

IN DEFENSE OF INTEGRITY¹

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Spurgeon's defense of the truth and concern for integrity follow the pattern set by Paul in dealing with his opponents in Corinth. In 2 Corinthians, Paul's response to criticism consisted of a defense of his integrity, without which his ministry would have been ineffective. He placed before his readers a number of reasons to reassure them of his integrity. They included his reverence for the Lord, his concern for the church, his devotion to the truth, his gratitude for Christ's love, his desire for righteousness, and his burden for the lost. In defending his integrity, he risked being called proud by his enemies, so he also displayed several marks of his humility: an unwillingness to compare oneself with others, a willingness to minister within limits, an unwillingness to take credit for others' labors, a willingness to seek only the Lord's glory, and an unwillingness to pursue anything but eternal commendation. Paul had right motives and he defended them for the right reasons, that is, to glorify God and to promote the truth of the gospel and Christ's church.

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Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the gifted nineteenth-century London preacher, said this in one of his later sermons, "I feel that, if I could live a thousand lives, I would like to live them all for Christ, and I should even then feel that they were all too little a return for His great love to me"²

Spurgeon was a pastor and Christian leader who clearly loved the Lord and defended His cause with integrity. That fact never exhibited itself more clearly than during the late 1880s, just a few years before his death. That is when he was a central figure in a major British church struggle known as the Downgrade Controversy. This doctrinal debate began within the Protestant churches of England (most notably the Baptist Union) when Spurgeon could no longer refrain from criticizing the church's alarming departure from sound doctrine and practice. Many

¹The source of this essay is the recently released volume entitled *The Power of Integrity* (Crossway, 1997). It is adapted and used here by permission.

²Cited in Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, 2d ed. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), 20.

churches and their pastors, who previously had been firmly conservative and evangelical, became more tolerant of theories that undermined the authority of Scripture and its view of man. Spurgeon also observed a deviation from the great Reformation doctrines and the proper role played by God's sovereign grace in salvation. From his pulpit and the pages of his magazine, *The Sword and the Trowel*, he courageously and consistently spoke out for the truth and urged average believers to resist false teaching and stand firm on the fundamentals of Christianity.

However, the tide of doctrinal declension among the churches in Charles Spurgeon's day continued, and his godly conscience constrained him to leave the Baptist Union. Shortly after his death in the 1890s, some of Spurgeon's supporters formed a new society called the Bible League to continue the battle for doctrinal purity and practical orthodoxy among evangelical churches. During the months of controversy, Spurgeon received harsh criticism from his opponents, but he never wavered from his defense of the truth. The following excerpt, preached during the Downgrade from a sermon entitled "Something Done for Jesus," reveals the true nature of Spurgeon's righteous motives and proper integrity:

We love our brethren for Jesus' sake, but He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. We could not live without Him. To enjoy His company is bliss to us: for Him to hide His face from us is our midnight of sorrow. . . . Oh, for the power to live, to die, to labour, to suffer as unto Him, and unto Him alone! . . . If a deed done for Christ should bring you into disesteem, and threaten to deprive you of usefulness, do it none the less. I count my own character, popularity, and usefulness to be as the small dust of the balance compared with fidelity to the Lord Jesus. It is the devil's logic which says, "You see I cannot come out and avow the truth because I have a sphere of usefulness which I hold by temporizing with what I fear may be false." O sirs, what have we to do with consequences? Let the heavens fall, but let the good man be obedient to his Master, and loyal to his truth. O man of God, be just and fear not! The consequences are with God, and not with thee. If thou hast done a good work unto Christ, though it should seem to thy poor bleared eyes as if great evil has come of it, yet hast thou done it, Christ has accepted it, and He will note it down, and in thy conscience He will smile thee His approval.³

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS INTEGRITY

Charles Spurgeon's defense of the truth and concern for integrity aligned with the legacy of the apostle Paul. Throughout his ministry, Paul faced opposition from those who hated the gospel and wanted to pervert its proclamation for their own purposes. Most of the opposition came from a group of false teachers in Corinth. They accused him of being incompetent, unsophisticated, unappealing, and

³Cited in *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, 205-6. For a more complete discussion of the Downgrade Controversy and its significance for today's church, see Appendix 1 of my book *Ashamed of the Gospel* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1993), 197-225.

impersonal. As a consequence, Paul was obliged, much against his normal preferences, to defend himself and his ministry. He did not seek to glorify himself, but he knew that he had to defend the gospel and the name of the Lord from those who sought to destroy the truth.

It soon became clear to the false teachers in Corinth that if they were going to redirect the Corinthian believers toward error and a false gospel, in addition to getting rich and gaining power and prestige, they would have to destroy Paul's integrity. Since he had established and taught the church at Corinth, the false teachers would have to undermine the church's confidence in Paul if they were going to replace his teaching with their own.

If his opponents at Corinth could destroy his integrity, they could also do away with Paul's usefulness, fruitfulness, and ability to serve the Lord. Therefore Paul had to maintain his integrity. While he had acknowledged his own humility in ministry—"We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor 4:7)—he also understood the real issue at stake in defending his integrity: "that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves" (v. 7).

An essential goal for any spiritual leader is to gain people's trust through genuine integrity. Like Paul, a leader's conduct must be trustworthy and consistent with his words. But once a leader proves to be hypocritical in any area of ministry, no matter how seemingly insignificant, he loses everything he has labored for in ministry and sees his credibility destroyed. That is what Paul feared as he confronted the rumors and lies of the false teachers at Corinth.

Paul used his second letter to the Corinthians, and certain passages in particular, to defend his integrity to the church. Second Cor 5:11 begins one of those passages, where Paul says, "We persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences."⁴ Paul wanted the church to understand and accept his sincerity in all things, as God had.

As Paul began this defense of his integrity, common sense dictated that he not expend any more time or energy in further self-promotion (2 Cor 5:12)—the Corinthians were already well aware of his consistent character and what he had done. Nevertheless, because of the insidious, persistent, and often vicious nature of his enemies' attacks, Paul outlined several reasons the Corinthians could look to for reassurance regarding his integrity.

Paul's Reverence for the Lord

The first reason Paul offered in defense of his integrity was his "fear of the Lord" (2 Cor 5:11). *Fear* in this context does not mean "being afraid," but "worship" and "reverence." A few scriptures easily illustrate this:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is

⁴The New American Standard Bible is the source of all Scripture quotations in this article unless otherwise noted.

understanding (Prov. 9:10).

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase (Acts 9:31).

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1).

Having the fear of the Lord means holding God in such awe that a person is wholeheartedly motivated to pursue His holiness and His service. Without question, that was true of Paul. He was so committed to the glory of God that it grieved him even to consider the possibility of dishonoring the Lord's name. Paul's intense reverence for God was therefore a powerful incentive for him to convince others of his integrity.

People sometimes ask me what is most difficult about receiving false criticism. I tell them that what is deeply disturbing and disconcerting is that the unfair criticism can lead others to believe I am misrepresenting God. That is what upset Paul about the allegations from the false teachers at Corinth—he knew they were misrepresenting him to the Corinthian believers.

A reverential knowledge of God's greatness is what characterized Paul. How else could he make this powerful declaration about God's attributes: "Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim 1:17)?

Paul's life was summed up in the exhortation he gave to the Roman Christians: "Present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Rom 12:1). His reverence for the Lord was complete, and he was grieved when enemies of the truth sought to undermine his integrity and threaten his ability to teach and preach. Paul therefore felt constrained to launch a defense of his integrity, not for his sake, but for God's.

Paul's Concern for the Church

Paul's concern for the church at Corinth was well established (cf. 1 Cor 1:10). And potential harm from false teachers had freshly aroused his interest in her spiritual welfare. He was concerned that the false teachers would eventually gain converts and more influence within the fellowship, leading to an ideological war between their faction and Paul and his supporters. That would shatter the unity of the church, which would yield other negative results such as a discredited leadership, stunted spiritual growth among church members, and a hindered outreach to the surrounding community.

Paul's response to this array of threats against the Corinthian church is instructive for all who strive for integrity. Rather than jumping into the rhetorical trenches and answering each criticism and lie of the false teachers, Paul took a wiser, more judicious approach: "We . . . are giving you an occasion to be proud of us, that

you may have an answer for those who take pride in appearance, and not in heart" (2 Cor 5:12). The apostle knew that in spite of all the dangers to the church, it was not prudent to mount a personal defense directly before his foes. Instead, Paul armed the people he ministered to so they might ably defend him and his integrity.

In the long run, that is a much sounder method to contend for truth and integrity with one's enemies rather than trying to answer each and every charge personally. As Paul discovered, one can go to his opponents repeatedly and present the best-reasoned, most balanced defense of the truth and his integrity, yet all they will do is twist what he has said and use it to tear him down some more.

A person is better off to let his friends be his defenders, because those who have something against him are not as likely to feel the same way toward his friends. The Corinthians certainly experienced Paul's consistent behavior and integrity, so they had no reason not to defend him.

So Paul appealed to the brethren in the Corinthian church because he was passionately concerned with their unity and growth. In the end he could leave the results of his efforts with God: "He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends" (2 Cor 10:17-18).

Paul's Devotion to the Truth

A few years ago I was invited to speak in a philosophy class at one of the state universities located near my home church in southern California. I began my remarks by saying, "I'm here to tell you about the truth you've been searching for all your life. It is all the truth you need to know."

My approach dumbfounded the students in the class. Students in those kinds of classes invariably spend the entire term considering various views of the truth, but never reach any conclusions. Quite likely they leave the course not ever expecting to find the truth. That is why I went against the conventional wisdom and expounded the truth of the gospel.

Whenever you are dogmatic, affirmative, and absolute in speaking the truth, as I was in that classroom, the world thinks you have lost your reason. That is how Paul's adversaries in Corinth characterized him. His passionate zeal and devotion to the truth became another reason for defending his integrity: "For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you." The Corinthian believers did not need to question Paul's reason—they came to Christ through his preaching, grew in their sanctification under his teaching, and, as a result, loved Paul and trusted in God. His sound mind was obvious to all. But the false teachers and their "converts," in their attempt to overthrow Paul's scriptural teachings with their own self-centered, erroneous ones, charged that Paul had lost control of his senses.

But the apostle made it abundantly clear that he and his fellow ministers were beside themselves for God (v. 13). The phrase "beside ourselves" refers to his passion and devotion to God's truth. The term does not refer to a person who is

clinically deranged, but it can describe someone, such as Paul, who is dogmatically committed to truth. And Paul could be more dogmatic than anyone else because he was dealing with direct revelation from the Lord.

Nevertheless, Paul's enemies insisted and persisted in labeling him a dogmatic extremist who was off balance mentally. But dogmatism has always had a negative connotation for the world, as the apostle discovered on other occasions. Notice what happened when Paul gave an earnest, straightforward presentation of the gospel before the Roman official, Festus:

"And so, having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." And while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad." But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth" (Acts 26:22-24).

Once again the solid thread of integrity is evident in Paul's ministry. He was in complete control and possessed a sound, sober mind. Both at Caesarea before Festus and at the church in Corinth, Paul's message was passionate and zealous because the truth of the gospel was at stake. But he also knew how to be humble and well-reasoned so that people would receive and apply the truth. In the end the issue was the same—he defended his integrity so he could continue to proclaim God's truth unhindered.

Paul's Gratitude for Christ's Love

Another reason Paul was so concerned to defend his integrity was his thankfulness for the Savior's love for him. He told the Corinthians: "The love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died" (2 Cor 5:14). Paul defended his ministry and offered its richness to Christ as an act of gratitude.

To emphasize the strength of this motivation, Paul used the Greek word translated "controls." The simplest, clearest meaning of this word is "a pressure that causes action." The gratitude Paul had for Christ's love for him exerted great pressure on him to offer his life and ministry to the Lord. And the overriding factor for Paul was the Lord's substitutionary death and the application of that death to him. The essence of Christ's substitution is summarized well in Romans 5: "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (vv. 6-8).

The death of Christ is meaningless apart from an understanding of its substitutionary impact—if Christ didn't die in our place, then we would have to die

for our sins, and that would result in eternal death.

That certainly should be motivation enough for all of us to strive for integrity in our ministries and all aspects of our lives. After all, everyone who died in Christ receives forever the saving benefits of His substitutionary death (cf. Rom 3:24-26; 6:8). That's the conclusion Paul is referring to in the second part of 2 Cor 5:14 when he says, "One died for all, therefore all died." The truth of our Lord's substitution is both a comfort and a motivation for thanksgiving, for Paul and for us: "I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:20-21).

Paul's Desire for Righteousness

The great eighteenth-century English hymn writer Isaac Watts composed the following stanzas about the pursuit of righteousness and obedience to God's Word:

Blest are the undefiled in heart, whose ways are right and clean, who never from the law depart, but fly from ev'ry sin.

Blest are the men who keep thy Word and practice thy commands; with their whole heart they seek the Lord, and serve thee with their hands.

Great is their peace who love thy law; how firm their souls abide! Nor can a bold temptation draw their steady feet aside.

Then shall my heart have inward joy, and keep my face from shame, when all thy statutes I obey, and honor all thy Name.

Those words, based on Psalm 119:1, could easily have been uttered by the apostle Paul as a way of declaring his all-out desire to live righteously. His desire flowed logically from his tremendous gratitude for Christ's love and was another reason Paul so vigorously defended his integrity to the Corinthians. Paul told them, "He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Cor 5:5).

In defending his integrity, Paul wanted the Corinthians to know that his old, self-centered life was finished. Against all the distorted accusations from the false teachers, he wanted his brethren to be persuaded that his motives in ministry were completely pure. And Paul had a strong case because, by God's grace, he was without self-promotion, self-aggrandizement, pride, or greed as he labored to plant and nourish local churches among the people of Asia Minor.

The Corinthians should never have doubted Paul's integrity. He had already instructed them about the spiritual lifestyle they ought to adopt: "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all

things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor 10:31–11:1)

Paul's beliefs and motivations had not changed, no matter what his hypocritical opponents were accusing him of. He still lived for Christ and for the sake of righteousness, not for himself. Any other standard was unacceptable to him.

So Paul defended his integrity because he desired to live boldly for the Lord and did not want anyone to think his motivation in life was anything less than that. Paul's example should be an encouragement to all of us to cultivate and defend our integrity, because without it, we cannot minister effectively for the Lord.

Paul's Burden for the Lost

Paul was extremely passionate when it came to reaching the lost for Christ. Seeing people converted by the sovereign power of the gospel message was the ultimate reason for him to continue in ministry. Paul's burden for the lost therefore is the last of his reasons for defending his integrity.

Acts 17:16 illustrates the intensity of Paul's evangelistic burden:

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was beholding the city full of idols. So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.

Paul writes about his passion for the unsaved in Rom 1:13-16:

I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented thus far) in order that I might obtain some fruit [converts] among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. Thus, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Later in his letter to the Roman believers, in perhaps the most telling statements he ever wrote about his burden for lost souls, Paul says,

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren [the Jews], my kinsmen according to the flesh. . . . Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them [the Jews] is for their salvation (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1).

As he continued to defend his integrity to the Corinthians, Paul said, "Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh" (2 Cor 5:16). This connects back to verse 15 and simply means that, since his transformation in

Christ, Paul no longer evaluated people by external, worldly standards. He had a new priority, and that was to meet the spiritual needs of the people of God.

Prior to our transformation we used to assess others by external criteria only—physical appearance, outward behavior, social and economic orientation, and engaging personality were our old yardsticks. But when a person comes to faith in Christ he begins to evaluate people by a new set of criteria. And the central issue we want to determine when we meet someone is: What is his relationship to God; does he know Christ?

Perhaps you have a neighbor who is kind and considerate, who helps you out often and is especially available when you have an illness or emergency. As is often the case, you develop a warm and friendly relationship with someone like that. But if you are honest, you can never be content in your friendship until you are sure he has a right relationship to God. In fact, the more you build your relationship with your neighbor or anyone else, the more burdened you become for his spiritual welfare.

Paul gives believers no option but to think of the unsaved and everything in life from a transformed perspective: "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor 5:17). Paul had certainly experienced complete change in his life—from self-centered Pharisee to dedicated apostle of Christ—and he knew such transformation would happen to anyone who became a Christian.

Is it any wonder that Paul defended his integrity so ardently? If any of his enemies could destroy it, he would lose his credibility and influence in preaching the gospel and thus his entire reason for living. If only every Christian could have the same passion and purpose as the apostle Paul.

PAUL REVEALS HIS HUMILITY

Time and again as Paul defended his integrity, he risked being labeled proud by the false teachers at Corinth. Yet such a designation could not have been more unfair or untrue. Paul had already, by the sovereign plan of God, distinguished himself as the most noble, most influential, most effective earthly servant the church had ever seen, apart from the Lord Jesus Himself. Yet undergirding all his strong character qualities and various motives for defending his integrity was the all-important characteristic of humility.

Scripture demonstrates that Paul was aware of his weaknesses and shortcomings. In Rom 7:18 he says, "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh." In 2 Cor 4:7 Paul describes himself in the lowliest of terms: "We have this treasure [the light of the gospel] in earthen vessels [garbage pails]." Finally, the apostle's humble self-analysis is seen very clearly in what he wrote to Timothy: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all" (1 Tim 1:15).

No Christian virtue is more cherished than humility. Micah 6:8 says, "He

has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" Humility is best defined as a true and genuine sense of conviction that one is utterly and completely unworthy of the goodness, mercy, and grace of God and incapable of anything of value apart from those divine gifts.

Paul culminates his defense of his integrity before the Corinthians with a thorough presentation of the marks of humility (2 Cor 10:12-18). In this passage he continues to contrast his pure motives and righteous goals in ministry with the impure motives and unholy agendas of the false teachers. Paul was certain his humility would be convincing proof to his readers of his true integrity.

An Unwillingness to Compare Oneself with Others

The first mark of humility for the godly teacher and leader is an unwillingness to compare himself with others and claim superiority over them. False teachers typically elevate themselves. But Paul had a different approach. He told the Corinthians, "We are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves" (2 Cor 10:12).

Those who invaded the Corinthian church with error used glib speech, a superior attitude, and a hypocritical front to appear better than everyone else, especially Paul. But he refused to lower himself to their childish, ego-centered games. In fact, he did not even consider such a strategy, saying, "To me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord" (1 Cor 4:3-4).

Paul was concerned only with comparing his credentials with God's standards. He did not use man-centered criteria to boast of his successes. Instead, he was more inclined to boast of his suffering, such as the sadness, tears, imprisonment, pain, and persecution he endured—all for the love of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 11:23-31).

In contrast, those who are proud and without integrity will establish these standards for success: charm, flattering personality, authoritarian bearing, rhetorical skills, and mystical spiritual experiences. They invent the standards, measure themselves by them, and commend themselves for superior "success."

Paul's standards were objective and God-centered. The false teachers' standards were subjective and worldly. Based on that simple comparison, it is easy to determine what pattern one should follow in pursuit of genuine integrity.

A Willingness to Minister Within Limits

The humble servant of God will also have a willingness to minister within limits. That was not the attitude of Paul's opponents at Corinth. They overextended and overstated everything they did in an effort to widen their influence, enhance their prestige, and increase their fortune. They exaggerated everything so that they would look better than they actually were.

We do not know exactly what the false teachers told the Corinthian believers about their battle with Paul, but undoubtedly they portrayed themselves as more powerful, more sophisticated, more articulate, and more successful than him. And they had to lie to make that case.

How did Paul respond to those claims? Again he refused to engage in the same dishonest tactics of his enemies but simply told the Corinthians, "We will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you" (2 Cor 10:13). Paul was concerned with only one thing: to portray accurately the reality of his ministry.

Paul always understood the principle of ministering within limits. He mentions it both at the beginning and the end of his letter to the Romans:

Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake (1:5).

Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed. . . . And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, that I might not build upon another man's foundation (15:17-18, 20).

Pride and overstatement were not characteristic of Paul. He spoke only of what Christ had done through him and supported his statements by objective, truthful evidence. God had sovereignly gifted Paul and given him a specific commission to fulfill. He was completely content to preach the gospel in the Gentile world and found churches and train leaders in those unreached regions. He did not need to be more important than God intended him to be; he just wanted to be faithful to God's plan and carry it out with a depth of excellence that would please the Lord.

What is remarkable about Paul's pattern for ministry is that he simply followed Jesus' example. We often forget that Christ willingly functioned within the narrow limits His Father established.

First, Jesus' ministry was limited by God's will. In John 5:30, Jesus told the Jewish leaders, "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." Second, Jesus obeyed the Father's will according to His timetable only (Matt 26:45; Luke 22:14; John 2:4; 4:23; 5:25; 7:30; 17:1). Third, Jesus limited His ministry to God's people and to those who recognized their need for salvation (Matt 15:24; Luke 5:31-32). Fourth, Jesus limited His ministry by God's plan. He preached the gospel to a small group of people first (including the disciples) before extending it beyond the regions of Judea. Never did Christ allow Himself to get sidetracked onto other issues, and neither did Paul.

An Unwillingness to Take Credit for Others' Labors

Plagiarism has been a problem in the world for centuries. It is defined as

"to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own." A truly humble person with real integrity will avoid plagiarism, and that was true of Paul. He never displayed a willingness to take credit for others' labors.

His deference for others contrasted with the false teachers' desire to take credit for things they had never achieved, such as their contributions to the spiritual progress of the Corinthian church. But Paul could confidently and accurately tell the Corinthians how God had used him in their lives:

We are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we shall be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another (2 Cor 10:14-15).

