

Shorter Reviews and Notices

Interpretation

■ *Faith and History: Essays in Honor of Paul W. Meyer*, edited by JOHN T. CARROLL, CHARLES H. COSGROVE, and E. ELIZABETH JOHNSON. Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1990. 377 pp. \$49.95. ISBN 1-55540-383-2.

THIS FESTSCHRIFT begins with a brief synopsis of Meyer's life, publications, and central concerns as a teacher and scholar. It also contains an unusual feature: a list of doctoral dissertations written under his supervision at Yale, Vanderbilt, and Princeton. The three editors, students during the Princeton years, chose a theme central to their teacher's heart—the relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Unfortunately, contributors to festschriften seldom follow the desires of editors. In this case, we find twenty-two essays, four of which deal with the Gospels, eleven with Paul's letters, and seven with general theological issues. Seven contributors, including the editors, are former doctoral students of Meyer—a fitting tribute to a superb teacher. Seven essays come from former colleagues, grateful for years of congenial and fruitful collaboration. So the volume fulfills the basic function and values of the festschrift-genre.

How can one best evaluate the merit and scholarly contribution of twenty-two diverse essays? It is quite impossible. The range of topics is too wide to permit discussion of common problems; even when scholars deal with the same document, as in the five essays on Romans, they do not engage one another in agreement or disagreement. There is an equally wide range of excellence. If forced to nominate the best, I would choose three: for exegetical precision and thoroughness, J. Louis Martyn's study of Sarah and Hagar; for provocative analysis and hermeneutical insight, Wayne A. Meeks's essay on the faithfulness of an

unpredictable God; for bringing medieval interpretation to bear on current issues, Karlfried Froehlich's study of Pauline rhetoric. If asked to hand out demerits, I would select Scholars Press, in part for shoddy binding, in part for careless proofreading (cf. pp. 117–19), and in part for excessive pricing.

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■ *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in Honor of J. Louis Martyn*, edited by ROBERT T. FORTNA and BEVERLY R. GAVENTA. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1990. 400 pp. \$26.95.

THIS FESTSCHRIFT assembles twenty-six essays composed by colleagues and former students of J. Louis Martyn. Sixteen focus on Paul, nine on John, and the last (by W. D. Davies) on Matthew. Typically in such efforts, topics and quality vary widely, and this collection is no exception. The authors pursue no common theme or argument; no overall interpretive issue is offered or settled; no essay "addresses" another. The effect is somewhat that of a catalogue.

D. Moody Smith's essay, the seventeenth in the collection, might well have stood first: He gives a coherent and thorough overview of modern Johannine scholarship, and so provides the reader with a clear sense of why, when, and how Martyn's own work shaped the field. Wayne Meeks, characteristically combining methodological finesse, sensitivity to social context, close reading, and common sense, presents one of the clearest and most useful analyses of Johannine (and subsequent) christology to be found anywhere. These same virtues, plus his command of Jewish sources both Greek and Semitic, distinguish the essay by

E. P. Sanders on Galatians 2:11–14. The “reconstruction” of a religious culture and indeed an entire society obsessed with the minutiae of “ritual purity” and the uncleanness of Gentiles—the Jews-as-backdrop, trotted out regularly to “explain” Galatians, Paul’s opponents generally and, *qal wahomer*, Jesus’—Sanders once again exposes for the chimerical history it is.

I happened to like these three essays best, but there is something here for everyone: textual criticism (Wink); exegesis (Meyer, Hall, Dahl, Gaventa, and others); redaction criticism (Tsuchido); Jungian archetypes (Brown). Those whose teeth ache when encountering sentences such as “Sin is an act of unbelief in the sense of distrust of the constituting call of the divine transcendence that arises out of the mimetic instability of the ego” will not much like Hammerton-Kelly’s theologizing of Romans according to René Girard; those whose do not, might.

These disparate essays fail to converge intellectually. They nonetheless cohere, bonded together by the authors’ deep respect and affection for the honoree. The glow of that shared feeling warms even the outside reader. Happy sixty-fifth birthday, Professor Martyn!

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■ *The Lord’s Prayer*, by JAN MILIČ LOCHMAN. Translated by GEOFFREY W. BROMILEY. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1990. 180 pp. \$12.95 (paper).

LOCHMAN, professor of theology at Basel, gives us a fresh and challenging discussion of the Lord’s Prayer, phrase by phrase. He moves expertly and confi-

dently within the Western theological tradition from the Early Fathers to contemporary theologians. Readers who want a survey in brief compass of what has been thought and understood in that great tradition regarding the Lord’s Prayer will find it in this book. Not that Lochman merely parrots the tradition; he has many original insights of his own, and a great strength of the book is his constant application of the petitions of the prayer to the current world situation.

The text to which Lochman brings the interpretations of the theologians, including his own, is scripture. This is most striking in his fairly comprehensive studies of what scripture means by the name of God, the kingdom of God, and the will of God. He also argues from scripture as to the true meaning of bread, debts, and temptation.

According to Lochman, the prayer judges us, demanding repentance or, as he prefers to call it, conversion. For example, the little “and” in “Give us this day our daily bread *and* forgive us our debts” signifies that whenever we eat, we should not only give thanks but also ask forgiveness, because those who live in the developed nations eat at the expense of the poor in the undeveloped nations. But the prayer also gives us hope—hope that God’s kingdom will come, God’s will will be done, despite the apparent hopelessness of our situation.

Although his answers may not always satisfy, Lochman does not evade any of the riddles inherent in the Lord’s Prayer. He wrestles honestly, with both learning and devotion. I wish I could have read this book before preaching or writing on the Lord’s Prayer.

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