodist hermeneutic in understanding its American development.

It is a "revisionist endeavor" in that it challenges popular interpretations of American Methodism both within the Methodist guild and among the wider field of American church historians. The author either rejects the utility or questions the hegemony of such interpretive models as the "Americanization of Methodism," the movement from "society to church," and the transition from "sect to denomination." He writes: "These notions suffer from being overworked and insufficiently attended. Like any draft animal they can be abused." (p.xv)

His method is to explore early American Methodism in terms of four separate but inter-related "languages." The first of these is the pietist or evangelical language. Methodism shared in this larger heritage of personal conversion that promoted such endeavors as revivals and awakenings. For Richey this was the primary language of early Methodism in America, as it was for much of its nineteenth century orientation.

This pietist language blended well with the distinctively Wesleyan language that was inherited from British sources. Thus the second language receives little attention in the book, apart from the demonstration that it contributed both to the continuities within Methodist development and the ultimate confusion resulting from the ten-

sions among the various languages.

"Episcopal language," the third category, emerged from the independent foundation of the Methodist Church in America in 1784. In ordaining bishops, American Methodism involved itself in a rhetoric which obscured both its true structure and mission. This led to confusion within Methodism and in the way it is perceived by other religious groups in America.

The fourth language, its political tongue, betrays the complexity of the issues regarding Methodist social conscience and political awareness. Why, for example, did Methodism adjust so readily to the institution of slavery when it began as an abolitionist denomination? Did it support American democracy as enthusiastically, especially in the early period, as some of its pronouncements might seem to imply? Richey feels Methodism was weakened in its early phase by a lack of a political theology which characterized Reformed theology in America.

The basic conviction of the book is that both the continuities and the changes within Methodism are best understood by the interactions of these four languages. The argument for the early period of Methodism depends, to a large degree, upon the author's preference for the Methodist vernacular. Much of his evidence is drawn from letters, diaries, journals, and accounts of the times in church records and public

newspapers. Asbury's expression, "a glass of the heart," (which highlights the chapter on Methodist views of the nation) could also categorize the author's approach. He believes Methodist expressions of their own self-understandings should hold greater weight in assessing the early American period than secondary interpretations from later historians, theologians, and social scientists.

As one whose area of interest is John Wesley and early Methodism, I am in complete agreement with Richey's assessment of sources. Methodism, especially in its earliest phases (both in England and America), will look deceptively like other social and religious movements until one explores the primary sources. Then the true soul of Methodism emerges. Richey engages this soul of Methodism in this book. Consequently the chapters on "Community, Fraternity, and Order," "From Quarterly to Camp Meeting," and "The Southern Accent of American Methodism" are loaded with information and insight. They contain, I believe, the chief value of the book.

The concluding chapter I found to be mildly disappointing in that the book ends with a question: "The question raised but not answered by this volume is the relation these languages have had to one another. Was it Babel or Pentecost?" (p.97) In terms of the entire history of Methodism in America, it is appropriate to leave this

question of language (hermeneutic) undecided. But one would think that the period 1770-1810 is less ambiguous. Here the author's preference for the pietist language is largely justified. The question really is whether a paradigm which works well for the early period of American Methodism can be stretched to cover the whole as well.

Luke L. Keefer, Jr.

Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan

Philosophy of Religion, 2nd ed.

Grand Rapids: Baker Book House

1988, 402 pp., \$18.95 (paper)

In recent years Norman Geisler has been producing books which are co-authored with other scholars. He follows this pattern in this revision of his 1974 text on the philosophy of religion.

The second edition is nearly an exact reproduction of the first in terms of content. The chapter titles and outlines are the same, and so is most of the exposition. The differences are in format rather than in content. References which were chapter end-notes in the first edition occur as footnotes in the second. This facilitates readability. The second edition also provides several guiding questions at the beginning of each of the four parts of the book, along with selected general readings. This should enhance its value as a course text in philo-

sophy of religion.

The new edition also improves the bibliography and the indices. The bibliography includes more sources, especially those which were published since the first edition. The "author index" of the 1974 edition becomes a "name index" in the 1988 book. The reader therefore has a better guide to the thinkers represented in the text, for views are presented even when specific publications are not analyzed.

Since the context is largely the same in both editions, the strengths and weaknesses of Geisler's writing still prevail. His strengths are his ability to organize clearly, summarize succinctly the characteristic thought of basic philosophic trends and their chief spokespersons, and his critiques of each school from a Christian point of view.

His weaknesses are closely allied to his strengths. There is a tendency to push schools of thought and various philosophers into set identity boxes which may not always fit comfortably. Something can be lost when complex systems are reduced to simple characteristics so as to note similarities shared by different approaches to a given question. Representative philosophers are more vulnerable to a particular author's critique when viewed according to isolated themes separated from the context of their total system.

In the final analysis, this book works

very well as an introduction to philosophy of religion. Students and "lay readers" in philosophy will find it very helpful in introducing the discipline: its history, its systems and methods, and its notable thinkers. Those with more extensive backgrounds in philosophy will chafe at its weaknesses. It all depends upon the level of the readership. Luke L. Keefer, Jr.