Paul did not overstate or claim credit for what was not his. Nor did he flaunt authority that did not belong to him. He underscored what he had said previously: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. . . . According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it" (1 Cor 3:6, 10).

Paul was determined to avoid the pride and dishonesty of those who "ministered" in a worldly fashion. He would not go to a place and tell lies about his alleged accomplishments. He would not go into a city and usurp the credit for ministry that belonged to another. Instead, Paul knew that those who truly desired to further God's kingdom would do so through their own virtuous lives.

Romans 15:17-18 summarizes well Paul's attitude about this third aspect of humility: "Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed."

A Willingness to Seek only the Lord's Glory

A fourth way in which Paul exhibited the true humility of the man of integrity was by a willingness to seek only the Lord's glory. The mere thought of self-glory was utterly repulsive to Paul, whereas those who teach error are willing, for the sake of their own glory and pre-eminence, to tear up the church and tarnish the glory of Christ.

Paul had already laid out his position quite plainly in 1 Corinthians regarding why Christians should seek only God's glory:

For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the

things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God . . . that, just as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1:26-29, 31).

Paul here reminds all that if they boast, it must be only in the Lord, and if they seek anyone's glory, it must be only His (cf. Ps 115:1). That is the essence of humility—the recognition of one's basic unworthiness and the acceptance of no worthiness but God's.

An Unwillingness to Pursue Anything but Eternal Commendation

Authentic biblical humility is also revealed in Paul's unwillingness to pursue anything but eternal commendation. In 2 Cor 10:18 he says, "For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends."

False teachers commend themselves. But Paul desired God's approval, and he proved that he did not fabricate his own commendation. The Greek verb he used for "commends" in verse 18 literally means "to be tested" or "to be approved." That's what Paul meant when he said, "But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself" (1 Cor 4:3).

Paul was not concerned about what others thought of him; the only praise and commendation he desired was from the Lord. That is an important reminder for all of us as we pursue integrity: we will receive God's approval not as a result of our gifts, our skills, our personality, or our popularity, but because of our humility.

In summary, Paul possessed the power of integrity. His motives were pure (1 Cor 4:5), and he defended them for the right reasons—to glorify God and promote the truth of the gospel and Christ's church. Paul's humble defense of his integrity is, with the exception of the Lord Jesus Himself, the most outstanding and thoroughly detailed example of Christian integrity found in Scripture. Modeling Paul's integrity should be a goal for us all.

ALARMED BY THE VOICE OF JACK DEERE

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Dr. Jack Deere, the well-known noncessationist author of the previously published Surprised by the Power of the Spirit, has proposed in his sequel, Surprised by the Voice of God, that humble, obedient Christians who seek to have an intimate walk with God should regularly hear God speak outside of Scripture through various means such as an audible voice, impressions, dreams, and/or visions. The author even suggests that a Christian's experience today could exceed the most spectacular moments in the first-century church at Jerusalem as recorded in Acts. Deere's attitudes toward those who disagree with his theological posture on these issues (cessationists) and his proposals are examined in regard to their logical validity, hermeneutical propriety, anecdotal proportions, exegetical precision, and theological persuasion. This reviewer has concluded that Deere unfortunately attempts to make too much out of too little and thus fails to present a convincing case for his own Third Wave convictions when Scripture, not experience, is the arbiter.

* * * * *

When living in an age of neognosticism and extreme mysticism¹ such as the present, how can one tell the difference between predictions made by Jean Dixon, hotline psychics, and those who practice the Third Wave theology espoused by Jack Deere? They all share in common the claim to receive messages about the future and general counsel concerning issues of life. Everyone seems to have just enough

¹Arthur L. Johnson, *Faith Misguided: Exposing the Dangers of Mysticism* (Chicago: Moody, 1988); John F. MacArthur, *Reckless Faith* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1994) 19-34; Peter Jones, *The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back: An Old Heresy for a New Age* (Phillipsburg, N. J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992); *idem*, *Spirit Wars: The Revival of Paganism at the Edge of the Third Millennium* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

success, as recounted anecdotally, to sound plausible. So, who is and who is not believable? And, how does one tell? In our age of rampant spiritual deceit, one cannot be too careful (Acts 17:11).

Jack Deere has followed up his previous work *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Zondervan, 1993)² with *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Zondervan, 1996) in order to explain why he believes that God is speaking today on a frequent basis to Christians who will listen (307-20). This divine communication reportedly includes the realms of specific information about other people (13-17), events that are both past and future (343-58), and particular direction regarding one's life (286-88). He claims this should represent normal Christianity (60-63) which is a continuation of the same phenomena one reads of in Scripture (53-56) and which did not cease with the close of the apostolic era and the NT canon (276-78).

Deere's carefully crafted case might be convincing to many at first glance because: (1) he claims to champion the real biblical cause (26-27); (2) frequent personal illustrations seem to undergird his teaching; and (3) citation of Scripture appears to validate his case.

However, several unusual features of Deere's teaching and ministry should warn one to examine carefully the contents of his latest book first before embracing the conclusions. First, Deere makes some bizarre statements and affirmations. For example, God allegedly spoke to Deere, while he was exercising, through a country western love ballad (128-29). Further, he recounts that Paul Cain, his mentor, supposedly received a message(s) from God via a huge TV screen in the sky (352-53).

Second, although Deere dedicates the book to Paul Cain as his beloved mentor, speaks highly of him (152, 176-77, 186), and uses Cain as the closing, spectacular anecdote to affirm his teachings (343-58), there is another side to the story. Cain's past associations with William Branham and others, whom Deere seems to embrace (207), causes one to question seriously Deere's wisdom in some of the pastoral and theological company he keeps.³

Third, enough credible and substantial critiques have questioned the

²See the reviewer's critique, "Who Surprised Whom? The Holy Spirit or Jack Deere?" *TMSJ* 5 (Fall 1994):123-40.

³See Hank Hanegraaff, *Counterfeit Revival* (Dallas: Word, 1997) 134-37, 145-50.

biblical basis of Third Wave theology in general and Deere in particular to make the reader wary and to prompt a more careful look at Deere's material before accepting it.⁴

Fourth, every generation has its claimants to hearing God speak, to receiving divine dreams, and to being able to tell the future. Since abundant biblical admonitions call believers to examine these kinds of assertions in light of Scripture, this review is in order. Is Jack Deere a modern day Daniel (Dan 1:17; 2:15) or even Paul (Acts 18:9-10), or is he a sincere, misguided soul like the sons of Sceva to whom a demon once said, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" (Acts 19:15)?

WHO IS JACK DEERE?

⁴Ibid. Particularly noteworthy is the Foreword written by a former Vineyard pastor (ix-xviii). Also consult *The Briefing* 45/46 (April 24, 1990) which gave considerable attention to Deere and Wimber. Deere responded to *The Briefing* critique with "The Vineyard's Response to *The Briefing*" (Anaheim, Calif.: The Assoc. of Vineyard Churches, 1992). Also see Thomas R. Edgar, *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996).

Jack Deere holds several degrees: an A.B. from Texas Christian University and a Th.M. and a Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary. He taught at Dallas Theological Seminary from 1976-1987 before the institution dismissed him because of his noncessationist views (37-38).⁵

According to the author, he originally held strong cessationist views in line with his training and teaching experience at Dallas Theological Seminary. After a year's study leave in Germany (1984-1985), he returned to DTS for the 1985-1986 school year (15). While inviting Dr. John White, a British psychiatrist, to preach at a church conference, Deere had a life-changing, twenty-minute phone conversation with White in January 1986 (13, 22).

White had been worshipping at the Vineyard Fellowship of Anaheim, California—pastored by John Wimber—since mid-1985 (33). White came to Fort Worth in April 1986, to hold the conference Deere writes about in chap. 2 (25-32). Several weeks later Deere attended a Wimber meeting in Fort Worth (33). As a result, Deere and Wimber became good friends; Deere visited the Anaheim Vineyard Fellowship on several occasions during 1986-1987 (37).

After departing from DTS in the fall of 1987, Deere also became acquainted with the Kansas City Fellowship pastored by Mike Bickle (38). He then made plans to move to Anaheim and become a full-time associate of John Wimber (38).

Deere remained with Wimber until 1992 when he returned to the Dallas-Fort Worth area, where he was briefly associated with James Robison. Deere now pastors the First Presbyterian Church in Whitefish, Montana, plus writes and lectures worldwide on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

DEERE'S MIND-SET

Throughout his second volume, Jack Deere has sketched distorted images of those who believe differently than he now does. Those allegations do not at all characterize the humble, Spirit-led person Deere would portray himself as being since he embraced noncessationist theology. The following samples suffice to document the point of Deere's unnecessary caricatures.

1. Cessationists, characterized as Bible deists by Deere (251-69), are idolaters.⁶
2. Those who presently believe like Jack Deere formerly did when he was a

⁵Page citations in this section are from *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*.

⁶“The Bible deists of today worship the Bible” (251).

- cessationist are Pharisaic in their attitudes (28, 61, 108, 124, 239-44, 247-48).
3. One who now believes like Jack Deere did previously is proud of heart (256).
 4. Cessationists are like liberals (126).

I suppose if I believed that other Christians who thought differently than I did were liberal, proud, Pharisaic idolaters, then I would be no more gracious or generous to those in my past than is Jack Deere.

DEERE'S LOGIC

Throughout the book, Deere engages in veiled syllogistic reasoning. In so doing, he draws faulty exegetical/theological conclusions that he lures the reader to believe are true when, in fact, they are not. For example (47), Deere asserts that (1) Christ and the apostles performed miracles, raised the dead, and heard God's voice through the power of the Holy Spirit and (2) 20th-century believers share the same Holy Spirit as Christ and the apostles. Therefore, he concludes, 20th-century believers should do miraculous works today like Christ and the apostles. Where Deere errs is in assuming that to share the same Holy Spirit also means that God's purposes in demonstrating the Spirit's power are the same today as they were in the first century. Deere's logic is faulty and he has failed to make that point valid.

Secondly (26), Deere argues (1) miracles occurred in the past and (2) Scripture nowhere says in so many words they will cease. Therefore, the miracles of the past should be expected today. Deere's thinking goes astray when he asserts that no one Scripture verse says that miracles will cease. He ignores the historical witness of Scripture that miracles were absent during long stretches of biblical history, not to mention that valid conclusions can actually be drawn from Scripture with regard to the authenticating purpose of miracles, which did not extend past the apostolic era.

A final example (281; 362 n. 2) will suffice to make this point. Deere asserts (1) miracles are used in Scripture to provide guidance to believers and (2) God is guiding today. Therefore, God is guiding today, as in the past, with the same kinds of miracles. He errs by assuming that God must continue to guide through a new set of contemporary miracles rather than through the faithfully recorded history of biblical miracles.

Deere has reduced his thinking to the point that he borders on being simplistic. He has engaged in bad logic which yields poor theology. Until he has established his assertions to be biblically valid through a clear exegetical/theological process, then his conclusions are personal opinions not biblical verities upon which one builds the Christian life. Theological not syllogistic reasoning yields the only reliable conclusions.

DEERE'S HERMENEUTICS⁷

Deere consistently makes two fundamental errors when interpreting Scripture. The first is that of *generalizing*, i.e., believing the occurrence of a miracle in the past means that nothing prevents it from happening again, and therefore expecting its recurrence. The second is *experientializing*, i.e., accepting someone's claims to have a miraculous experience today of the kind that appeared in biblical history, then letting that experience prove that God is presently working the same kind of miracles. The first involves a biblically unwarranted hermeneutic that reasons, unless Scripture denies the continuance of an experience, that experience has continued and will continue today. The second reads experience into Scripture so that experience validates Scripture rather than the reverse.

Both *generalizing* and *experientializing* can be combined and called *normalizing*, i.e. assuming that if it was normal in Scripture, it then must be normal thereafter. For example:

1. Eutychus being raised from the dead (23-24).
2. Abraham hosting angels (19, 26).⁸
3. The life of Jesus (28, 42-45).
4. The Israelites in the wilderness (29).
5. Paul in Corinth (50).
6. The book of Acts (51-56).⁹

⁷Compare Mayhue, "Who Surprised Whom?" 129-32. For a fuller discussion of these interpretive errors consult Richard Mayhue, *How to Interpret the Bible for Yourself* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1997) 151-61.

⁸Deere cites Heb 13:2 at least five times (19, 26, 29, 137, 140). "What happened then happens today—just read your Bible," writes Deere (26). The main point of Heb. 13:2 is not angelic visitation, but rather entertaining strangers. Further, even if one did entertain angels, one would be no more aware of it than Abraham, so Deere's point is no point at all.

⁹This strikingly strange statement below illustrates Deere's grandiose expectations. He actually

By following the letter of Deere's logic, one could expect additional virgin births after Christ's. Yet, I think Deere would say, "No!" to that because Christ's virgin birth was a unique event fulfilling God's purpose as foretold in the OT and was the one-time manner in which a sinless child was born to sinful parents. Although, the Scriptures do not ever say that no more virgin births will occur, that does not necessarily mean there will be more. So, if Deere is willing to follow the above line of reason with the virgin birth (and I think he would), then he is also bound to follow it in regard to miracles. If so, then, that would invalidate most of his thinking in *Surprised by the Voice of God*.

If Deere's thesis of normalization is true, then miracles of Scripture should be occurring today. People would be taking trips to the third heaven like Paul (2 Cor 12:1-6); only like Paul they shouldn't tell the details. The clothing and shoes of Christians would not be wearing out, just like the Jews in the wilderness (Deut 29:5). Axe heads would float (2 Kgs 6:1-7), people would take alternative transportation (Acts 8:39-40), grocery shopping would be made obsolete (Exod 16:13-14), and crossing the Sea of Galilee would be like taking a walk in the park (John 6:19). But none of this is true. So the reader can see, Deere's paradigm of normalizing the miraculously unique tragically trivializes the extraordinary and essentially emasculates its powerful impact and purposes.

DEERE'S ANECDOTAL STYLE

suggests that the experience of Acts is abnormal in that it is substandard. "If all things are possible for him who believes, and Acts shows us some of these possibilities, shouldn't we make the Christianity of Acts our goal? Better yet, why should we assume that Acts represents the apex of Christian experience? What if the Lord of history really has saved his best wine for the last days? Wouldn't you like to drink it?" (46).

Deere begins where he left off in *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*, primarily using anecdotes to make his case. By his own admission, he puts experience on the same level as Scripture.¹⁰

I have confined my discussion to that part of the language of the Holy Spirit that seems most common in the Scriptures, or to those aspects that either I have personally experienced or that someone I know to be a credible witness has experienced.¹¹

Elsewhere, Deere takes to task those whose theology would be based on Scripture alone for not correcting their beliefs with experience (253). But, no matter how frequently or loudly Deere argues that his convictions come from Scripture, not experience, his books say otherwise. What one reviewer lamented about *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* is equally true of this volume. “. . . [H]e unfortunately leaves the reader with the impression that it is the religious experience itself that validates what he argues.”¹²

One other point needs to be made, this time from Deere's first volume. In *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (55), Deere argued, “No cessationist writer that I am aware of tries to make his case on Scripture alone. All of these writers appeal both to Scripture and to either present or past history to support their case.” Later he wrote (268 n. 9), “Even the greatest of the cessationist scholars, Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, could not make his case on Scripture alone. He appealed both to the Scriptures and to ‘the testimony of later ages.’” What Deere has argued is essentially that cessationists should restrict their discussion to Scripture alone. The use of historical or contemporary illustrations weakens their case.

This, however, is significantly inconsistent with what he knows to be true. It is a little like a boxing match in which one fighter has his hands free to smash his opponent, while the other has his hands tied behind his back and cannot even defend

¹⁰Compare Mayhue, “Who Surprised Whom?” 129-32.

¹¹Deere, *Surprised by the Voice* 156. When Craig Blomberg reviewed *Surprised by the Power of the Holy Spirit* in *Themelios* 21 (April 1996):26-27, he noted, “Deere engages in narrative theology at its finest. He simply recounts the events he experienced, particularly in the realm of supernatural physical healings and startlingly accurate prophecies, which led him to abandon his prior beliefs that the signs and wonders of the contemporary charismatic movement were at best all of human manufacture.”

¹²Edith L. Blumhofer, “Dispensing with Scofield,” *CT* 38 (January 10, 1994):57.

himself. In light of the above quotes from Deere, this reviewer was astounded to read this, also from the pen of Deere, when he defended himself against the critique of others. What was denied to cessationists is allowed for noncessationists.

... [A]lthough Scripture establishes doctrine, personal experience and anecdotes are vital for the effective communication of that doctrine. The role of personal experience is to illustrate, clarify, support or confirm the teaching of Scripture; that is why the Scripture is filled with biography and historical writings.¹³

Let the reviewer suggest that the rules of engagement must be consistent for both sides. From the cessationist's side, illustrations that illustrate are permissible. From Deere's perspective, illustrations are also permissible, which is known from: (1) his own admission as quoted above; (2) the thirty pages of attempted historical validation in *Surprised by the Voice of God* (64-93); and (3) anecdotes galore that proportionately seem to overshadow the biblical discussion. But let both sides be reminded—Scripture is always primary in determining truth, while experience is only secondary at best.

DEERE'S EXEGESIS¹⁴

Deuteronomy 18:20-22 (68-69). Deere lightly dismisses the seriousness of this text as it applies to a false prophet of God.¹⁵ To speak on behalf of God without a clear message from God was enough to make one a false prophet deserving of death. This standard would apply in spirit at all times, not just in ancient Israel.

Job 33:14-15 (219, 232, 235). The words of Elihu to Job are uncritically assumed to be true by Deere with regard to the normalization of dreams in the experience of all believers. Given the obscure nature of the saying and the fact that Elihu rendered it in anger (cf. *Job 32:2-3*), these observations should quickly alert the interpreter of Scripture not to build a theology of dreams upon this foundation of sand. Yet, Deere unwisely does just that.

Isaiah 42:3 (113). Deere allegorizes this wonderful text describing the graciousness of Messiah. With this interpretive methodology, Deere can make the

¹³Deere, "The Vineyard's Response," in the section "Major Issues," 3.

¹⁴Compare Mayhue, "Who Surprised Whom?" 132-34.

¹⁵Consider the prophetic example of Samuel whose words did not fail (1 Sam 3:19-20) and, in contrast, the false words of Hananiah (Jer 28:15-17), for which God took his life.

Scripture mean anything he desires.

James 5:13-20 (25, 163). As in *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit*,¹⁶ Deere shallowly touches on this text and concludes about James, “He promised his readers God would use them to heal sick people . . .” (25). He never considers or even allows for the fact that the context of James 5:16 points primarily to spiritual healing through the confession of sin, not to physical healing. It certainly does not promise that Christians will go about healing people physically.¹⁷

The above is a representative sampling of texts that Deere has handled casually to support his thesis. Perhaps more telling than his less-than-careful exegesis is his practice of eisegesis, i.e., imposing a meaning foreign to the biblical text on the text and then speaking as though the conclusions came from Scripture. For example, Deere’s section “Learning the Language of the Holy Spirit” (159-232) in large part comes directly from his own thinking and experience. One ought to ask of this material, “Where is this taught in Scripture?” The answer would be, “In the white spaces.” It is the personal opinion of Jack Deere—nothing more!¹⁸

DEERE’S THEOLOGY

A representative set of rather startling statements which help to define Deere’s thinking can also illustrate the author’s noncessationist theology. They prove to be extremely insightful in trying to comprehend the core message of the book.

“I can no longer conceive of trying to live the Christian life without it” (17). One might think Deere is referring here to guidance from the Scripture or prayer, but in context he is referring to the voice of God beyond the biblical text. Not only does this kind of statement suggest spiritual elitism—i.e., without the voice

¹⁶Mayhue, “Who Surprised Whom?” 132-33.

¹⁷For an expanded treatment of James 5:13-20 see Richard Mayhue, *The Healing Promise* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus, 1997) 127-39.

¹⁸For other examples of Deere’s eisegesis see his (1) discussion of personal expectations with regard to the voice of God (17); (2) guidelines for prophetic ministry (190-203); and (3) rules with regard to “prophetic pitfalls” (204-16).

of God the Christian life is inferior—but also some sort of Christian gnosticism—i.e., possessing special knowledge to which only a few have access. It does not appear that Deere is talking about “How to know the will of God” in life’s daily affairs as understood by most Christians through the ages.¹⁹ But rather, he seems to be referring to frequent updates directly from God.

“But after God wrote the Bible, he apparently went mute, or so it seemed to me, for the only way I could hear him speak was through his book” (19). This true confession from Jack Deere is quite revealing. In spite of the claims and promises of such Scripture as Psalms 19, 119; 2 Tim 3:14-17; and 2 Pet 1:3 that Scripture alone is sufficient in spiritual matters, Deere wants more. This craving usually marks one who does not appreciate what he has, rather than one who is seeking what has been promised but not yet delivered. He has certainly joined the ranks of the “Bible plus something else” crowd, which is characteristic of both aberrant Christianity and cults.

“. . . [E]ven knowledge of the Bible is an insufficient guide to Jesus” (38). Deere seems to be suggesting that without extrabiblical revelation from God, no one will know Christ in a sufficient manner. He is definitely going beyond the illuminating ministry of God’s Spirit, which both cessationists and noncessationists embrace. Deere is talking about “*direct, supernatural revelation*” (38; his emphasis). Yet, he later writes, “The most common way the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus and speaks to us today is through the Bible” (100). That statement alone is at odds with Deere’s statement on page 38 and with the thesis of his volume.

“With the coming of the Spirit there is a sense in which every Christian is to be prophetic. . . . Everyone in the New Testament may at one time or another prophecy, dream, or have a vision” (179). How does Deere know this? It certainly is not from anything the New Testament clearly teaches or from any NT historical examples. He appeals to Peter’s quote of Joel 2:28-29 in Acts 2:17-18 at Pentecost and draws the above unsubstantiated conclusion. He fails to alert his readers to the following facts: (1) The phenomena in Acts 2:19-20 (cf. Joel 2:30-31) did not occur then; (2) all of Acts 2:17-20, quoting Joel 2:28-31, seems most certainly to be experienced concurrently in the future; (3) it appears that only the Twelve were speaking in tongues, not the entire assembly; and (4) nowhere else in the NT epistles is the scope of Joel’s prophecy seen to be fulfilled. So, Deere’s conclusion is a result of the worst kind of proof-texting.

“But probably more often than not, a naive commitment to tradition often

¹⁹See Richard Mayhue, *Spiritual Intimacy* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1990) 113-34, for a biblical discussion of this theme. Also see John Murray, “The Guidance of the Holy Spirit” in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976) 1:186-89.

drowns his [God's] voice in a sea of confidence in human methods and rules" (249).

Deere is saying that the so-called extrabiblical voice of God is more reliable than the biblical voice of God, i.e., biblical instruction that is gleaned from a careful study of Scripture. He would accuse those who believe differently of having embraced a deficient tradition, but commend those of his persuasion who have supposedly interpreted the truth correctly. Or put another way, without "the voice" one cannot be sure of what Scripture teaches.

"In Bible times, people knew God spoke frequently through dreams, so they took them seriously" (217). "Dreams have always been an important means of communication. . . . And one of his favorite ways of speaking is through dreams" (219). Contrary to Deere's pronouncements, dreams and visions were actually uncommon, even scarce. Consider that in the entire OT (a period of over 4,000 years) fewer than 20 specific dreams to less than 15 people are recorded.²⁰ Historical instances of dreams in the NT are not found beyond the 6 recorded in Matthew.²¹ All these dreams occurred to or for the benefit of incredibly important people as they related to the crucial times in God's unfolding plan of redemptive history. Yet dreams, even then, were extremely few and far between.²² The biblical data does not support Deere's thesis that dreams were frequent in Scripture and thus should be today. Actually, the Bible and Jack Deere are in direct conflict.

If one also includes "visions" with the above survey of "dreams," as done in Scripture (Dan 1:7), less than 25 specific visions to fewer than 15 people are recorded in the OT.²³ Even fewer are found in the NT.²⁴ Dreams and visions were never given for mundane reasons or to the masses as they related to God's plan of redemption.

²⁰ Abimelech (Gen 20:3, 6); Jacob (Gen 28:12; 31:10, 11); Laban (Gen 31:24); Joseph (Gen 37:5; cf. 42:9); Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker (Gen 40:5); Pharaoh (Gen 41:5, 8); Moses (Num 12:6); a soldier (Judg 7:13-14); Saul [implied] (1 Sam 28:15); Solomon (1 Kgs 3:5, 15); Job (Job 4:13; 7:14); Daniel (Dan 1:17; 2:1-2; 4:4-5; 5:12; 7:1); and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:1-2; 4:4-5). Deere's frequent mention of Job 33:14-15 is discussed above.

²¹ Five relate to Christ's birth and very early childhood. They were to Joseph (Matt 1:20; 2:13; 2:19; 2:22) and the magi (2:12). The last, related to Christ's trials, was experienced by Pilate's wife (Matt 27:19).

²² The only other two mentions of dreams in the NT are Acts 2:17, which is commented on above, and Jude 8 which actually warns the church to beware of dreamers.

²³ Abraham (Gen 15:1); Jacob (Gen 46:2); Balaam (Num 24:4, 16); Samuel (1 Sam 3; Ps 89:19); Nathan (2 Sam 7:4, 17; 1 Chr 17:15); Iddo (2 Chr 9:29); Zechariah (2 Chr 26:5); Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1; 8:3; 11:24; 40:2; 43:3); Daniel (Dan 1:17; 2:19; 7:1-2; 8:1; 10:1); Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:5, 9-10, 13); prophets (Hosea 12:10); Joel (Joel 2:28); Amos (Amos 1:1); Obadiah (Obad 1:1); Nahum (Nah 1:1); and Habakkuk (Hab 2:2).

²⁴ The four disciples (Matt 17:9); Zacharias (Luke 1:22); the women at the tomb (Luke 24:23); Ananias (Acts 9:10); Paul (Acts 9:12; 16:9-10; 18:9; 26:19; 2 Cor 12:1); Peter (Acts 10:3, 17, 19); and John (Rev 9:17).

Those revealing quotes from Deere illustrate the biblically unwarranted extremes and Scripturally unsubstantiated conclusions espoused by the author. These alone seriously jeopardize the biblical credibility of his teachings.

CUTTING TO THE CHASE

At this point it could be asked, “Why would anyone be against the kind of experiences Deere tries to persuade the reader should be part of the normal, healthy, vibrant Christian life as abundantly portrayed in Scripture?” The answer is quite simple, “Because Jack Deere’s conclusions are unbiblical!”

Deere’s efforts to normalize the extraordinary are quite unconvincing in light of too many bizarre statements, too many anecdotes, and too many caricatures of those who sincerely disagree. On the other hand, the almost total absence of sound hermeneutics, skilled exegesis, and biblically-based theology deeply erode any confidence in the accuracy of Deere’s conclusions. In short, this reviewer submits that Deere’s work is scripturally deficient and neither adequately nor accurately addresses the most important question, “How and in what ways does God’s Holy Spirit, who resides in every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, guide and direct Christians today?”

ETA LINNEMANN FRIEND OR FOE OF SCHOLARSHIP?

Robert W. Yarbrough¹

Eta Linnemann falls within the broad frame work of "conservative evangelicalism" according to a recent classification of scholarly students of Scripture. A brief biographical sketch reviews her preconversion scholarly achievements and then her postconversion literary achievements. German scholars have largely ignored her postconversion work on historical criticism, but in North America and Britain, reviews of it have been mixed in their evaluations of the volume. Some reviews of her work on the Synoptic Problem have been positive in North America and Britain, but some have been very negative. A weighing of the weaknesses and merits of Linnemann's scholarship as reflected in those reviews yields the conclusion that she is a friend of scholarship in terms of her industry, tenacity, and intensity to shed light on a crucial area, in her zeal for the truth, in her creativity, originality, fearlessness, and sharpness in analysis; and in her willingness to change her mind after discovering her earlier weaknesses.

* * * * *

Historical criticism in its classic Troeltschian formulation has come under increasing fire in recent decades. This is so much the case that Gerald Bray argues plausibly for recognizing a new hermeneutical paradigm as characteristic of current academic study of the Christian Scriptures. No longer should one speak of "critical" study, meaning academically rigorous and in some sense "scientific" research, as over against "uncritical" or "conservative" study, meaning academically flabby, methodologically outdated, and hermeneutically naive. Rather, in existence today are broadly speaking three approaches to formal, scholarly study of Scripture, each having its own distinct heritage, characteristics, legitimacy, and leading lights.

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The first of these is what Bray calls "academic scholarship, which carries on the historical-critical tradition inherited from the last century, and seeks to integrate new approaches into its established norms."² From its own point of view, this approach often regards itself as the only game in town, but in point of fact it no longer possesses the monopoly status it once did, and a rival outlook has arisen. This rival, a second position, Bray characterizes by the rubric "social trends"; in this world of academic discourse, current social and political issues set the agenda. Here scholars typically accept fully the critical conclusions of the first group—but view them as irrelevant. Along the lines made famous by liberation theology, they press toward a responsible and transformative orthopraxy rather than an academic critical orthodoxy that is removed from the world and its pressing social needs.

Bray's third group is that of "conservative evangelicalism." To quote Bray at some length:

This is a movement within the Protestant churches whose adherents have rejected the critical assumptions of Enlightenment thought to a greater or lesser degree. They seek to maintain the theology of the Reformation, though in practice this has frequently been modified. . . . Conservative evangelicals tend to regard the first world of discourse ["academic scholarship" above] as their mission field, and are ambivalent toward the second one ["social trends" above]. They frequently sympathize with the cause of fighting injustice, but doubt whether the way it is defined, or the methods adopted to combat it, are really consonant with scholarly standards or traditional theological positions.³

Bray's taxonomy is useful for purposes of the present discussion because it helps situate the subject of this essay, Professor Dr. Eta Linnemann. Bray himself alludes to her, albeit in just one sentence. Under the subheading "Alternatives to historical criticism: The conservative attack," he states,

Mention might also be made of the remarkable case of Eta Linnemann, who after being trained in the standard liberalism of the German universities was converted to a conservative evangelical faith, and has subsequently devoted her life to a root-and-branch critique of her earlier views.⁴

²Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation Past and Present* (Downers Grove, Ill./Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1996) 467.

³*Ibid.*, 539.

⁴*Ibid.*, 481.

For some reason Bray does not list any of her post-conversion writings in his otherwise full bibliographies. Is this possibly not an oversight but an understandable move to avoid seeming too familiar with, and possibly sympathetic to, Linnemann's controversial outlook and sometimes flamboyant turns of phrase?⁵ Bray's recognition that her views are important enough to cite, but sufficiently problematic to pass over lightly, alerts readers to a problem, or set of problems, crying out for clarification. To provide that clarification is the aim in what follows.

To that end subsequent discussion will first flesh out biographical information, only sketchily furnished in Dr. Linnemann's published works to date. Sources for this will be personal autobiographical statements she has made available and oral interviews granted to this writer in late 1994 and early 1995. Next, the article will analyze reaction to her by surveying (1) the flurry of German-language discussion that arose after her formal published renunciation of "the historical critical method" in 1985 and (2) published reviews of her two major books written since that renunciation. Finally, this investigation will seek to answer the question posed by the essay's title. For reasons to be expressed below, the conclusion will cautiously contend that, overall, Linnemann is a friend of the scholarly enterprise in its highest sense rather than an adversary.

BIOGRAPHY

Linnemann was born October 19, 1926, in Osnabrück, Germany, in the northwestern corner of present unified Germany, well inland from the coast and as far south in Lower Saxony as one can travel without entering the North Rhine-Westphalia area. Primary and secondary schooling stretched from April 1933 until March 1948, being prolonged by World War II. From October 1948 till July 1953 she studied Protestant theology, which included a full range of biblical, philosophical, theological, and church-historical subjects, in Marburg, Tübingen, and Göttingen. Notable professors at Marburg were Bultmann and Dinkler in NT, Balla and Fohrer in OT, and Benz, Maurer, and Zscharneck in church history and dogmatics. At Tübingen her professors included Fuchs and Michel in NT, Würthwein and Elliger in OT, Rückert and Ebeling in church history and dogmatics, and Weischedel and Krüger in philosophy. At Göttingen she heard, among others, Gogarten, Wolf, Käsemann, and Trillhaus.

⁵E.g., "One can no more be a little historical-critical than a little pregnant" (Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990] 123).

Ironically, she had entered university in the hopes of becoming a schoolteacher, but all university openings for this major were full when she sought enrollment. Advice given her was to declare theology as her subject and then later move laterally into education. She never made the switch, becoming a theologian instead, yet continuing in her direct involvement with public school religious curriculum, as remarks below will show. By her third semester at Marburg, she says, her thought turned "in the historical-critical direction." Important books in this early period were Rudolf Bultmann's on Jesus and on the history of the synoptic tradition,⁶ as well as Walter Bauer's on early Christian belief and heresy.⁷ She regards Ernst Fuchs as her theological father in those days, Bultmann as her grandfather. From Bultmann she acquired her exegetical method, from Fuchs her theology and hermeneutic.

She took and passed her first state examinations on August 12-15, 1953. Then came a practicum during which she produced a scholarly, as yet unpublished treatise on the theology of Johann Adam Möhlers. Her second set of required exams took place August 17-18, 1957. She passed them as well. At this point the *Landeskirche* (state church) in Hannover assigned her to write interpretations of biblical texts for religion teachers in the German public school system. Out of this labor arose her critically acclaimed book on Jesus' parables, which was accepted as a doctoral dissertation by the *Kirkliche Hochschule* (Ecclesiastical College) of Berlin. Overseeing this work were Karl Kupisch, Ernst Fuchs, and Martin Fischer. She received her doctoral degree *summa cum laude* on July 13, 1961.

From April 16, 1961 till March 31, 1966 she taught in a seminary in Berlin,⁸ lecturing in New Testament, church history, and religious education. On April 1, 1966 she received appointment to occupy the chair of Protestant theology and religious pedagogical methodology at the Teachers' College of Braunschweig. There she became associate professor on February 14, 1967. In the midst of these labors she requested permission to *habilitieren* (submit a second doctoral dissertation, required in the German theological system for the *venia legendi*, the right to full privileges as university professor), a request she made to the Protestant faculty at the Philipps University in Marburg. Her dissertation there was entitled *Studien zur*

⁶Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980 [1935]); *idem*, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968 [1931]). [titles and dates of English translations with dates of the original German works in brackets]

⁷Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971 [1934]).

⁸In her own words she was "Dozentin am Seminar für kirklichen Dienst in Berlin."

Passionsgeschichte (Studies of the Passion Story). She received the *venia legendi* for NT on February 11, 1970 and was named honorary professor at Marburg on August 10, 1971. She became full professor at Braunschweig in 1972.

Her move into evangelical Christian confession has an early stage and then a later, better known one. In 1946 she had been given a copy of the Pietist *Losungen*, Bible verses for each day of the year meant for personal devotions and life direction. In subsequent years she bought them for herself, expressing her spiritual interest. Then on a holiday retreat in April 1948, following graduation from secondary school, she underwent a memorable religious experience when she responded to an evangelistic message and invitation. But apparently this rebirth barely took root, if at all; at any rate it did not issue immediately in sweeping life change. That took place on November 5, 1977, when at the age of fifty-one she says she gave her life to Christ. It was a month later that she "repented of my perverse theological teaching" and declared her earlier work and writing rubbish. She has elaborated on this part of her life in her first post-conversion book, *Historical Criticism of the Bible*.⁹

At her own request she took early retirement from the university, sensing a need to rebuild her biblical and theological outlook from the ground up. She received aid here by American missionaries in Wolfenbüttel holding Bible classes which she attended. In 1983 she sensed a call to teach in a missionary capacity in Batu, Indonesia, where she has returned to teach a number of times over the years since.¹⁰ Her other Christian service, besides local church involvement in an independent congregation near her north German residence of Leer-Loga, has been research and writing. Her initial book on historical criticism appeared in German in 1986 and has since been published in Dutch (1987), English (1990), Indonesian (1991), and Norwegian (1994) editions.¹¹ Sales of the English edition alone have far exceeded 10,000 copies. A second monograph dealing with the synoptic problem appeared in both German and English editions in 1992¹² and has likewise sold

⁹See note 5.

¹⁰For an assessment (now slightly outdated) of the work there, see Klaus Wetzel, "Die Studenten des Bibelinstituts Batu—ihre kirkliche u. geographische Herkunft," *Evangelische Missiologie* 1 (1988):7-10.

¹¹Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible*.

¹²Eta Linnemann, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?*, trans. by Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids:

several thousand copies. A third book is well along and will cover various topics, centering on questions of NT introduction. Just one of its chapters alone runs to forty single-spaced pages (ca. 17,500 words), in which she subjects to close scrutiny Udo Schnelle's negative decisions regarding the authorship of most NT documents.¹³

Baker, 1992).

¹³Udo Schnelle, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Göttingen, 1994).

Since 1991 she has conducted two extended speaking tours in the United States, speaking at several dozen colleges and seminaries and before numerous church groups. She has also produced a number of essays, among them one called "Pauline Authorship and Vocabulary Statistics,"¹⁴ a second entitled "Historical Critical and Evangelical Theology,"¹⁵ a third entitled "The Lost Gospel of Q—Fact or Fantasy?" which recently appeared in *Trinity Journal*,¹⁶ and fourth "Is There a Gospel of Q?" which appeared in *Bible Review*.¹⁷ Still unpublished, to this writer's knowledge, is a close analysis of a portion of Robert H. Stein's *The Synoptic Problem*. An example of her German language article production is "Echtheitsfragen und Vokabelstatistik" ("Questions of Authenticity and Vocabulary Statistics"),¹⁸ in which she investigates the use made of statistics to call in question the traditional authorship of most NT books.

If being a friend of scholarship were simply a matter of authoring academically serious publications, the overarching question of this essay would virtually answer itself: of course, Linnemann is a friend of scholarship—she is producing it! But a look at reviews of her works shows that such an unqualified answer would meet with considerable disagreement.

REACTION TO LINNEMANN'S PUBLICATIONS

This section will canvass the response, first in Germany and then in North America and Britain, to Linnemann's book *Historical Criticism of the Bible*, her initial post-conversion blast against Historical Criticism and call to faith in Christ and the Bible. It will then do likewise in North America and Britain with her second book, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* It will deal with some minor criticisms along the way, leaving major criticisms for the next section where attention will focus on the weaknesses and merits of her second book.

Germany: Responses to Linnemann's Conversion and Charges Against Historical Criticism of the Bible

In December 1985, Linnemann went public with news of her conversion and renunciation of Historical Criticism as she had previously practiced it. A newspaper article in the *Kasseler Sonntagsblatt* entitled "Radikale Wendung einer Theologin" ("A Theologian's Radical Turn") contained the same news of her disillusionment with university biblical criticism as later appeared in the foreword

¹⁴Journal publication under negotiation.

¹⁵*Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 5/2 (1994):19-36.

¹⁶*Trinity Journal* 17NS (1996):3-18.

¹⁷*Bible Review* (August 1995):18-23, 42-43.

¹⁸*Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie* 10 (1996).

of her book *Historical Criticism*.¹⁹ This report caused no small stir, and it was all negative as far as Protestant theological officialdom was concerned.

Bultmann supporter and retired bishop Erich Vellmer drew first blood in the counterattack by chiding Linnemann condescendingly in the same paper for harboring the personal misconception that faith requires the support of theology and of historical-critical work. Vellmer, sounding notes familiar to anyone conversant with Bultmann's writings, insisted that a "faith" intermixed with "facts" was not Christian faith at all. The outward form of the Bible's statements ("Aussageweise") must be separated from the meaning, the content, of the Bible's statements ("Aussageinhalt"). Biblical writers wrote with particular intentions and using time-bound conceptions whose meaning must be liberated from their antiquated forms.

This is the service that Historical Criticism provides, says Vellmer, who implies that Linnemann is an imbalanced extremist ("Schwärmer") for raising a red flag regarding the negative relation between "history" and "faith" that prevails among historical critics in Germany. For Vellmer, what "faith" asserts is completely independent of what "history" turns out to be when analyzing Scripture with the historical-critical method. To relate faith directly to facts would be to make salvation dependent on works—the work of human cognition. Linnemann is thus unfaithful to the genius of the Reformation, Vellmer concludes, as well as of the NT itself. Supportive media departments of the state church in several central locales picked up and publicized Vellmer's letter in coming weeks.

It received additional support from a second Protestant clergyman, Walther Roth, who linked Linnemann's conversion with psychological fickleness or character weakness, thus disqualifying her testimony as a witness to anything of consequence whatsoever. The editorial staff of the paper airing the whole dispute likewise opposed Linnemann, siding with the Protestant clergy who were critical of her new outlook.

Initial mainline response to Linnemann, then, was negative if not scathing. It is worth noting that the primary means of official attack was to twist Linnemann's position: whereas she confessed that she had quit assuming that the Bible was historically untrue, having realized that her grounds for that critical assumption were unfounded, but then went on to speak of new-found personal faith in Christ, her opponents ignored the personalistic side of her statement and represented her as saying that faith is mere affirmation of facts: "Glauben ist nicht bloßes Fürwahrhalten" ("Believing is not merely affirming facts to be true") blared the title of a state

¹⁹The article and responses to it referred to above are from *Dokumentation: Kasseler Sonntagsblatt. Moderne Theologie und Gemeinde. Der Streit um Eta Linnemann* (Kassel, 1986). I owe Hans Bayer thanks for making this available to me.

church press release. Besides, at the dogmatic level Linnemann could expect little sympathy for her reported conversion in a church that teaches salvation is inherent in baptism and thus requires no conviction and decision of the sort Linnemann reported.

In the midst of all this, laity rose immediately to mount a spirited if populist defense: the newspaper in which Linnemann's initial profession of faith appeared received over a dozen formal letters of protest against Vellmer and support for Linnemann. The paper printed few of these but did print Vellmer's and Roth's rebuttals in full. To the extent that German Protestant church leadership stated their verdict, it was clearly negative against Linnemann.

One can measure scholarly response to her life change by observing that shortly after her conversion, Linnemann sent personal letters explaining her shift in outlook to all her fellow German university theologians. Few even replied, and fewer still, Linnemann reports, were in any way supportive. As for her first post-conversion book,²⁰ since it was not written for an academic audience per se or published by an academic press, it is no wonder that German scholars ignored it in academic journals.

***North America and Britain: Reaction to
Historical Criticism of the Bible***

²⁰*Wissenschaft oder Meinung? Anfragen und Alternativen* (Neuhausen: Hänssler, 1986), later translated as *Historical Criticism of the Bible* (n. 5 above).

An awareness of Linnemann in English-speaking circles began at the 1988 national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Wheaton, Illinois.²¹ Several American publishers expressed interest in the word about Linnemann's conversion and new book.²² This resulted in the 1990 release of *Historical Criticism of the Bible*, of which some fifteen published reviews appeared by the spring of 1997.²³ At one end of the spectrum of response is David Watson, who has no word of negative criticism, calling Linnemann's book simply "a magnificent testimony!"²⁴ David P. Kuske's remarks are equally free of disagreement.²⁵ Slightly more reserved is David E. Lanier, who raises rhetorical questions about the extreme tone and substance of some of her statements, yet declines to censure her. In his words, "the present writer will refuse to chide her for writing out of the deepest passion of her repentance any more than he would have chided Paul for writing off the teachings of Gamaliel as so much *skubala* ('garbage')." ²⁶ Joe Blair, echoing Lanier's benign assessment, raises a couple of questions but points to no fundamental flaws.²⁷ William F. Warren, Jr., likewise raises no criticisms, noting only that Linnemann "at times overstates her position."²⁸ Hardly any more critical is the three-sentence

²¹Robert Yarbrough presented a paper entitled "From Bultmannian to Biblicist: Eta Linnemann's Indictment of Contemporary New Testament Scholarship."

²²I.e., *Historical Criticism of the Bible*.

²³One review by David C. C. Watson appeared twice: *Churchman* 105/4 (1991):373 f.; *English Churchman* (July 12 & 19, 1991):7.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵David P. Kuske, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 88/3 (1991):239.

²⁶David E. Lanier, *Faith and Mission* 11/2 (1994).

²⁷Joe Blair, *Grace Theological Journal* 11 (Fall 1990):246-48.

²⁸William F. Warren, Jr., *Theological Educator* 45 (1992):149-52.

assessment of E. Earle Ellis, who writes,

While she sometimes paints with too broad a brush and tends to underrate the positive contributions of historical biblical study, she offers important insights and a challenge to all who, within the academic enterprise, seek to be faithful interpreters of the Scriptures as the Word of God.²⁹

More strongly worded is the caveat in David Crump's otherwise generally positive review, "Prof. Linnemann draws too many black or white dichotomies for her proposals . . . to be anything more than the enthusiastic trailblazer's rallying cry."³⁰

²⁹E. Earle Ellis, *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 34 (Fall 1991):82.

³⁰David Crump, *Criswell Theological Review* 6 (Fall 1992):153-55.

Markedly more reserved is Robert M. Johnston, who points out that Linnemann may sound as intellectually arrogant to some as the critics she denounces. She seems to be unaware of "positive uses of historical-critical *methods* (as distinguished from *ideology*)" by scholars like F. F. Bruce, George Ladd, and Robert Stein.³¹ Johnston appears to beg the question that Linnemann raises: does not the historical-critical *method* in fact necessarily imply an *ideology* hostile to a Christian historiography? Still, his negative remarks are measured and brief, hardly more than ten percent of his total review.

A positive yet discerning analysis is offered by Robert Shirock, who notes that in some ways Linnemann's horizon is too limited to the German scene. He points out, for example, that

a growing number of young evangelicals have worked their way through the problems which Linnemann raises and have found ways in which they can maintain their conservative beliefs while at the same time pursuing advanced research in Scripture within certain existing university systems,³²

referring no doubt to the British universities. Yet he urges that everyone engaged in biblical research and exposition read the book, noting,

Young evangelicals tend to allow the past forty years of German higher criticism to establish the agenda for their research. We believe that there is much truth in Linnemann's contention that we ought to be on the offensive rather than maintaining a defensive posture.

Equally positive are the remarks of Daniel Clendenin, who notes points of disagreement, including "the annoying form of the book with all its zeal and preachiness and its sometimes simplistic, grim content," yet concludes that it "masters so much prophetic insight, intellectual candor, self-examination and gospel passion that guild Christians everywhere might benefit from it."³³

³¹Robert M. Johnston, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 30 (Summer 1992):171-74.

³²Robert Shirock, *Evangelical Quarterly* 64 (July 1992):275-77.

³³Daniel Clendenin, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35/1 (1992):101 f.

Less unabashedly affirming is the essay by Andreas Köstenberger, who raises numerous perceptive questions. Linnemann demonizes Historical Criticism, he notes, but "the alternative remains unclear." (This is precisely the misgiving voiced by another reviewer, Howard Rhys, who in other respects says of Linnemann's book, "Her challenge is well expressed."³⁴) More sharply, Köstenberger suggests that Linnemann seems to be headed in the direction of a "devotional" study of Scripture rather than an academically serious one. "Thus Linnemann unfortunately remains largely captive to the very dichotomy between believing and critical inquiry that much of the historical-critical theology itself has helped create."³⁵ In light of the work Linnemann has published in recent years, one doubts that Köstenberger would accuse Linnemann of a "devotional" method today. Yet even allowing for such criticisms, Köstenberger accords Linnemann grudging praise.

A final positive review comes from Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) quarters. Horace D. Hummel writes, "One could easily close his eyes and, with only a few modifications, imagine this book as a product of the intense LCMS conflict about historical-critical exegesis a good two decades ago."³⁶ "Linnemann deserves better" than Earle Ellis' lukewarm commendation, Hummel thinks, and her "main thrust is surely beyond cavil." He concludes by hinting that the warning which Linnemann's book constitutes for North American evangelicals, whose acceptance of historical-critical thought is at times considerable, also comprises a warning to the LCMS. Is infighting among the LCMS's right wing hampering its attention to the real and far more dangerous challenges from the left? Did the LCMS "win" a pitched theological controversy in the 1960s and 70s only to be lulled into ultimate loss at the hands of historical-critical impulses now?

Purely negative reactions to Linnemann come from two sources. Casimir Bernas, writing in *Religious Studies Review*, finds her conversion touching but her thinking absolutely wrong.³⁷ "Things are not really as grim as depicted by

³⁴Howard Rhys, *Sewanee Theological Review* 35 (1992):212. Rhys is also critical of Linnemann for holding to a view of verbal inspiration of the Bible and for accepting "such historic ascriptions of authorship as that of Paul for the Pastoral Epistles."

³⁵Andreas Köstenberger, *Trinity Journal* 13NS (1992):95-98.

³⁶Horace D. Hummel, *Concordia Journal* 19 (July 1993):284-87.

³⁷Casimir Bernas, *Religious Studies Review* 18/2 (April 1992):140.

Linnemann." Following the same Kantian and Bultmannian definition of faith as Vellmer and Roth who opposed Linnemann in Germany (above), Bernas writes, "For those . . . who consider theology to be faith seeking understanding, it is simply erroneous to maintain that critical scholarship is an impediment or danger to either faith, understanding, or gospel proclamation." Behind this assertion appear to lie the convictions (1) that "faith" and "knowledge" are utterly disparate spheres, and (2) that historical study has destroyed whatever factual basis Linnemann might have for her claims.³⁸

³⁸Bernas says that the issue is "the reconciliation of historical research with religious faith" and advises Linnemann, "*Non arguitur contra factum.*"

The second purely negative reaction comes from Gregory A. Boyd.³⁹ It is interesting to contrast the cautiously appreciative reviews of figures like Ellis and Köstenberger (above), who are trained experts in exegesis and methodology, with the spirited review of Boyd, who is not. As an apologetics professor, he writes about his bitter disappointment with Linnemann's book. It is not the kind of book he thinks she ought to have written. He faults her for demonizing philosophy and science, which Boyd wants to view as having Christian roots; for ignoring the church's errors and shortcomings in biblical interpretation; for wanting to transport society back into antiquity, doing away with all scientific and medical advances of modern times; for unqualified fideism in her understanding of the gospel; and for failing to see the positive conclusions of Literary and Historical Criticism because of her fixation with alleged errors in criticism's assumptions. And so he concludes:

This is . . . just the kind of over-simplified, non-objective, and certainly unappreciative approach to biblical criticism which contemporary evangelicals do not need. What is needed is a critical dialogue with the biblical critical enterprise which is as appreciative as it is critical, as respectful as it is faithful, and objective as it is committed to scriptural authority. . . . Sadly, despite its sometimes profound insights into the subjective nature of supposedly objective scientific endeavors, Linnemann's book does not contribute to this needed critical dialogue. Unless you are looking for a passionate sermon on the evils of biblical criticism, therefore, I cannot recommend this book to you.⁴⁰

North America and Britain: Reaction to Is There a Synoptic Problem?⁴¹

Linnemann's second post-conversion book, an examination of the so-called synoptic problem,⁴² has received about eleven reviews of varying length and rigor by the spring of 1997. Among the most positive is that of John Wenham.⁴³ Wenham points out that "where Mark and Luke are undoubtedly parallel, Luke (if he is redacting) has made about 5,000 changes in Mark and Matthew about 8,000 changes."⁴⁴ He agrees that Linnemann's statistics show "in detail the unlikelihood of literary dependence" on the scale accepted by many.⁴⁵ He calls Linnemann's third section, dealing with how the synoptics arose apart from literary interdependence,

³⁹Gregory A. Boyd, *Christian Scholar's Review* 22/1 (Fall 1992):106-9.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 109.

⁴¹See note 12 above.

⁴²Usually defined as the set of knotty questions posed by both the similarities among and the differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, assuming some kind of literary dependence among the three.

⁴³John Wenham, *Evangelical Quarterly* 66/3 (1994):266-67.

⁴⁴Cf. John Wenham's own weighty contribution to the synoptic debate: *Redating Matthew, Mark and Luke: A Fresh Assault on the Synoptic Problem* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 1992).

⁴⁵Wenham argues for a limited literary interdependence and for Luke's use of Mark (*ibid.*).

"lightweight." Yet he places himself alongside Linnemann as one who believes "in the verbal independence of the Synoptics" and concludes, "It is heart-warming to welcome this courageous and scholarly addition to the present synoptic problem ferment."

Purely laudatory is Erich H. Kiehl's review.⁴⁶ He says her book's "charts and tables reflect the extensive and meticulous study Linnemann has done to demonstrate the accuracy and truthfulness of her study." Unfortunately, little in this review indicates that the reviewer was interested in pointing out flaws had he sensed any. Only slightly more critical are remarks by Edwin E. Reynolds.⁴⁷ He questions mainly formal aspects of the book, although he also wonders "how the statistics would vary if she were to test words for similarity in content rather than for identity." Overall, he writes, "Regardless of what one thinks of her conclusion, her statistical research is impressive, and certainly makes a very significant contribution to synoptic studies. Scholars should be grateful for the wealth of data she has contributed to the field." Robert L. Thomas, though he "does not concur with every minor point along the way," considers her book "probably the most significant volume on the Synoptic Problem to appear thus far in the twentieth century."⁴⁸

William R. Farmer praises Linnemann's debunking of the presumed bases for the classic two-source hypothesis as held by Strecker, Marxsen, and Koester based on Wilke, Weisse, and Holtzmann.⁴⁹ But he thinks her main argument, that "the Gospels are independent literary works based on eye-witness testimony," is "unconvincing." He does concede that Linnemann correctly exploits a gap in current criticism, which has "failed thus far in explaining Luke's use of Matthew."

David W. Jurgens, like Farmer, is skeptical of Linnemann's main thesis.⁵⁰ But he is less appreciative of her rejection of the two-source hypothesis and with it Marcan priority. He suggests that Hans-Herbert Stoldt's list of fifty-seven agreements of Matthew and Luke against Mark may in fact be a sign that Matthew and Luke *did* use Mark. He contends, "If Matthew omits 6,593 words of Mark, and Luke omits 11,025 words of Mark, they would naturally have omitted many of the same words without ever having consulted each other." It can be asked whether this statement adequately answers Stoldt's objections to the two-source hypothesis.⁵¹ Jurgens' other criticism of Linnemann runs like this: Robert Stein in *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* states that he believes in Scripture's inspiration, and that

⁴⁶Erich H. Kiehl, *Concordia Journal* 19 (July 1993):280-81.

⁴⁷Edwin E. Reynolds, *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 33 (Autumn 1995):309-10.

⁴⁸Robert L. Thomas, *The Master's Seminary Journal* 4 (1993):111-13.

⁴⁹William R. Farmer, *Religious Studies Review* 20/4 (October 1994):337.

⁵⁰David W. Jurgens, *Reformed Review* 47 (1993):63.

⁵¹Summarized in Hans-Herbert Stoldt, *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*, trans. and ed. by Donald L. Niewyk (Macon, Ga./Edinburgh: Mercer University/T. & T. Clark, 1980) 18-23.

when gospel compilers edited traditions as determined through source, form, redaction, and literary criticism, those interpretations are still "divinely inspired, canonical, and authoritative." In other words, Jurgens, like Stein, is willing to extend divine inspiration to whatever means gospel transmitters, compilers, or redactors used over the decades of gospel formation. Linnemann's arguments for eyewitness testimony are, then, unnecessary, because Stein's extended doctrine of inspiration abolishes the need for assured and direct eyewitness accounts. This point will receive further attention in the next section of this article.

Five reviews remain, each more critical than the preceding. Peter Head finds "the major weakness" in Linnemann's statement that "given the assumption of literary dependence, one would expect similarities of nearly 100 percent."⁵² He calls this "a false premise," though he discusses none of Linnemann's observations supporting her statement and alleges that no evidence is available to prove it in light of certain literary parallels like "the Targums and the Masoretic Text; the Gospel of Peter and the canonical Gospels; or Josephus' use of the OT and Aristeas." In a much fuller treatment, Matt Williams makes nearly the same observation, though he seeks to ground it at greater length.⁵³ This article will review his arguments below. He adds the criticism that Linnemann fails to interact with non-German scholars—like Streeter, Sanday, and Farmer—who have argued for literary dependence. In fairness to Linnemann, however, she explicitly takes on the two-source hypothesis as it originated and exists in Germany and is taught in the university there, not all literary dependence theories elsewhere that have sprung up subsequently. It might surprise Williams to learn that German NT scholars feel no need to take Streeter, Sanday, and Farmer into account, so they clearly do not. This is, therefore, not a very telling criticism.

Rainer Riesner has some kind words to say of Linnemann.⁵⁴ But her book "contains too many onesided and imprecise statements." He shows that her handling of the history of the synoptic problem is flawed and that her use of patristic sources lacks cogency. His summary of her extensive use of statistics deserves quotation:

In general L.[innemann], like many of her historical-critical opponents, places too much faith in the view that statistics are decisive for the synoptic question. Although this reviewer has long maintained that the oral gospel tradition must be taken very seriously, he does not believe that it suffices to explain the synoptic phenomena in their entirety.

On cultural-historical grounds alone it seems virtually unthinkable that prior to the synoptic gospels, which L. places in the mid-60s, nothing had been written down. I share with L. the concern that broad segments of New Testament science underrate the

⁵²Peter Head, *Anvil* 10/3 (1993):260-61. Linnemann makes a statement to this effect in *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* 109, and again (with more nuance) on 132.

⁵³Matt Williams, *Trinity Journal* 14/1NS (Spring 1993):97-101.

⁵⁴Rainer Riesner, *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie* 9 (1995):225-27.

reliability of the synoptic gospels. But in conservative evangelical exegesis the early written recording was actually seen as a factor supporting this reliability.

In a somewhat more critical vein Dan G. McCartney concedes that Linnemann "certainly deserves commendation" for "her criticism of the naturalistic assumptions lying behind literary dependence theories."⁵⁵ But he charges her with a "misunderstanding of the nature of the problem" she is dealing with. Even if it can be shown that only 46% of Mark shows verbal identity with Matthew, McCartney says that is significant. He compares the situation with two student examinations he might grade, noting that 46% agreement between the two would cause him to suspect literary dependence immediately.

But this analogy is surely defective. What if he were to test two students from an oral culture on what they had learned from a religious teacher in that culture, and what if they had lived with that teacher for three years and had received systematic instruction from him, often repeated verbatim? Would 46% agreement in their reminiscences, especially when remembering the words of their master, mean they had copied from each other? McCartney's comparison is hardly to the point.

McCartney goes on to allege two other examples of Linnemann's basic misunderstanding of her topic. He charges her with making sweeping conclusions at times and with condemning all criticism of the gospels because "most German criticism operates on unbelieving presuppositions." McCartney does not allow for Linnemann's self-restriction to the German scene, dominated as it is by the Two-Source Theory. Nor does he recognize that in academic gospels study in Germany there is no other game in town except for the one controlled by such presuppositions, apart from a relatively tiny enclave of scholars making up the NT segment of the *Arbeitskreis für evangelikale Theologie* (a Tyndale Fellowship-like group) numbering no more than a dozen professional NT scholars. McCartney concludes that "in spite of her overstatements, she has some good points to make," but that "it is sad she has couched her arguments . . . in such a way that her valid observations will be easy for people to ignore."

⁵⁵Dan G. McCartney, *Westminster Theological Journal* 55 (1993):348-50.

One critical review remains, that by John S. Kloppenborg.⁵⁶ Generally speaking, it is a withering blast, repaying in kind the absence of "critical, courteous, and fair-minded interchange" he finds in Linnemann's book. His charges are these: (1) Linnemann fails to set the views of figures like Lessing and Holtzmann "within a historical context"; (2) she limits her view to the German scene; (3) "her procedure involves both fragmentation of the data and curious statistical operations," an assertion for which Kloppenborg advances some arguments; and (4) she is wrong in assuming that literary dependence ought to result in nearly 100% reduplication of the original source, in this case Mark. He concludes, "If there is a case to be made for the independence of the Synoptics, let it be made. But let it be done with care, attention to the richly nuanced conversation that continues within the academy, and without baseless assertions of prejudice and bad faith." Clearly, in his view Linnemann is guilty of all these, as well as ignorance of bibliography and issues that would justify writing her off as at least emotionally imbalanced and perhaps just plain incompetent.⁵⁷

CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOLARSHIP?

⁵⁶John S. Kloppenborg, *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 6 (1993):262-64.

⁵⁷The dismissive, even contemptuous tone of the review is striking. Kloppenborg might reply that she pushed first.

In two books and a number of articles that are impossible to explore in detail here, Linnemann has challenged the monopolistic gospel studies enterprise of German university scholarship as epitomized in the standard textbooks used there. In this she is hardly alone, as Bray has pointed out: "Historical criticism came under attack [in the 1970s and since] from many different sources, including from within the discipline itself."⁵⁸ Is her voice as yet another important word of caution, or even dissent, against Historical Criticism in the strict sense? Should one even move in the direction of looking askance at synoptic study operating within literary dependence parameters on the basis of her findings? With thousands of copies of her books in print and sales still lively, those questions cry out for informed answers from everyone involved in formal gospels studies, whether for preaching or for scholarly purposes. To answer these questions, an additional weighing of criticisms catalogued in the previous section—besides the minor ones already dealt with—is in order. This should also give a basis for additional insights into the question of the viability of Linnemann's proposals, a question involving a few perspectives and considerations that reviewers so far have either not noticed or decided not to mention.

Weaknesses and Merits of Historical Criticism

(1) The contentions of Vellmer, Roth, and other mainline German Protestant leaders that true faith is untouched by Historical Criticism because faith does not deal with empirical truth anyway, just religious experience, will carry weight only with those whose notion of Christian faith excludes any admixture of cognitively apprehended facts. This has admittedly been the shape of Christian faith for many since Lessing and Kant. It is a popular conception of faith today among various groups. Examples would include those who identify with an existentialist gospel à la Bultmann, those who utterly reject the role of reason in saving faith à la Barth, and those whose postmodern world view denies the knowable existence of truth generally and in religion particularly ("If there is a mountain out there, there are any number of ways to get to the top."). Persons identifying with those views might be New Age-types desiring a Christian flavor in their religious mix, old-line liberals of mainline denominations, evangelicals zealous for Barth, or pietists of any persuasion who so stress Spirit and direct experience that Scripture and knowledge assume secondary importance.

⁵⁸Bray, *Biblical Interpretation Past and Present* 461.

But it is difficult to regard criticisms of Linnemann based on this outlook as fatal to her case, because so much in the Bible, in the history of the church, and even in recent hermeneutical discussion argues against it as a compelling position.⁵⁹

And in fact those criticisms came against Linnemann only from her German colleagues and from Casimir Bernas in North America. It seems fair to set them aside as insufficient grounds for calling in question the academic merit of Linnemann's arguments as a whole.

(2) Complaints that Linnemann tends to generalize and overstate, on the other hand, recur in reviews and must be taken seriously. To the extent that these tendencies detract from the substance of the arguments, or even replace argument with rhetoric, Linnemann's *modus operandi* has weakened her own case. It is likewise lamentable that she fails to concede positive contributions by critical scholarship. For example, do not NT exegetes everywhere make heavy use of the Greek lexicon that Walter Bauer, no theological conservative, compiled over a lifetime of diligent labor? Common courtesy calls for more fairness here.

On the other hand, the other side could argue that university scholarship in Germany during the last century would have produced a Hellenistic Greek lexicon anyway. After all, Bauer's predecessor, Cremer, a rock-ribbed confessionalist, proved that one need not share Bauer's critical views to produce quality lexical work. The post-Enlightenment, anti-orthodox conceptions of NT scholars *per se*, which "Historical Criticism" as Germans understand it enshrines, deserves little or no credit for Bauer's production. Possibly better lexical work, and more of it, could have come into being if there had been more appreciation for the truth and beauty of the Christian Scriptures and fewer million man-hours and monographs devoted to showing how true Christian faith, or early Christian history, is nothing like what the surface claims of the NT and the traditional teachings of the church imply.

Moreover, if one praises German criticism and demands reverence for its scholarly achievements, is it right to overlook its complicity in two World Wars, Germany's tragic anti-Semitism, and the West's widespread religious skepticism at the end of the twentieth century? Though it would be quite wrong to blame Historical Criticism for those disasters, it is equally dubious to call for respect for Historical Criticism's accomplishments while saying nothing of its liabilities. More than one German responding to Vellmer and Roth spoke of their country's empty churches and desolate soul as the result of the ravages of critical theology in the

⁵⁹On Kantian fact-faith dichotomization in currently ascendent pluralist theologies (Hick, Knitter, et al.), see Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, "Zur Lage von Glaube und Theologie heute," *Internationalen Katholischen Zeitschrift Communio* 25 (July/August 1996):359-72. I am indebted to Werner Neuer for this reference.

universities, and ultimately in the churches, over many generations. As the manifold failures of the twentieth century's Marxist experiments continue to come to light, it should never be forgotten that Karl Marx learned much about the NT at the feet of Bruno Bauer, a notable historical critic of the nineteenth century. Those are all sentiments that may sound churlish to voice but probably deserve a hearing.

(3) The investigation of reviews in the previous section revealed that the major set of arguments against Linnemann came from Boyd.⁶⁰ Some of his evident pique seems to be a classic case of a book not containing what the reviewer thinks it should. This irritation leads him to accuse Linnemann of fideism, a curious charge when one remembers that Germans like Vellmer thought she sounded rationalistic. His displeasure with Linnemann's statement that a Christian philosophy is a contradiction in terms makes sense in North America, where a Christian like Alvin Plantinga can be a leading philosopher, but fails to appreciate the German setting, which regards "philosophy" as a body of knowledge that rules out the viability of classic Christian belief and renders dialogue with it passé. North American academia has analogies at this point, as Alan Bloom and more recently Phillip Johnson have pointed out. It is naive to think that even Alvin Plantinga is causing historical critics in Germany (or, so far, in North America⁶¹) to rethink their hermeneutic.

Boyd's claim that Linnemann wishes to return humankind to classical antiquity is likewise hardly to be taken seriously. It constitutes an unfortunate overreaction to Linnemann's rhetorical critique of modernity's pretensions that it is leading the world into utopian splendor in all areas of life, whether medical or educational or technological. Here Linnemann is merely echoing similar critiques by many secular thinkers who call attention to the Trojan horse of "modern" approaches to medicine, technology, the environment, and even private life, and who point out that post-industrial "progress" is often more than offset by harmful side effects. For example, despite the mechanization of the American home by all kinds of time saving devices, why do we have so much less discretionary time than a generation ago? Further, what has a generation of post-60s educational philosophy and values clarification done for the SAT scores, morals, and character of American school children?⁶² "New" or "modern" is often not better at all. This is Linnemann's point, as most reviewers were able to recognize.

Boyd's charge that Linnemann fails to point out modern science's Christian

⁶⁰See above under the heading "North America and Britain: Reaction to *Historical Criticism of the Bible*."

⁶¹For a tantalizing harbinger, possibly, of better things to come, see Stephen Louthan, "On Religion—A Discussion with Richard Rorty, Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff," *Christian Scholar's Review* 26/2 (Winter 1996):177-83.

⁶²This is not to blame schools for children's declining performance; home life is an even greater problem. But schools are an obvious relevant factor in the decline.

roots are historically well founded. But they are irrelevant for science as it exists in the sphere Linnemann is dealing with. In that realm a stark naturalism has pretty much hijacked the scientific enterprise inaugurated centuries ago by thinkers who were, as Boyd correctly implies, Christian in their world view. Boyd, unlike other reviewers, seems to lack adequate grasp of the shape of "historical critical" thought as it actually exists in the German university system. He seems to see it as a benign set of ground rules amenable to at least two underlying metaphysical (or anti-metaphysical) rationales: a Christian rationale and a post-Enlightenment, non-Christian one. But this is not how "historical critical" thought is the concept in the halls of learning of the European continent, especially in Germany. In the end Boyd's criticisms point more to failure to understand the German system, a system not without analogies in North America, than to a systemic failure on Linnemann's part.

Boyd's decision not to recommend the book to those not looking for a passionate sermon on "the evils of biblical criticism" is understandable. There are plenty of non-Christians or historical critics to whom this writer would not want to give a copy of *Historical Criticism* for fear the tone would do more harm than good. Yet Boyd's words appear to trivialize those "evils," when in fact Linnemann is on firm ground in seeing them for the dangers they are. Boyd also seems to assume that people do not *need* to hear sermons they do not *want* to hear. The opposite is not seldom the case.

The value of Boyd's remarks is that they alert readers to the limitations of Linnemann's style of response. This writer has finally concluded, in the course of preparing this essay and cataloguing reviewers' responses, that a defense is possible for what she has written from the standpoint of who the writer was, when she wrote (shortly after conversion), and just which set of ills she sought to address (those prevailing in the German system, of which she had long been an insider). But Boyd is correct to warn that her approach is not to be universalized, at least not *in toto*, even by others who share many of her basic convictions. Her words could fan the flames of an anti-intellectual, militia mentality already too common in conservative American religion. They might cause college or seminary students to be haughty and dismissive of ideas they have not yet taken the time to understand. They might encourage young preachers to adopt a Rush Limbaugh tone that would be disastrous for any gracious presentation of gospel claims. The need exists for an even-handed, restrained, and highly trained interaction with historical-critical ideas long typified by scholars in, say, the Tyndale Fellowship tradition, a tradition of learned and dispassionate inquiry, yet still palpably Christian in orientation, with precedents as varied as the work of J. B. Lightfoot, Adolf Schlatter, and J. Gresham Machen.

Yet there is room from time to time for a prophetic voice calling attention to imminent dangers and warning against complacency, unwitting complicity, and misplaced hopes. With many reviewers, this writer concurs that limitations of Linnemann's popular-level diatribe against Historical Criticism should not obscure

its important, valid insights. Despite its flaws and intentional popular appeal, Linnemann's *Historical Criticism* furthers scholarship by sharpening one's vision of what it is and ought to be.

Weaknesses and Merits of Is There a Synoptic Problem?

(1) Reviewers of *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* have repeatedly pointed out the weakness of Linnemann's positive proposals regarding how the gospels found their way into writing in the mid-A.D. 60s. Though her appeal to external, patristic evidence is refreshing when compared to common critical fixation with internal evidence alone,⁶³ it is not as sophisticated as it might be. Wenham, Riesner, and others appear to have valid criticisms here.

Linnemann is also more dependent on Zahn's history of synoptic studies than is desirable. Here, too, Riesner has shown the weakness of Linnemann's reliance on secondary literature, expertly citing relevant original sources to show the derivative nature of her knowledge of certain points. But this does not mean that Kloppenborg is justified in claiming that Linnemann fails to set figures "within a historical context." Linnemann is broadly correct that an anti-Christian animus worked in figures like Lessing, and that biblical scholars taking their cues not from data but from the *Zeitgeist* transformed NT scholarship into a discipline serving philosophical idealism rather than the empirical ideals normally associated with historical science. F. C. Baur and the Tübingen school illustrate that point. Still, if Linnemann wishes to place weight on her reading of the history of the discipline, she needs to do more careful primary-source investigation.

Of course, Linnemann could respond that her reading of history is no more sketchy and tendential than Bultmann's reading of the history of NT theology, which is at least as skewed as Linnemann's in the direction he wanted it to go.⁶⁴ This is not to advocate letting Linnemann off the hook because Bultmann does the same thing. It is only to point out that a weak ancillary section does not necessarily detract from a book's central arguments. Clearly Linnemann's account of the remote history of gospel studies is not the main point of her book, any more than is her reconstruction of gospel composition on the basis of patristic sources—especially Irenaeus.

(2) Jurgens' appeal to Robert Stein⁶⁵ in an effort to minimize the importance of eyewitnesses calls for careful reflection. Linnemann is obviously concerned

⁶³The fixation goes back to D. F. Strauss (*The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. George Eliot [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972 (1835)]): "To investigate the internal grounds of credibility in relation to each detail given in the Gospels, (for it is with them alone that we are here concerned) and to test the probability or improbability of their being the production of eyewitnesses, or of competently informed writers, is the sole object of the present work" (70). Strauss justified the limitation to internal matters by discrediting patristic testimony, i.e., early church tradition. His procedure is somewhat similar to that of Reimarus.

⁶⁴Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1980⁸) 585-89.

⁶⁵Robert H. Stein, *The Synoptic Problem: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987).

to uphold apostolic authorship of the synoptics, whether direct (Matthew) or indirect (Mark, Luke), along the lines envisioned by ancient tradition, the titles of the earliest manuscripts themselves, and Luke's prologue. Jurgens seems to think that the process of gospel composition is of less importance than the final form, which is at the end of the day what God inspired. But the issue is not so simple. At the inaugural level of "historical-critical" study of the gospels as it exists today is D. F. Strauss (1808-1874). And foundational to his demolition of the aura of reliability that had surrounded the gospels for centuries was his conviction that the gospels are not, and must not have been, produced by direct eyewitnesses:

It would most unquestionably be an argument of decisive weight in favour of the credibility of the biblical history, could it indeed be shown that it was written by eyewitnesses, or even by persons nearly contemporaneous with the events narrated. For though errors and false representations may glide into the narrations even of an eyewitness, there is far less probability of unintentional mistake (intentional deception may easily be detected) than where the narrator is separated by a long interval from the facts he records, and is obliged to derive his materials through the medium of transmitted communications.⁶⁶

Linnemann's sensitivity to the eyewitness question is probably an intuitive response to the German setting where the ongoing task of upholding Strauss' denial of eyewitness status to the gospels is an underlying, if tacit, function of source, form, and redaction criticism. It is worth noting that Bultmann wished to dedicate the first edition of his *History of the Synoptic Tradition* to Strauss but was advised against it by his teacher Wilhelm Heitmüller for political reasons.⁶⁷ His desire confirms his commitment to the ideal Strauss established.

It is ironic, then, to see defense of the authentic (i.e., true-to-historical-fact) result of gospel formation—such as Stein argues for—when most historical critics understand that material to contain either no direct eyewitness material, or only such as has been handed along, processed perhaps several times, and eventually set in final form generations after the events described. To illustrate, contemporary study of Abraham Lincoln gives the authenticity of sayings attributed to him an A rating in the case of a direct quote recorded soon after its utterance, B if an indirect quote recorded soon after its utterance, and C for quotes reported only after the passage of weeks, months, or years.⁶⁸ That seems to be a reasonable ranking system, with its

⁶⁶Strauss, *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* 69. See also n. 62 above.

⁶⁷Gerd Lüdemann, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, trans. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 193 n. 76. Thus, though "Rudolf Bultmann hardly ever referred to Strauss," (Colin Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988] 204), he may have worked more consciously in Strauss' train than his explicit autobiographical remarks indicate.

⁶⁸Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher, *Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, 1996), cited in Lewis Lord, "Looking for Lincoln," *U.S. News & World Report* (February 17, 1997):62-63.

analogies in criteria established to rank the authenticity of what Jesus may have said. But if applied to Jesus' words with the understanding that all the synoptic material is the result of a complex tradition process that first crystallized two generations or more after Jesus' death, few of the synoptic words of Jesus are likely to be regarded as necessarily genuine. Divine inspiration becomes a *deus ex machina* to preserve what historical probability and common sense argue against.

Though Linnemann may try to prove too much with her theory of radical non-interdependence among synoptic writers, she is not being naive in her aversion to facile theories of synoptic composition that would retain a high degree of reliability for synoptic sayings while going with the flow of literary criticisms sprouting out of the ashes of the once-reliable gospel edifice that Strauss torched to the ground. If eyewitnesses are primarily responsible for gospel documents, the complicated tradition process *as posited by large segments of synoptic criticism*⁶⁹ is both unlikely and unnecessary. On the other hand, if traditional two-source synoptic criticism is largely correct and the whole gospel tradition is mostly hearsay, then claims of eyewitness reliability for the results of the tradition process sound like special pleading, especially when those claims call in the Holy Spirit to guarantee the historical veracity that empirical observation is assumed to have demolished.

(3) Another point touched on repeatedly by reviewers (Head, McCartney, Williams, Kloppenborg) was Linnemann's claim that literary dependence should result in something approaching 100% agreement between, say, Matthew and Mark, if Matthew copied Mark. Reviewers claimed that literary dependence could be at work with a much lower percentage of agreement. Discussion above has already suggested that McCartney's comparison of 46% agreement between two student test papers, on the one hand, and the gospels, on the other, is an apples-and-oranges comparison carrying minimal weight. The same is true of Williams' observation based on local newspaper reports of a super-sectional high school basketball game. It is not easy to see what is proved by observing that two reporters gave two quite different accounts.

This yields no basis for the conclusion that to have the degree of verbal similarity they do,⁷⁰ the gospels must reflect some amount of direct literary

⁶⁹The italics are important. I think there was a tradition process, and it was complicated. But I do not find the methods and informing hermeneutic of some segments of guild synoptic studies to be convincing either in their methods or results. Rainer Riesner's *Jesus als Lehrer*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1988) is an example of an alternate approach which does not oversimplify, yet works in conscious contrast to many received ground rules of synoptic criticism. See also the viewpoints represented in William R. Farmer, ed., *Crisis in Christology* (Livonia, Mich.: Dove Booksellers, 1995). Biblical scholars represented in this volume include C. F. D. Moule, R. T. France, E. Earle Ellis, N. T. Wright, James Dunn, Martin Hengel, Peter Stuhlmacher, Ben F. Meyer, and Farmer himself. While all of these would take exception to much in Linnemann, their work shares with hers a theme of disagreement with the methods, aims, and results of synoptic criticism in many of its current forms.

⁷⁰For a summary of many of the statistical findings, see Linnemann, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* 149.

borrowing. Other explanations are possible. Different on-the-spot reports of a post-season basketball melee bears little resemblance, formal or material, to the apostolic recollection of the deeds and words of the Son of God as He instilled His truths into His followers over the span of several years—and in a culture where faithful preservation of holy prophetic utterances had a venerable past.⁷¹

⁷¹Note, e.g., Kenneth E. Bailey, "Middle Eastern Oral Tradition and the Synoptic Gospels," *The Expository Times* (September 1995):363-67.

More weighty here is Head's reference to the Targums and the Masoretic Text, the Gospel of Peter and the canonical Gospels, and Josephus' use of the OT and Aristaeus. In the same vein Kloppenborg refers to Josephus' replication of the Decalogue. Their point is to underscore what Kloppenborg calls "the extremely free way in which classical authors treated their source material."⁷² But this is not always the case. Counterexamples like Suetonius and Eusebius spring to mind immediately. From the NT writers to Clement of Rome and onward, it is apparent that direct borrowing from scriptural sources commonly results in nearly 100% reproduction of the text being cited, at least in the form known to the writer. When the likeness is much less than 100%, then one suspects a loose allusion, not direct copying. So the evidence here is not as clearly one-sided as suggested.

Furthermore, for each example cited by reviewers, one could point out factors that show the relatively free citation as observed in some sources to be doubtful analogies for synoptic composition. The express design of the Targums was to expand and interpret the Masoretic Text; the Gospel of Peter is clearly bent on augmenting some strands of canonical material with lore of quite different origin; Josephus is well within the bounds of literary license in how he shapes and adapts the material he uses from the Hebrew Scriptures and elsewhere. It is only if one assumes synoptic literary interdependence that these analogies seem immediately to explain synoptic phenomena. But closer scrutiny limits the analogy.

The Targums, for example, are hundreds if not more than a thousand years later than the traditions they gloss. The Gospel of Peter is a mid-second century document⁷³ making obvious free use of canonical sources for doctetic purposes. Josephus' various apologetic motivations are well documented. In each of these cases, purely literary dependence, helped along by extra-literary considerations (for example, Josephus could not possibly have been a witness at Mount Sinai), is the only historical explanation possible. Things are different with the synoptics. The

⁷²Kloppenborg, *Critical Review* 263.

⁷³Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, rev. ed., trans. R. McL. Wilson, vol. 1 (Cambridge, England/Louisville, Ky.: James Clarke & Co./John Knox, 1991) 221; M. S. Enslin, "Peter, Gospel of," in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, K-Q (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962) 766. The claims that it "circulated in the mid-1st century" and "probably served as one of the major sources for the canonical gospels" (Paul Allan Mirecki, "Peter, Gospel of," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, vol. 5 [New York et al.: Doubleday, 1992] 278), are based on the mutually supporting theories of J. D. Crossan and H. Koester and lack documentary backing.

time span between document and putative source is drastically reduced.

Admittedly, a literary dependence explanation on the analogy of Targums, New Testament Apocrypha, and Josephus is imaginable. But so is the scenario proposed by Linnemann: hand-picked and specially trained followers of Jesus heard His words and recorded them in juxtaposition with His equally striking and memorable deeds, all framed with varying degrees of chronological concern and exact verbal precision within a continuum stretching from birth and boyhood to Galilean days, forays to Judea and elsewhere, and eventually death in Jerusalem. Verbatim similarities among the synoptics, typically exceeding 80% in Jesus' words but more often running at around 50% or below even in parallel passages, are due to similarity of reminiscence and the lasting impressions His words left. The accounts resemble each other because the things they report happened and were remembered by those later responsible for recording them, not because various non-witnesses relied chiefly on one or two seminal documents (Mark, Q) having equally indirect ties with the original phenomena.

The synoptics differ for many reasons. To name some obvious ones: imprecision of memory, point of view of recollection, varied and repeated forms in which Jesus delivered His wisdom, translation from Semitic forms into Greek, and the inherent fact that identical truths or observations are communicable in quite different verbal combinations, linguistically speaking.

None of this discounts the challenge that reviewers pose at this point. It simply suggests that the reasons they give for discounting Linnemann are thin in substance. Most telling in Linnemann's favor, however, is the obvious conclusion that reviewers seem to use a heads-I-win, tails-you-lose argument. Synoptic agreement is seen as proof of inter-synoptic direct dependence. Yet synoptic divergence is still proof of inter-synoptic direct dependence, reasoning from parallels like those cited above.⁷⁴ In this scheme of things no dissent from current consensus is possible—literary dependence theories are, as M. Goulder says of the Q theory, a juggernaut.⁷⁵ While one may finally beg to differ with Linnemann's dissatisfaction with the critical tradition that makes use of that logic, it is only fair to grant that she has a point in calling it into question.

(4) A recurring criticism in reviews questioned Linnemann's use of statistics. Richard S. Cervin sent a lengthy and detailed personal letter to Linnemann outlining problems with her method. To summarize his criticism (page references are to Linnemann's *Is There a Synoptic Problem?*):

I have found a number of problems with some of your statistics. On page 110, you say "We can only assess the data objectively through quantitative means" and on page 59 you

⁷⁴See Linnemann's observations on this phenomenon in *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* 109 f. and elsewhere.

⁷⁵M. Goulder, "Is Q a Juggernaut?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115/4 (1996):667-81.

acknowledge the need for tests. I agree with you in principle; however, your analysis makes no use of statistical tests—you have simply counted words and figured percentages. How is anyone to know whether your word counts are statistically significant or are the result of mere chance? How is anyone to know whether your samples are large enough to be statistically significant? Merely counting words and providing percentages as you have done is not very meaningful without some statistical tests to demonstrate probability levels, correlations, margins of error, and various other relationships among the data.⁷⁶

⁷⁶This and other quotations from Cervin are from a copy of his letter to Linnemann kindly supplied by Cervin.

Kloppenborg refers to the same problem in complaining that Linnemann "draws conclusions from raw numbers."⁷⁷ This is probably the major weakness of Linnemann's book. Yet Cervin goes on to note that he has "yet to see any biblical scholar provide any formula for any probability statement made." He adds that in the course of researching his response to Linnemann, he "found that nearly all of the statistical studies done by biblical scholars that I examined were based on misunderstandings and/or ignorance of statistical procedures and reasoning." In other words, Linnemann is using a method of reasoning similar if not identical to scholars who argue contrasting conclusions. Though it is fair to point out her faulty method, if faulty it is, one must also go on to call in question the statistic-based arguments of the mainline textbooks that Linnemann seeks to refute. Among reviewers, only Riesner recognizes that Linnemann's problem here is one shared by everyone who places too much weight on statistics alone to prove or disprove synoptic theories. If statistical findings *supporting* literary dependence theories receive positive recognition despite their faulty nature (and no one familiar with synoptic literature will suggest they are not receiving that recognition), then it would be consistent to agree that Linnemann, using similar methods, has formulated an important counterbalance in response to those theories.

Norman E. Reed has pointed out the problem of statistical studies of the gospels along with the reasonable nature of Linnemann's results seen within that milieu.⁷⁸ He points out that B. H. Streeter finds a 51% agreement between Matthew and Mark in actual wording. Morgenthaler finds 77% agreement in overall substance, 38% if agreement be defined as identical wording. Carson, Moo, and Morris say that 97% of Mark is paralleled in Matthew,⁷⁹ citing Robert Stein's *The Synoptic Problem*, which says that "97.2% of the words in Mark have a parallel in

⁷⁷Kloppenborg, *Critical Review* 263.

⁷⁸"How Much of Mark's Gospel Can Be Found in Matthew?" Unpublished paper. Unfootnoted quotations in the next few paragraphs are from Reed. My thanks to Rev. Reed for sharing the results of his research with me.

⁷⁹Carson, Moo, and Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 33.

Matthew."⁸⁰ For support Stein cites Joseph Tyson's and Thomas Longstaff's *Synoptic Abstracts*.⁸¹ Clearly the divergence of figures here—51%, 77%, 38%, 97%—suggests that something is awry. Taking the highest of these, Reed shows that Stein's figure is far too high and is based on a dubious interpretation of Tyson and Longstaff.

⁸⁰Stein, *Synoptic Problem* 48.

⁸¹Joseph Tyson and Thomas Longstaff, *Synoptic Abstracts*, *The Computer Bible* 15 (Wooster, Ohio: College of Wooster, 1978).

Tyson and Longstaff analyze the synoptics with computers for verbal agreement using three different criteria.⁸² The first is *continuity*. This means "strict verbal agreement of at least two consecutive words between parallel pericopes." Using this criterion, 3,512 of Mark's 11,025 words agree with Matthew.⁸³ Thus 32% of Mark agrees with Matthew. A second, more generous criterion is what Tyson and Longstaff call *identity*. This is defined as "strict agreement of words, but without the requirement that any of the words have to be consecutive." Using this method, 40% of Mark's words agree with Matthew. A third criterion is *equivalency*. This "calls for only the root or the meaning of two words to be in agreement within parallel pericopes."

Applied to all of Mark, adding the similarities found by computer search based on all three criteria, 5,357 of Mark's 11,025 words have verbal agreement with Matthew. This is a 49% parallel between Mark and Matthew.

Reed shows that when Stein cites Tyson and Longstaff, he appears to base his 97.2% figure on the observation that "[o]f the 11,025 words found in Mark, only 304 have no parallel in Matthew."⁸⁴ This means that 10,721 are parallel; Stein appears to be reasoning that 10,721 divided by 11,025 is 97.2%. The math here is correct, but he has gone beyond what Tyson and Longstaff themselves arrive at, which is 49%.⁸⁵ Reed comments, "The problem is further compounded when others . . . quote his interpretation of the data in their writings." And in a surprisingly positive assessment of Linnemann, given criticisms recounted elsewhere in this paper, Reed concludes,

. . . Linnemann claims that the parallelism found between Mark and Matthew is 55.25 percent. She also writes that 40.32 percent of the words of Mark have exact verbal agreement [with parallel passages in Matthew]. But she goes on to give a reasonably detailed explanation of the method she has used to arrive at these statistics. Her willingness to include a description of her method adds to the credibility of her claims. It is interesting to note how closely her results, produced by observation and tedious hand calculations, agree with the computer generated results of [Tyson and Longstaff's] *Synoptic Abstract*.

⁸²Ibid., 11.

⁸³Ibid., 170.

⁸⁴Stein, *Synoptic Problem* 48.

⁸⁵Tyson and Longstaff, *Synoptic Abstracts* 75, 170.

It seems fair to agree with reviewers that Linnemann's work is hampered by the same restrictions inherent in all purely statistical approaches. But it seems equally important to bear in mind that the suggestion that her statistics are wildly improbable or misleading appears to be one-sided.

(5) Two final criticisms of Linnemann need to be assessed. Previous discussion has already touched on one of them: her specific positive proposal, based on Irenaus's statements about Peter in the A.D. 60s, is unconvincing. It is important to note this. But it is equally important to point out that no single positive proposal explaining the data of gospel origins has yet found universal acceptance. Even Reimarus (who proposed greed for financial gain as the historical explanation for apostolic claims) and Strauss (who proposed naive mythological forms of perception and expression), rightly hailed as leaders in the historical-critical tradition, find few to no followers of their specific positive proposals today. What they contributed was the destruction of prior certainties, not the establishment of more lasting ones. With this in mind, one can say that Linnemann's central argument—that the synoptics can be explained on historical and not merely literary grounds—might still merit serious consideration in spite of the weaknesses of her last few chapters. Parts of her other sections may bring about a constructive destabilization of prior but dubious certainties. It is up to others to make constructive use of them if this is possible.

(6) And finally, Kloppenborg makes much of Linnemann's failure to factor in "the virtual avalanche of literature on the synoptic problem."⁸⁶ This is undoubtedly a weakness. Yet the German university textbooks that Linnemann worked with likewise fail to show familiarity with this avalanche. Helmut Koester, for example, in his section on literary criticism of the gospels, notes only studies by Holtzmann, Wellhausen, Streeter, Lehmann, Farmer, and Stoldt.⁸⁷ The work of Streeter, Farmer, and Stoldt he ignores, unless he includes them in his remark that strong objections continue to be raised against "the Two Source Hypothesis," which he presents as "the most widely accepted solution of the Synoptic Problem." In other words, Linnemann is far from alone in doing her work in isolation from other important strands of research.

Like Kloppenborg, this writer is uncomfortable with Linnemann's bibliographical myopia, and it is true that she invites suspicion by not presenting her views in close enough interaction with a broader spectrum of thinkers. But given the studies she has chosen to respond to, her work is hardly more restricted in focus than theirs.

One thinks here of Otto Betz's critique of the Jesus Seminar: "In view of [their] unfounded presuppositions and the homogeneity that these forced presuppositions impose on the Fellows, the number of scholars [voting] doesn't amount to

⁸⁶Kloppenborg, *Critical Review* 264.

⁸⁷Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, volume 2: *History and Literature of Early Christianity* (Philadelphia, Berlin and New York: Fortress/Walter de Gruyter, 1980) 43-45.

much in the end: even with 400 participants the Seminar's findings would hardly look any different."⁸⁸ Linnemann ignores a sizable bloc of synoptic discussion because in the end, it amounts to a single shout of acclaim for literary dependence, which is the very premise that she wants to isolate and call into question. If one should not ridicule Koester (or Bultmann, whose work typically showed the same tendency) for failing to do bibliographical justice to those segments of the community of scholarship that do not agree with his line of thinking, neither should she/he write off Linnemann for mirroring the limited scope of the textbook examples she analyzes.⁸⁹

CONCLUSION

This article began by noting Bray's argument that Historical Criticism no longer enjoys its former monopoly status and is being supplanted by at least two other broad and rival forms of intellectually viable analysis. Linnemann's work is symptomatic of the current ferment. Of the criticisms lodged against her, some of them stick. Others lack cogency. She is not a foe of scholarship, it appears, unless that scholarship is unprepared to question its basic premises where this is warranted. But then in what sense is it scholarship?

Her work as exemplified in her first two post-conversion books is not a model of scholarly disquisition due to its (in places) sermonic form, abrasive tone, and failure to take account of other literature. On the other hand, sermons are sometimes needed where they are not desired. What she seeks to prove—that the synoptics are not literarily interdependent—may turn out to be unprovable using statistics alone, or indeed by any means whatsoever. Yet it is notoriously difficult, in many instances, to furnish positive proof for or against anything that is not and never was true. She may be regarded as a friend of scholarship in terms of the industry, tenacity, and intensity with which she has expended impressive labor in hope of shedding light on a crucial area of inquiry; in her zeal for truth; in her creativity, originality, fearlessness, and sharpness in analysis; and in her willingness to change her mind (humility) after finding herself fundamentally mistaken at the

⁸⁸Review of R. W. Funk and Roy Hoover, *The Five Gospels*, *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 119/11 (1994):989.

⁸⁹In private conversation, Linnemann defends her practice here by noting that it amounts an *ad fontes* focus. The problem she wrestles with is that the synoptics are read through the lenses of secondary literature based on dubious assumptions. She attempts to analyze the primary literature, first of all, not to wade into the turbulent, and turbid, waters of secondary discussion.

very core of her outlook.

Article output subsequent to her two post-conversion books shows that her work continues to exhibit the strengths just mentioned—and fewer of the weaknesses. It is ironic, and perhaps symptomatic of the troubled state of criticisms of all stripes at the moment, that precisely in an age of tolerance and recognition of the legitimacy of women's voice in biblical scholarship, some have been so quick to stigmatize a female intelligence praised so highly⁹⁰ when it served the furtherance of historical-critical assumptions and results.⁹¹

⁹⁰Her two published doctoral dissertations were accorded critical acclaim. The first of these, *Jesus of the Parables* (New York/Evanston: Harper & Row, 1966), continues in widespread use.

⁹¹My thanks to Steve Kline and to the New Testament Colloquium of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for constructive comments on this paper.

THE MISSION OF ISRAEL AND OF THE MESSIAH IN THE PLAN OF GOD¹

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God placed human beings, including the Messiah and the people of Israel, in His creation to fulfill a mission. The four Servant Songs of Isaiah (42:1-9; 49:1-13; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12) summarize the mission of the Messiah as coming in two phases: a period of lowliness at the end of which He would die for the sins of His people and rise from the dead and a period of exaltation during which He would restore Israel's land and provide salvation to all peoples. Features of the Servant's first phase identify Him clearly as Jesus of Nazareth, with His second phase receiving full development in Daniel 7 as explained in Revelation. The mission of Israel has marked similarities to that of the Messiah, for example, the responsibility of witnessing to the nations. Israel has failed in her mission, however, and awaits a future restoration before she can fulfill her mission. That will come in her future kingdom when the Messiah returns. Israel also has a significant mission during the present age, illustrated by Jewish authorship of all but two of the NT books. Yet she is not presently fulfilling OT prophecies of her future role in the kingdom. The ultimate mission of all peoples will receive fulfillment in the new Jerusalem when they enjoy personal fellowship with God in bringing glory to Him.

* * * * *

God has a plan for this world. As a personal Creator of all things, He had a goal in making the universe and planet earth the way He made them. Human beings He put into the world play a vital part in achieving His goal for the world. He has assigned them a mission to execute.

¹This essay will appear as a chapter in *Israel: the Land and the People* which is scheduled for release by Kregel during the fall of 1997.

In particular, it is God's servant who has the task of carrying out the mission of God. Scripture applies the words "My servant"² to ten individuals and one corporate body.³ One of the individuals referred to by this title is God's Servant,⁴ the Messiah. His mission is paramount in the fulfillment of God's plan. Another primary participant in God's program is God's corporate servant Israel. The present discussion will focus on the mission of these two in implementing the plan of God.

THE MISSION OF THE MESSIAH

Of special interest are references to God's Servant in the "Servant Songs" in Isaiah's prophecy. The prophet records the four songs in 42:1-9;⁵ 49:1-13;⁶ 50:4-

²English translations of biblical expressions and texts in this article come from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise indicated.

³The individuals receiving the designation "My servant" include Abraham (Gen 26:24); Moses (Num 12:7, 8; Josh. 1:2, 7; 2 Kgs 21:8; Mal 4:4); Caleb (Num 14:24); David (2 Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8; 1 Kgs 11:32, 34, 36, 38; 14:8; 2 Kgs 19:34; 20:6; 1 Chr 17:4, 7; Ps 89:3; Isa 37:35; Jer 33:21, 22, 26; Ezek 34:23, 24; 37:24, 25); Job (Job 1:8; 2:3; 42:7, 8); Eliakim (Isa 22:20); the Servant of the LORD (Isa 42:1; 49:6; 52:13; 53:11; Zech 3:8; Matt 12:18); Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 25:9; 27:6; 43:10); Zerubbabel (Hag 2:23); Christ's follower (John 12:26). The people of Israel (or Jacob) compose the corporate body that God calls "My servant" (Isa 41:8, 9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21, 26; 45:4; 48:20; Jer 30:10; 46:27, 28; Ezek 28:25; 37:25).

⁴This essay will capitalize the first letter—i.e., "Servant"—whenever the term applies to God's Servant, the Messiah, and will leave all other references to a servant in a lower case letters.

⁵Claus Westermann (*Isaiah 40–66, A Commentary*, trans. David M. G. Stalker [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969] 92) limits the first Servant Song to 42:1-4. He considers 42:5-9 to be a later addition to the song (101), but does so without convincing evidence.

11;⁷ 52:13–53:12.

The First Servant Song (Isa 42:1-9)

⁶Westermann limits the second Servant Song to 49:1-6 (ibid., 206-7). He considers 49:7 ff. to be a later addition to the song (213), but does so without convincing evidence.

⁷Westermann limits the third Servant Song to 50:4-9 (ibid., 225-26). He considers 50:10-11 to be a later addition to the song (233), but does so without convincing evidence.

It is God who speaks in the first song. Westermann points out how Isaiah 42:1 relates to the Servant's God-given mission: "The first words [i.e., 'Behold, My Servant' or 'This is My Servant'] plainly describe a designation. This means that someone with the right so to do designates or appoints someone else to perform a task or to hold an office."⁸ He notes three descriptions of the Servant's task in the first song: to bring forth justice to the nations (v. 1c), to bring forth justice in truth (v. 3c), and to establish justice in the earth (v. 4b).⁹ To Westermann's list of tasks, the Servant's appointment as a covenant to the people¹⁰ and a light to the nations¹¹ (6cd) is an additional responsibility. Westermann's three tasks interpret "justice" as having a special meaning in the context of Isaiah's prophecy, that of refuting the claim of Gentile gods that they are deity, because the LORD alone is God.¹² The Servant's task is to spread this message worldwide. That is the illumination He must bring to all mankind. A further mission He is to fulfil comes out in 42:3ab where the figurative language tells of the comfort and encouragement he will bring to the weak and oppressed. In addition, He will during His earthly reign replace Israel's spiritual blindness with clear vision and restore her captives to freedom (42:7; cf. Isa 29:18; 32:3; 35:5; 61:1).

One feature of the first song that renders improbable the identification of the Servant as corporate Israel lies in 42:3-4. The picture of gentleness and patience in v. 3 and of the absence of hesitation or discouragement in v. 4 is inapplicable to the nation as a group in fulfillment of her mission of bringing justice and light to the nations (cf. Isaiah 41).¹³

The Second Servant Song (Isa 49:1-13)

In the second song, the Servant speaks. That song includes other tasks for the Servant: bringing Jacob back to God (49:5b), restoring the preserved ones of Israel (49:6b), serving as a light to the nations so as to extend the LORD's salvation to earth's extremities (49:6cd), and functioning as a covenant of the people Israel to restore the land (49:8cd) and release the captives (49:9ab). The return of captives will be much more miraculous than the exodus from Egypt under Moses. Though not directly stated, the Servant's task through all this activity is also to glorify the one true God (49:3). Thus the broader scope of the Servant's office extends to the Gentile world as a whole, though its

⁸Ibid., 93.

⁹Ibid., 95.

¹⁰Le., He embodies the blessings of salvation promised to God's people Israel.

¹¹Le., the Servant will use Israel to shine and enlighten all nations when He reigns in His kingdom (49:6; cf. Isa 19:24).

¹²Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* 95.

¹³Allan A. MacRae, *The Gospel of Isaiah* (Chicago: Moody, 1977) 69-70.

immediate scope aims at Israel and bringing her back to God.¹⁴ In the accomplishment of these tasks, the Servant must endure humiliating treatment that will for the moment appear to doom His mission to failure (49:4ab, 7bc), but He will eventually reign as the supreme ruler throughout the earth because of the LORD's blessing upon Him (49:4cd, 7efg).

¹⁴Cf. *ibid.*, 212.

The survey of the Servant Songs has thus far assumed the Servant's identity as an individual person. In the second song, however, that simple identification is insufficient because the prophet specifically identifies "My servant" as Israel (49:3a). Identification of the servant as corporate Israel has strong attestation elsewhere in Isaiah and the OT (e.g., Isa 41:8, 9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21, 26; 45:4; 48:20; Jer 30:10; 46:27, 28; Ezek 28:25; 37:25).

God affirms His choice of the nation frequently (e.g., Isa 41:8, 9; 43:10; 44:1, 2; 45:4). Yet spiritual blindness and deafness have beset God's servant Israel (Isa 42:19), causing her to turn her back on the LORD. Nevertheless, He will not forget her (Isa 44:21), but will eventually after a period of chastening (Jer 30:11de; 46:28fg) redeem her and install her as the head of all peoples (Isa 44:26; 48:20d; Jer 30:10-11c; 46:27-28e; Ezek 28:25; 37:25¹⁵).

Identifying the Servant as a single person is also necessary in some passages in the Servant Songs especially.¹⁶ In this connection, Hugenberger comments,

[A]lthough surrounded by texts that refer to corporate Israel as a servant, the servant of the servant songs, who innocently and obediently suffers for the transgression of the people (53:4-12) and who brings salvation to the Gentiles and restores Jacob/Israel to Yahweh (49:5-6), is not to be equated with corporate Israel. By allowing him to share the servant designation of corporate Israel, however, and in one verse even the name 'Israel' (49:3), the prophet may be suggesting that this one is everything Israel should have been as he faithfully fulfills the role to which Israel

¹⁵Ezekiel 37:22-25 is also a recognized Messianic text in its reference to "My servant David" and His future reign (cf. Daniel I. Block, "Bringing Back David: Ezekiel's Messianic Hope," in *The Lord's Anointed, Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, Philip E. Satterthwaite, Richard S. Hess, and Gordon J. Wenham, eds. [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995] 177-83). It speaks of the future reign of David's descendent over Israel in fulfillment of the promise to King David in 2 Samuel 7.

¹⁶The fourth Servant Song (52:13-53:12) in particular must refer to an individual. Various attempts to apply it to Jeremiah, Isaiah himself, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Job have been fruitless because of the many discrepancies between any of these individuals and the Servant described in that song. A generally accepted interpretation among Jewish people applies the song to the Jewish nation, a view dating at least as far back as Origen (David Baron, *The Servant of Jehovah: The Sufferings of the Messiah and the Glory That Should Follow, An Exposition of Isaiah LIII* [London: Morgan & Scott, n.d.] 18). Baron suggest three reasons for this interpretation: the repugnancy to Rabbinic Judaism of a suffering, expiatory Messiah, the inability to reconcile this picture of the Messiah with one of His coming in power and glory, and the impression that the Jewish nation through the centuries has been the innocent sufferer for the guilt of the other nations (18-20). According to the figurative interpretation of the fourth song that sees a reference to corporate Israel, the death of the servant is Israel's suffering and captivity which results in benefit to the rest of the world, but that suffering is hardly vicarious and does nothing to mediate between God and man (39; cf. Gordon P. Hugenberger, "The Servant of the Lord in the 'Servant Songs' of Isaiah: A Second Moses Figure," in *The Lord's Anointed* 108). That suffering was the penalty for Israel's own sins. Neither has the nation suffered voluntarily or without resistance as this Servant has (Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 42-44). Whenever Isaiah uses the servant in a collective sense, it is always with the addition of "Jacob" or "Israel" (Isa 41:8; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 48:20) or through use of plurals alongside the singular (e.g., 43:10-14; 48:20, 21) to indicate the corporate use (Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 45).

had been called.¹⁷

Baron suggests essentially the same:

¹⁷Hugenberger, "Servant of the Lord" 111.

Here [i.e., in 49:3] God says to him “Thou art My servant, O Israel” (or “Thou art Israel”). He is invested with the name of Israel because He, “as Israel’s inmost centre, as Israel’s highest head,” realizes the idea and carries out the mission to which the nation which had originally been *called* to the task of carrying out God’s saving purpose in relation to the world does not respond.¹⁸

In the second song, several features point to an individual. He will be a human being, conceived in and born from a mother’s womb (49:1bc).¹⁹ This distinguishes Him from the personified group of Israel. Other indications of individuality include God’s giving effect to the Servant’s word (49:2a) and keeping Him safe (42:2b) and the Servant’s regard for His work as a failure (42:4ab) with the realization that God nevertheless approves of it (42:4cd).²⁰ In particular, the individual Servant stands in bold contrast to the corporate servant in that the latter receives the redemption provided by the former (49:6ab).²¹ A further distinction lies in the moral perfection always attributed to the individual Servant as opposed to the shortcomings of corporate Israel (e.g., cp. 42:1-9 with 42:18-25).²²

Other reasons for concluding the Servant of the Servant Songs to be an individual emerge from the fourth song. The words, “He was cut off . . . for the transgression of my people” (53:8cd),²³ distinguish the Servant from

¹⁸Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 37.

¹⁹Isaiah has earlier spoken of Immanuel’s virgin birth (7:14).

²⁰Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66* 211.

²¹Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 37.

²²Hugenberger (“Servant of the Lord” 108) contrasts the sinlessness of the Servant (50:5; 53:9) with the sinfulness of Israel (40:2; 42:18-25; 43:22-28; 47:7; 48:18 f.; 50:1; 54:7; 57:17; 59:2 ff.; cf. also 43:22; 46:3, 12; 48:1, 8; 53:6, 8; 55:7; 58:1 ff; 63:17; 64:5-7). He also lists four passages that distinguish the Servant from the repentant remnant of Israel: Isa 42:3, 6; 49:8; 53:8 (109).

²³According to Zech 3:8-9, “My Servant the Branch . . . will remove the iniquity of that land in one

“my people,” who can hardly be other than the people of Israel.²⁴ Further, the subject of chapter 53 is an innocent sufferer (v. 9cd) who suffers for the guilt of others (v. 4), He is a *voluntary* sufferer (v. 12), an *unresisting* sufferer (v. 7), and His sufferings ended in death (vv. 8c, 9b, 12c).²⁵ None of these is applicable to a body of people.

day.”

²⁴MacRae, *The Gospel of Isaiah* 141.

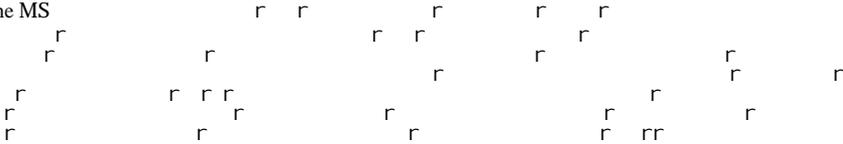
²⁵Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 38.

In spite of the differences, however, a unity binds the individual Servant to the corporate servant. That is what emerges in Isa 49:3. Through the Servant's redemptive work on behalf of the nation (cf. Isa 53:6), the nation will eventually be one with Him and thereby glorify the LORD. When the LORD says to the Servant, "You are My Servant, Israel" (Isa 49:3), He views the unification that will eventually occur during the Messiah-Servant's reign upon the earth. The Servant will become a light to all the nations, extending His salvation to all (Isa 49:6cd) and will use the nation to bring the nations to God (cf. Isa 19:24). At that point the mission of the Messiah and that of Israel will coincide.²⁶

The Third Servant Song (Isa 50:4-11)

The Servant's soliloquy about being perfected through sufferings comprises the third Servant Song (Isa 50:4-11). His task resembles the commission to Jeremiah the prophet, that of listening as a disciple and that of teaching as a disciple (Isa 50:4a, 4d with Jer 15:16; 18:20).²⁷ Of interest is the absence of the term *ʿebed* ("Servant") from this song. *limmud* ("disciple") replaces it. Everywhere else in the OT *limmud* designates a disciple of some human teacher (e.g., Isa 8:16), but here the Servant is a disciple of God in a direct sense.²⁸ His mission as a disciple also entails His obedience to God (50:5). "Opening the ear" is a figure of speech to denote obedience as in Psalm 40:6-8 (cf. Phil 2:8; Heb 5:8; 10:5-7).

²⁶The assigning of the name "Israel" to the servant in 49:3 has provoked much discussion. Westermann gives four reasons for suggesting it is a later addition to the text: (1) "Israel" is absent from one MS



²⁷Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* 227.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 229.

The Servant's unwavering obedience to God's will is an aspect of His moral perfection.

An additional task this song assigns to the Servant one that His obedient spirit necessitates is that of being persecuted, submitting Himself to cruel treatment by His enemies (50:6). Though some might construe v. 6 as implying the attacks, blows, and insults against the Servant as justifiable, with God on the side of His opponents,²⁹ the ultimate explanation lies in the plan of God for His Servant to experience this type of treatment (cf. Isa 53:10; Acts 2:23).

²⁹Ibid., 230.

The close of the third Servant Song offers encouragement to those who fear the LORD and obey the voice of His Servant (50:10) and proclaims judgment against perpetrators of injustice (50:11). Of particular help in identifying the Servant in v. 10 is the parallelism of the verse's first two lines. Obeying the voice of God's servant is inseparable from fearing the LORD because the LORD has made His Servant's mouth as a sharp sword (cf. Isa 49:2). This factor renders it difficult to comprehend how the Servant could be the nation Israel or the best part thereof. The Servant stands in an absolutely unique relationship to God,³⁰ at least raising the possibility, if not requiring that the Servant be deity.

The Fourth Servant Song (Isa 52:13 53:12)

The fourth Servant Song speaks of the Servant in the third person and divides into three parts (52:13-15; 53:1-9, 10-12), the first and third of which speak of His humiliation and exaltation and the second of His humiliation only. The first section summarizes the whole song by speaking briefly of the Messiah's sufferings and glory. The second is the lament and confession of penitent Israel in the future, and the third tells of the fruit of His sufferings and His subsequent exaltation.³¹ The fourth song corresponds to the first song (42:1 ff.) by giving the culmination of the Servant's work as that earlier song shows His work's origin i.e., His appointment to the Servant's office.³²

³⁰Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 3:303-4.

³¹Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 51-52.

³²Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* 258.

Implied tasks of the Servant in 52:13-15 include prudent dealings³³ as an exalted world ruler (v. 13), enduring inhuman cruelty to the point of disfigurement beyond semblance to a human being (v. 14), and an unprecedented rise to leadership that will amaze all the world (v. 15).³⁴ In the process of rising to the forefront He will “sprinkle many nations” (v. 15a), i.e., perform the priestly work of cleansing not only Israel, but many outside the nation.³⁵

³³I.e., He will act wisely in fulfilling the task entrusted to Him (Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 56). This contrasts with servant Israel’s unwise dealings in failing to fulfil her mission.

³⁴Edward J. Young unfortunately limits the exaltation of the Servant in 52:13, 15 to Christ’s first coming—His resurrection, His ascension, and His session at the Father’s right hand—and refers the shutting of the mouths of kings to their amazement regarding His saving work (*Isaiah Fifty-Three, A Devotional and Expository Study* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952] 12, 20-21). Yet the earlier context of Isaiah 52 speaks of Israel returning from exile (cf. George A. F. Knight, *Servant Theology, A Commentary on the Book of Isaiah 40–55*, International Theological Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984] 164-65). This factor locates the scene of the Servant’s exaltation on earth rather than in heaven, necessitating a reference to His second advent rather than His resurrection and ascension. Young’s explanation is typical of covenantalists who are willing to understand prophecies of Messiah’s first advent—i.e., His sufferings and substitutionary death—in a literal way, but back away from a literal interpretation of those related to His earthly rule during a future kingdom.

³⁵Young, *Book of Isaiah* 3:338-39.

In the second part of the fourth song (53:1-9), the speakers are those who confess that their guilt has caused the Servant's suffering.³⁶ The first person plural pronouns represent the prophet speaking on behalf of Israel, and contrasted with the third person singular pronoun, distinguish between the Servant and Israel.³⁷ Their confession reflects the Servant's suffering as a substitute for themselves and the consequent change in themselves this realization has brought. So the clear mission of the Servant is substitutionary suffering for the sins of others (53:4-6, 8d). His entire life span has the mark of lowliness and suffering, lacking in beauty and outward appeal (53:2-3).³⁸ The confessors acknowledge their agreement with general public opinion about the Servant's being despised and smitten by God, but emphasize that the suffering of such a one empowers Him to be a substitute and to atone for their iniquities (53:4-6).

Following the confession of vv. 4-6, the report resumes from v. 3 and confirms earlier evidence from the second song that the Servant is an individual, not a corporate entity. Only an individual can be born (v. 3), suffer (v. 7a), die (v. 8c), and be buried (v. 9ab).³⁹ In particular, His burial with malefactors points to an individual rather than a group.⁴⁰ The wording of vv. 7-8a points to suffering at the hands of others in contrast to vv. 4-6

³⁶Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* 257, 263-64. The tenses in the second part of the fourth song are "perfects, the future being regarded prophetically as already past" (Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 67).

³⁷Hugenberger, "Servant of the Lord" 110.

³⁸The inconspicuous beginning of the Servant, the "tender plant," alludes to the decayed stump of Jesse of Isa 11:1. After the "proud cedar" of David's monarchy fell in that earlier Messianic prophecy, a strong vigorous shoot proceeded from the root. In Isaiah 53, however, it is a frail "tender twig" that struggles from the ground. The passage here speaks of His sufferings and rejection while Isaiah 11 tells of His future reign and exaltation (Baron, *Servant of Jehovah* 70-71).

³⁹Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* 264. Some advocates of a corporate identification of the Servant point out that the prophet speaks of the nation as being born in Isa 44:2, 24, thereby claiming to nullify part of this argument for an individual identity (cf. Hugenberger, "Servant of the Lord" 107-8).

⁴⁰Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* 266.

Summary of the Servant Songs

The following summarizes various facets of the Messiah-Servant's mission as reflected in the Servant Songs' direct and indirect statements about the role He is to fulfil. That mission falls into two rather distinct phases.

Phase 1. Lowliness and suffering will mark His entire life, depriving Him of attractiveness and outward appeal (53:2-3). Yet He will bring comfort and encouragement to the weak and oppressed (42:3ab). He will listen as a disciple and teach as a disciple. He will obey God with an unwavering obedience that marks His moral perfection (50:5). Because of His obedience to God, He must endure persecution and cruel treatment at the hands of His enemies (50:6). Humiliating treatment will for the moment appear to doom His mission to failure (49:4ab, 7bc). His persecution will be so violent that it disfigures His outward appearance to the point of making Him unrecognizable as a human being (52:14).

He will die from such ill treatment, not because of any fault of His own (53:9cd), but because of the sins of His people (53:8d). He will die as their substitute to atone for their iniquities (53:4-6, 8d). General opinion of people will be that God despised and struck Him with these harsh measures (53:4cd), but this is not so. It happened because God planned for Him to die thus (53:10abc). Through His death He will accomplish the priestly work of cleansing Israel as well as many other nations (52:15a). But it is also God's plan for Him to rise from the dead, thereby prolonging His days with a life after death that is satisfying (53:10e-11b).

Phase 2. The Servant's appointment as a covenant to the people of Israel (42:6c; 49:8c) elaborates on His prolonged life. He will restore Israel's land (49:8d) and release her captives (49:9ab). He will replace her spiritual blindness with clear vision when He gives her captives their freedom (42:7).

His dealings with Israel will be a means toward a further goal, that of bringing light to the nations (42:6d; 49:6c) and sending the LORD's salvation to earth's extremities (49:6d). He will establish justice in truth throughout the earth (42:1c, 3c, 4b), impressing all mankind with the truth that the LORD alone is God. He will reign as supreme ruler over the world because of the LORD's blessing on Him (49:4cd, 7efg). Prudent dealings will mark His reign (52:13), following a rise to leadership that will amaze all people (52:15). He will share a portion with the great and booty with the strong (53:11c-12).

Through all of this, His mission is to glorify the one true God (49:3).

Identification of the Servant

The Servant of the Servant Songs possesses characteristics that no individual in OT history can fulfil. Also, it is impossible to identify the Servant of the songs with corporate Israel for reasons already stated.⁴⁴ His unique relationship to God poses the possibility of His equality with God (Isa

⁴⁴Cf. Hugenberger, "Servant of the Lord" 106-19.

50:10), distinguishing Him from every other person who has ever lived. The only possible identification is the promised Messiah of Israel who was in Isaiah's time still to come. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth perfectly fit Isaiah's portrayal of *Phase 1* of that Servant's mission.

New Testament writers frequently capitalize on the accuracy of that identification. The first gospel notes the fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1a in Christ at His baptism (Matt 3:16-17) and transfiguration (Matt 17:5). All four gospels observe the fulfillment of Isaiah 50:6 in the ill-treatment of Christ during His trial (Matt 26:67; 27:26, 30; Mark 14:65; 15:19; Luke 22:63; John 18:22). Luke speaks of the resoluteness of Christ to complete His mission (Luke 9:51), as does Isaiah 50:7. John 12:38 ties Israel's failure to recognize her Messiah with Isaiah 53:1. Philip identifies Jesus as the one about whom Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 53:7-8 (Acts 8:32-33). All four gospel writers recorded the silence of Jesus throughout His trial (Matt 26:63; 27:12-14; Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9; John 19:9; cf. 1 Pet 2:23) just as Isaiah predicted regarding the Servant (Isa 53:7). Several NT writers focus on Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah 53:7 when they call Him the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 5:6). Nor does the complete innocence of the Servant (Isa 53:9) escape the notice of Peter (1 Pet 2:22). Isaiah's prediction of the Servant's crucifixion with wicked men (Isa 53:12) also matches with Jesus' death according to Luke's description (Luke 22:37).

Such literal fulfillments of prophecies about *Phase 1* of the Servant's mission leads inevitably to the expectation that prophecies about *Phase 2* of His mission will receive that type of fulfillment also. The Servant at His second advent will serve in the precise manner that Isaiah predicted He would.

Further Explanation of Phase 2 of the Servant's Mission

Daniel 7 is a passage that, among others, furnishes specifics regarding *Phase 2* of the Messiah-Servant's mission. Daniel had a vision of a sea stirred up by the four winds of heaven and four large beasts emerging from it, the first resembling a lion with an eagle's wings, the second like a bear with three ribs in its mouth, the third like a leopard with four bird-wings from its back and four heads, and the fourth different from the other three and having ten horns (Dan 7:2-8). As the vision continued, the next scene before him featured a blindingly brilliant picture of the Ancient of Days (i.e., God the Father⁴⁵) upon His throne with His surrounding retinue (Dan 7:9-10).

Daniel next witnessed the slaying of the fourth beast and the divesting of dominion from the rest of the beasts (Dan 7:11-12). At that point the Son of Man⁴⁶ came with the clouds of heaven approached the Ancient of Days

⁴⁵John F. Walvoord, *Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971) 164.

⁴⁶I.e., God the Son. The suggestion of J. A. Montgomery (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ICC [New York: Scribner's, 1927] 319) that the son of man is a personification of the Jewish nation (cf. Dan. 7:7: 22, 27) is untenable, because Dan 7:21-22 distinguishes between the saints and the Son of Man. On earth they suffer defeat at the hands of the horn before receiving the kingdom

and received dominion over all peoples, a kingdom that would never end (Dan 7:13-14). All this troubled Daniel, so he asked for an interpretation of what the vision meant. He learned that the large beasts represented four kings (or kingdoms i.e., Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome⁴⁷) that were to arise from the earth, but that the saints⁴⁸ would eventually possess the kingdom forever (Dan 7:15-18). Daniel then asked for further clarification regarding the fourth beast and regarding the ten horns and the horn that came up among them, uprooting three of the horns. He saw that last horn warring against the saints until the arrival of the Ancient of Days to deliver the saints

(7:21-22), but in heaven the Son receives power to rule the whole earth without any prior warfare (Dan 7:13-14; Archer, "Daniel," in vol 7. of *EBC*, Frank E. Gaebelien, gen. ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985] 90). Note also that the followers of the Son of Man are "the saints, the people of the Most High," indicating the equivalence of the Son of Man with the Most High. The plural "saints" compared with the singular "Him" in the final clause of 7:27 further eliminates the possibility of identifying the nation of saints with the Song of Man (ibid., 94-95). Jesus Himself appears to be the one who connected the Son of Man with the Servant of Isaiah's Servant Songs. He did so in such passages as Mark 10:45: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992] 154).

⁴⁷Cf. E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 143-47, 275-94.

⁴⁸"The saints" can be none other than God-fearing Jews, as Robert D. Culver describes: "The 'saints' I hold to be no different from 'the people of the saints' [Dan. 7:27] in the passage before us. . . . They are the Israelites of the end time who will at last inherit the kingdom of David with Christ Himself reigning as their king" (*Daniel and the Latter Days* [Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1954] 128, cf. 132-34; cf. A. C. Gaebelien, *The Prophet Daniel*, 17th ed. [New York: Our Hope, 1911] 80). Surprisingly, Walvoord sees the saints to be "the saved of all ages as well as the holy angels which may be described as 'the holy ones'" (*Daniel* 172), but this interprets the term anachronistically insofar as its referring to saints of all ages, and in its inclusion of angels, it cannot explain the expression "the people of the saints" in 7:27.

and give them the kingdom (Dan 7:19-22). The continuing explanation to him divulged that the fourth beast would be a fourth kingdom that would subdue the whole earth and that the ten horns would be ten kings within that kingdom. The additional horn would be a king who conquers three others and will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints, being permitted to change things his way for three and a half years (Dan 7:23-25).

But he will have his dominion removed, and control over the world will pass to the people of the saints of the Most High. The kingdom of the Most High will continue forever, with all His subjects serving and obeying Him (Dan 7:26-27).

A convenient way to survey Daniel 7 is through the eyes of John's Apocalypse, the last book of the Bible that alludes to Daniel 7 over thirty times.⁴⁹ In fact, the purpose of the entire Apocalypse is to develop a phrase derived from Daniel 2: "things that must happen soon" (Rev 1:1; cf. Dan 2:28[LXX]; cf. also 2:29, 45).⁵⁰ Since Daniel 2, like Daniel 7, looks forward to the crushing and displacement of the kingdom of Rome by the kingdom of God, the two chapters speak of the rise and fall of the same four empires and the collapse of the last with the arrival of the Messianic Son of Man.⁵¹

Revelation as a further detailing of Daniel 7's prophecy, then, provides helpful insights.

Like both Daniel 2 and Daniel 7, the Apocalypse describes the outworking of God's program instituting the everlasting kingdom that will replace other earthly, temporary kingdoms. "The things that must happen" (Rev 1:1) comprise steps in the development of that program. That is part of the mission of the Messiah. Revelation uses the title "Son of Man" from Daniel 7:13 to designate the Messiah (Rev 1:13; 14:14) and describes Him in terms similar to those speaking of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 (Rev 1:14). The numbering of the throngs of angels around the heavenly throne in Revelation 5:11 has its origin in Daniel 7:10. The four winds of the earth

⁴⁹Eugene H. Merrill, "Daniel as a Contribution to Kingdom Theology," in *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, Stanley D. Toussaint and Charles H. Dyer, eds. (Chicago: Moody, 1986) 222-23; cf. G. K. Beale, "The Influence of Daniel upon the Structure and Theology of John's Apocalypse," *JETS* 27, no. 4 (December 1984): 419 n. 31; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22, An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995) 555 n. 40.

⁵⁰Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7, An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1992) 53.

⁵¹Merrill, "Daniel as a Contribution" 222-23; Walvoord, *Daniel* 146, 153. Revelation alludes to Daniel 2 over ten times (Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* 553 n. 32). Gleason L. Archer, Jr., writes, "Chapter 7 parallels chapter 2; both set forth the four empires, followed by the complete overthrow of all ungodly resistance, as the final (fifth) kingdom is established on earth to enforce the standards of God's righteousness. The winged lion corresponds to the golden head of the dream image (ch. 2); the ravenous bear to its arms and chest; the swift leopard to its belly and thighs; the fearsome ten-horned beast to its legs and feet. Lastly, the stone cut out without hands that in chapter 2 demolishes the dream image has its counterpart in the glorified Son of Man, who is installed as Lord over all the earth. But chapter 7 tells us something chapter 2 does not—viz., that the Messiah himself will head the final kingdom of righteousness" ("Daniel" 85).

held by angels in Revelation 7:1 derive from the four winds of heaven in Daniel 7:2. The warfare of the beast against the saints and victory over them are subjects in Daniel 7:21 and Revelation 11:7 (cf. also Rev 13:7). Rulership of the Son of Man over a worldwide kingdom in Daniel 7:14, 27 finds further development in Revelation 11:15. Revelation 12:3 refers to ten horns of the beast as do Daniel 7:7, 20, 24 (cf. also Rev 13:1; 17:12). The beast's persecution of the woman in Revelation 12:13 is an elaboration of his wearing down of the saints in Daniel 7:25. The picture of the beast emerging from the sea in Revelation 13:1 traces back to the emergence of beasts from the seas in Daniel 7:3 (cf. also Rev 11:7). The beast arising from the sea of Revelation 13:1 recalls the fourth beast that was different from the other three in Daniel 7:7. Revelation 13:2 likens that beast to a leopard, a bear, and a lion, comparisons that allude to the first three beasts of Daniel 7:4-6. The "mouth speaking great things and blasphemies" of Revelation 13:5 recalls the "mouth uttering great boasts" of Daniel 7:8, the "boastful words" of Daniel 7:11, and the "mouth uttering great boasts" of Daniel 7:20. The blasphemies of the beast in Revelation 13:6 allude to the little horn's speaking out against the Most High in Daniel 7:25. Revelation 19:20 tells of the beast's slaying and his casting into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, adding details to Daniel 7:11. Revelation 20:4 tells of the saints' possessing of the kingdom in following up Daniel 7:9, 22, 27. Daniel 7:10 briefly mentions the seating of the court for judgment, but Revelation 20:12 reveals more about the opening of the books for judgment. Revelation 22:5 tells of the eternal reign of the saints, an allusion to Daniel 7:18, 27.

The alignment of the Apocalypse with Daniel 7 at so many points underscores the fact that the last book of the Bible is a further detailing of *Phase 2* of the mission of the Messiah. First, He will inflict upon a rebellious world unparalleled wrath for seven years, at the beginning of which He delivers the body of Christ from the scene of that wrath. He then will initiate Israel's promised kingdom on earth for a thousand years and follow it with an everlasting kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth.

THE MISSION OF ISRAEL

As noted above, the OT refers to corporate Israel also as "My servant." In fact, "Israel" or "Jacob" is the only name given for "My servant" (Isa 41:8; 44:1-2; 45:4), since the text never assigns a name to the Servant individual except in the special occurrence of Isaiah 49:3. Many statements about the Messiah-Servant also apply to Israel as God's servant.

For example, God has chosen both and upheld both with His right hand (Isa 41:10; 42:1, 6; 43:10; 44:1). He has called both to be His witnesses to the nations (42:6; 43:10, 21; 49:3, 6; 60:3).⁵² So the Servant and the servant relate closely to each other.

⁵²Wright, *Knowing Jesus* 158-59.

In the context of Isaiah 43:10, corporate Israel receives the charge to witness to the accuracy of God's prophecies. Since the gods of the surrounding nations could not match His predictive feats (43:9, 12), Israel is to bear testimony to this fact (43:12). This she will do in her promised future kingdom under the Messiah's leadership.

The servant Israel is to function as the LORD's messengers proclaiming the bright days ahead for the nation (44:25-26). A further part of Israel's mission is to manifest God's holiness in the sight of the nations (Ezek 28:25).

The international scope of the servant's mission to all peoples is quite clear. That goal is evident from the very beginning of the nation, in God's promise (and commission) to Abraham that through his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen 12:3). God's choice of Israel was His way of dealing with mankind as a whole, meaning that as Israel fares, so fares the rest of mankind (cf. Rom 3:19). In a manner of speaking, Israel serves as God's "test-tube" for sampling the whole human race.

In contrast to the Messiah-Servant, however, God's servant Israel has defaulted in her mission. Isaiah 42:18-22, 24, for example, elaborates on the nation's disobedience and failure. This reflects a definite discontinuity and distinction from the Servant whose character and mission are described in vv. 1-9 of the same chapter.⁵³ Will the servant's ministry go unfulfilled, then?

⁵³Ibid., 159-61.

No, but Israel must undergo a spiritual restoration before she can resume her mission. How will that spiritual restoration come? It must come through the Messiah-Servant, a part of whose mission is to “bring back Jacob and gather Israel to Himself” (Isa 49:5).⁵⁴ The mission of the Servant to the rest of the world does not preclude His restoration of Israel; rather, His restoration of Israel furnishes the channel for bringing salvation to the nations (Isa 49:6). Though the Servant is distinct from Israel in His task of restoring her, He also identifies with Israel in enabling her to fulfil her original mission.⁵⁵ “The universal purpose of the election of Israel is to be achieved through the mission of the Servant.”⁵⁶ Ultimately, in Israel He will show forth His glory (Isa 49:3; 44:23).

When will the restoration of Israel come? It certainly did not come at the resurrection of Christ as Wright contends,⁵⁷ because subsequent to that event, His disciples asked about the yet unfulfilled restoration of Israel’s kingdom (Acts 1:6). Jesus did not deflect the disciples’ question,⁵⁸ nor did He correct it. The restoration of Israel was still future at that point. Under the guidance of the Spirit, Peter later invited his Jewish listeners to repent in order to bring about the (future) restoration of Israel (Acts 3:19-21). Later, in Romans 11:26-27 Paul prophesied about the future restoration of Israel.

Clearly, Israel is not fulfilling her mission today because she is still in a state of disobedience. She rejected her Messiah at His first advent and cannot function as His witness until a national repentance applies the benefits of His substitutionary atonement to the nation’s sins.

That repentance will come in conjunction with *Phase 2* of the Servant-Messiah’s mission. The mission of the servant Israel is in abeyance during this period while God is visiting all nations to call out a people for His name (Matt 28:19-20; Acts 15:14). The mission of the church during this interim period is separate from God’s mission for servant Israel.⁵⁹ God’s

⁵⁴Ibid., 161.

⁵⁵Ibid., 162.

⁵⁶Ibid., 163.

⁵⁷Ibid., 164, 167.

⁵⁸Contra *ibid.*, 167.

⁵⁹The next section of this article—“The Mission of Israel in the Present Age”—discusses the role of

purposes for the church were undisclosed during OT times (cf. Eph 3:4-7).

So Israel will fulfil her mission in the promised future kingdom. God has not rejected His servant (Isa 41:9). He will yet restore the nation to the role of being His witnesses to the nations (Isa 43:10).

the faithful remnant of Israel within the body of Christ. That “remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom 11:5) plays an important part in the church’s discharge of her mission during the present.

But He will do so in several steps after the church goes to be with the Lord Jesus in heaven. The seventieth week of Daniel 9 will immediately precede that kingdom. During the last three and a half years of that week, 144,000 Israelites will be God's major witnesses to the world.⁶⁰ Revelation 7:1-8 introduces these servants of God who are sealed on their foreheads to protect them from God's wrathful visitation against earth's rebels. They will bear the brunt of the dragon's anger while the bulk of believing Israelites find protection from that anger (Rev 12:17).⁶¹ In their faithful witness for Christ they will suffer martyrdom but subsequently will rise from the dead to join Christ on Mount Zion in His kingdom on earth (Rev 14:1-5). At some point near the end of that seventieth week, a great revival will come in Jerusalem (Rev 11:13), perhaps provoking the massive attack on Israel resulting in the battle of Armageddon (cf. Rev 16:16).⁶²

Then the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16) will usher in the millennial kingdom. In that kingdom Jerusalem, "the beloved city" (Rev 20:9), will be the focus of all activity. Christ will rule sitting on David's throne as indicated throughout the Apocalypse (Rev 1:5; 3:7; 5:5; 22:16). Servant Israel will be in the forefront, ruling with Him and shining as a light to all nations.

He will help His people (Isa 44:2), redeem them and wipe away their transgressions (Isa 44:22; 48:20). He will show His glory in redeemed Israel (Isa 44:23). Jerusalem and Judah will again prosper (Isa 44:26). Then the Messiah's salvation will reach to the ends of the earth through the channel of Israel (Isa 49:6). Israel will fulfil God's purpose for her.

THE MISSION OF ISRAEL IN THE PRESENT AGE

⁶⁰Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* 472-78; *idem*, *Revelation 8-22* 141-43, 191-92; cf. J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles C. Cook, 1909) 2:382, 3:27-28; J. B. Smith, *A Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Scottsdale, Penn.: Herald, 1961) 191-92.

⁶¹Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* 141-42.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 98-99, 216-63.

Wright builds a case to prove that Jesus' disciples began implementing the prophesied mission of Israel to the Gentiles immediately after Pentecost.⁶³ He cites Luke 24:46-48 and Acts 1:8 as fulfillments of Isaiah 43:10, 12 regarding Israel's responsibility as God's witness. He reasons that Peter and others were mistaken in thinking that God could not turn to the Gentiles until the restoration of Israel.⁶⁴ He insists that James' words in Acts 15:13-18 prove, however, that the restoration of Israel had already transpired, that the Davidic kingdom was present, and consequently, the light was going to the Gentiles in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.⁶⁵ He sees Paul as concurring with this perspective as evidenced by his writing in Romans 9:11 and his preaching in Acts 13:46-47.⁶⁶

Besides missing the point already cited i.e., that in no sense was the resurrection of Christ a restoration of Israel Wright misses other important aspects of references to the OT in the NT. For instance, he overlooks the different direction the plan of God took in light of Israel's rejection of her Messiah at His first coming. That difference was well known in advance to God, but He did not see fit to reveal it to man in the pages of the OT. The new direction in His dealings with mankind resulted in additional meanings⁶⁷

⁶³Wright, *Knowing Jesus* 165-74.

⁶⁴Ibid., 167-68.

⁶⁵Ibid., 169-70.

⁶⁶Ibid., 170-72.

⁶⁷"Additional meanings" refers to meanings beyond those discerned through grammatical-historical interpretations of the OT passages. Many use the expression *sensus plenior* (i.e., "fuller sense") to refer to those additional meanings.

being assigned to OT passages by authoritative NT writers.⁶⁸ For example, Paul's use of Isaiah 42:6 (cf. Isa 49:6) in his speech of Acts 13:47 applies to his own ministry as he preached in Pisidian Antioch God's words to Isaiah's Messiah-Servant. In the Isaianic context, that promised salvation to the ends of the earth was to come in conjunction with repentant Israel's liberation from foreign oppressors. No strict application of grammatical-historical hermeneutics of the Isaiah passage could have interpreted it to refer to a Jewish Christian preacher, himself a fugitive wanted by Israel's authorities, offering international peace and prosperity to a mixed audience of Jews and Gentiles. Israel had not yet repented and still remained under foreign domination. Paul's meaning, inspired by the Holy Spirit, went beyond anything intended for Isaiah's original readers.

⁶⁸Kaiser's rejection of a reader-response hermeneutic that assigns new meanings by the process of *sensus plenior* is quite valid (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995] 27-28). What is proposed here, however, is not a reader-response hermeneutic of just any reader. It is an additional meaning provided through inspired NT Scripture. Kaiser's objection to this explanation lies in an alleged loss of apologetic advantages of appeals to OT texts by the apostles and gospel writers (ibid., 23-24). An answer to that objection, however, lies in the fact that the apostles and writers also appealed to direct prophecies of the coming Messiah from the OT, ones that did not depend on meanings added by NT writers. Even Kaiser has prophetic categories that lie outside the "direct prophecy" category (ibid., 33-35), though in his system they are far less numerous. The literal fulfillments of grammatical-historical understandings of OT prophecies were ample to answer the skeptics with whom the earliest Christians had to deal.

That was not a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy; it was an additional meaning furnished through the apostle to the Gentiles during the period of Israel's rejection. Isaiah's original promise will yet see realization after the fullness of the Gentiles has joined the body of Christ (Rom 11:25). Wright is correct in allowing that the restoration of Israel is still future, but he is wrong in contending that it lies in the past also.⁶⁹ Fulfillment in the future is the only meaning that consistent grammatical-historical interpretation will yield. NT writers did not always assign additional meanings to OT texts.

They sometimes depicted literal or direct fulfillment of OT prophecies, but any that they used relating to the new program and new people of God, the church, of necessity took on a different nature, simply because OT prophecy did not foresee the NT church.

The new meaning of OT prophecies applied to the church introduced by NT writers did not cancel the original meaning and their promises to Israel. God will yet restore the nation of Abraham's physical descendants as He promised He would.

Failure to realize how the NT uses the OT has led some recent scholars to suggest that interpretation of the OT is not a one-way street, that NT writers' preunderstanding determined the meanings they found in the OT.⁷⁰

This has led them to label the literal understandings about political dimensions of predictions of a restored monarchy as "unfortunate misappropriations of prophecy in our day, with unhappy consequences for Christian consciousness, and conscience, in relation to Palestine."⁷¹ The suggestion is that "a suitable appropriation of even these clearly messianic prophecies still has to pass through a rather subtle theological process."⁷² That apparently refers to a removal or alteration of the meaning understood by the original readers of the prophecies.

It is quite true that a remnant in Israel according the election of grace (Rom 11:5) within the body of Christ is currently providing great benefit to the Gentile world.⁷³ For example, the evident fact that all the books of the NT except two have Jewish authors is a reminder of the immeasurable profit of that remnant to the body of Christ and the world as a whole. God's wisdom in using people of Abraham's lineage as channels of His special revelation to the world has wrought untold spiritual value to countless numbers of the world's inhabitants. Many outstanding Christian

⁶⁹Cf. Wright, *Knowing Jesus* 171.

⁷⁰E.g., J. Gordon McConville, "Messianic Interpretation of the Old Testament in Modern Context," in *The Lord's Anointed* 12.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 15.

⁷²*Ibid.*

⁷³The continuing existence and distinctiveness of the Jewish people is in itself a testimony to God's faithfulness to His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Even in her unbelief, corporate Israel stands as a witness to the world. But the witness of the remnant according to the election of grace goes far beyond that because of the remnant's special relationship to God as part of the body of Christ.

leaders of Jewish lineage furnish a further illustration of the benefit of that remnant to the church and thereby to the rest of the world. But the grafting in of the wild olive branches i.e., God's direct dealings with Gentiles has come during the period of corporate Israel's rejection of her Messiah (Rom 11:11). That will not be the manner of Israel's illumination of the Gentiles according to Isaiah. Isaiah's ingathering of Israel will provide that illumination and will come in conjunction with the nation's repentance (cf. Rom 11:12).

Israel in her rejection is currently distinct from the body of Christ, and the nation will remain distinct in the millennial kingdom and in the new heavens and the new earth. The Jewish people are and will always be God's chosen. Neither the church nor any other people will usurp their role of joining with Christ in His millennial rule.⁷⁴ Otherwise, Isaiah's OT promises about their future have undergone revision. God promised the land and the rulership to Israel and to Israel alone in the future kingdom.

John in the Apocalypse tells which mortals will inhabit the earth at

⁷⁴Blaising and Bock appear to merge others with Israel in the nation's future inheritance: "We can illustrate this progressive dispensational view of the church in the case of Jewish Christians. A Jew who becomes a Christian today does not lose his or her relationship to Israel's future promises. Jewish Christians will join the Old Testament remnant of faith in the inheritance of Israel. Gentile Christians will be joined by saved Gentiles of earlier dispensations. All together, Jews and Gentiles, will share the same blessings of the Spirit, as testified to by the relationship of Jew and Gentile in the church of this dispensation. The result will be that all peoples will be reconciled in peace, their ethnic and national differences being no cause for hostility. Earlier forms of dispensationalism, for all their emphasis on the future for Israel, excluded Jewish Christians from that future, postulating the church as a different people-group from Israel and Gentiles" (Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* [Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1993] 50). That viewpoint in essence eliminates Israel's uniqueness in God's future program. Yes, the church will join with Christ in His earthly rule too, but in a capacity different from chosen Israel.

the beginning of the millennium. He refers to them as “the nations” (Rev 20:3). Of the possible identification of these nations, the most probable is that they will be the redeemed who have survived the rule of the beast during the last half of Daniel’s seventieth week (Rev 11:13; 12:13-17).⁷⁵ They will be largely of Jewish extraction as identification of the woman of Revelation 12 requires, but will also include a significant number of Gentile believers who have befriended the Jewish remnant of those days (cf. Matt 25:31-46). In the millennium, the world’s population will multiply rapidly because of ideal conditions and a relatively low death rate,⁷⁶ bringing into existence a new set of nations in a relatively short period. Among these, the Jewish nation will be the leader as the reference to “the beloved city” Jerusalem in Revelation 20:9 reflects. During this time, the church will be present on earth with Christ, but will exist in a resurrected state. God will fulfil the land promises to the generation of mortal Israelites alive at that time, not to immortal people subsequent to their resurrection.

The distinction between Israel and the church will continue into the new creation also. The twelve tribes of Israel will function as city gates in the new creation (Rev 21:12) and the twelve apostles (i.e., the church) as foundation stones (Rev 21:14). Israel’s role differs from that of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. Though finite man may not comprehend precisely the nature of those roles in the new creation, the text is clear that a distinction between the two peoples of God will remain.

THE ULTIMATE MISSION

⁷⁵Thomas, *Revelation 8–22* 410-11; cf. John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1966) 302; Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Revelation*, Everyman’s Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1968) 116.

⁷⁶Walter Scott, *Exposition of the Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Swengel, Penn.: Bible Truth Depot, n.d.) 407.

Old Testament Messianic prophecies begin as early as Genesis 3:15, a verse that depicts the Messiah's mission of bruising the serpent's head.⁷⁷

It was some time before revelation of the mission of Israel, however. That awaited the call of Abraham (Gen 12:1-3). From that point on, the mission of Israel paralleled that of the Messiah in many ways. Why did God single out Abraham and his descendants from the rest of mankind. It was His chosen method of dealing with humans as a whole to limit His special attention to one segment of them. He gave this segment a mission to the rest of the world so that the rest of the world could fulfil His ultimate mission for all people. In light of Israel's failings along the way, the Messiah has filled and will fill the gap in redeeming Israel so that Israel can eventually fulfil her responsibility to the rest of the world.

So the mission of Israel and the Messiah in the plan of God is a means to fulfilling the mission of all mankind in God's plan. What is that ultimate mission? Is it a redemptive mission? That is certainly a part of God's plan, but God's plan is far greater in scope than just the redemption of lost men. Is man's mission to rule over God's creation (cf. Gen 1:26)?

That too is definitely part of what God's plan entails, but it is not the ultimate goal. Both of these missions are anthropocentric, not theocentric.

The long sentence of Ephesians 1:3-14 expresses man's ultimate purpose three times: "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (1:6), "to the praise of His glory" (1:12), and "to the praise of His glory" (1:14). The first expression connects with God the Father, the second with God the Son, and the third with God the Spirit. Together they express the ultimate mission of the human race to glorify the Triune God. God receives glory through His grace manifested in the body of Christ. Similarly, God receives glory because of His gracious dealings with Israel. The ultimate mission of Israel (Isa 44:23) and the Messiah (Isa 49:3) is to bring glory to God, because God will not give His glory to anyone or anything else (Isa 42:8). As Israel and the Messiah fulfil their mission, so will the rest of humankind. The new Jerusalem will feature God's glory in the final realization of His plan for all of creation (Rev 21:23-26; 22:5).

⁷⁷T. Desmond Alexander, "Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis," in *The Lord's Anointed* 27-32; cf. Kaiser, *Messiah in the Old Testament* 37-42.

THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT AND SELF-ESTEEM

John Makujina¹

The current practice of using the second greatest commandment—"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"—as a biblical justification for self-esteem is widespread enough to deserve closer investigation. The study of relevant biblical material reveals that scriptural data does not support modern formulations of self-esteem. Selfishness rather than self-esteem more accurately represents the forms of self-love in the passages, where self-love refers to a type of self-interest necessary for survival, one that is easily prone to overindulgence. The evangelical treatments of self-esteem, however, capitalize on the imago Dei and God's redeeming love as motivations for loving and valuing self. Methodological weaknesses in the psychological approach to the second greatest commandment are evident in several areas. An a priori commitment to modern concepts of self-love, which tends to impair careful biblical exposition, usually leads to errors in exegesis.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

The effort to integrate psychology and Christianity encounters one of its greatest challenges when attempting to harmonize secular humanistic teachings on self-love with the biblical witness. Those in search of such an integration have for some time been compiling a modest list of Scriptures with which they intend to corroborate clinical research on self-esteem.² Among the texts quoted in support of this teaching, the second greatest commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev

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²Besides the second greatest commandment, other favorites are Gen 1:26-27; 1 Sam 18:1, 3; Pss 8:5; 139; Matt 6:26; Rom 12:3.

19:18),³ is perhaps the most popular and important. The following study will articulate a leading interpretation and application of this passage by the evangelical psychological community, and then examine it in the light of sound hermeneutical principles. The discussion will take into account historical, literary, grammatical, and lexical phenomena of these texts that are so frequently neglected.

³Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author's.

Biblical arguments for self-esteem that do not appeal to the second greatest commandment in some form or another are uncommon. Many prominent names in Christian psychology as well as several well-known evangelical teachers have employed this Scripture in books, articles, lectures, and broadcasts as the biblical underpinning of the self-love concept.⁴ Because of this, two recognizable divisions have emerged in the psychological interpretation of the text. The first intrepidly asserts that the second greatest commandment is, among other things, a command to love self.⁵ Understandably, few integrationists have adopted this perspective. The second position, which embraces a greater number of self-esteem advocates, argues that self-love in these passages is a desirable and necessary part of the emotional well-being of every individual, but not necessarily a command.⁶ The heart of this argument lies in its definition of the word "love." Proponents assume that the love referred to coincides with the widely accepted Christian understanding of self-esteem: to deliberately love, value, and honor one's self based on one's possession of the *imago Dei* and Christ's sacrifice for that individual. In some cases word studies accompany this interpretation as proof that "love" in this context is equivalent to self-esteem,⁷ while others make the assertion without any evidence.⁸

⁴E.g., C. W. Ellison, "Self-Esteem," *Baker Encyclopedia of Psychology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985) 1047; Gary R. Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, rev. ed. (Dallas: Word, 1988) 316; James Dobson, *Hide or Seek*, rev. ed. (Old Tappan, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1979) 185-86; James Dobson and H. Norman Wright, "The Importance of Premarital Counseling," Focus on the Family Radio Broadcast, CS 213.

⁵Robert Fisher, "Love is Loving Self," *Church of God Evangel* (March 1992):9; Walter Trobisch, *Love Yourself: Self Acceptance and Depression* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1976) 8.

⁶Tim Stafford, "Don't Buy the Lie," *Campus Life* (September 1992):38; H. Norman Wright, *Improving Your Self Image* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1983) 55; Collins, *Christian Counseling* 316; Dobson, *Hide or Seek* 185-86; Ellison, "Self-Esteem" 1047; Paul D. Meier et al., eds., *Introduction to Psychology and Counseling*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991) 143; Bruce Narramore, *You're Someone Special* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978) 37-38; David A. Seamands, *Healing Grace* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1989) 142.

⁷Narramore, *You're Someone Special* 37.

⁸Dobson, *Hide or Seek* 185-86.

The present investigation will focus on the second supposition, namely, that self-love in Lev 19:18 and its parallels connotes the idea of self-esteem—leaving aside the question of whether the passages contain a divine imperative to love self. Discussion of pertinent introductory matters relating to the book of Leviticus, where the command to love one's neighbor as self first appears, will initiate the discussion.

EVIDENCE FROM THE OT

Leviticus

The book of Leviticus—with holiness as its foremost theme—is a highly technical document of laws issued to govern the civil and religious life of Israel. Although Leviticus continues the legislation begun in Exodus, it forms a self-contained unit nicely dividing itself at chapter 16 (the Day of Atonement).⁹ Because Leviticus consists mainly of the Priestly Code (Exodus 25–Leviticus 16) and the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26), which are considered to be corrective measures for specific instances of religious failure,¹⁰ it does not constitute a complete and systematic set of instructions relating to the Israelite religious system. Therefore one should consider its regulations paradigmatic and representative, serving as principles for cases and incidents not mentioned in the inspired scroll.¹¹

The nineteenth chapter of Leviticus lies within the Holiness Code (17–26), a body of laws imposed in order to regulate the moral standards of the laity.¹² The Holiness Code also contains descriptions of annual feasts, miscellaneous laws, and covenant curses. Chapter 19 itself consists of ethical and religious laws that fall into two divisions (19:1-18 and 19:19-37), laws that stem from the thesis that introduces the section, "You shall be holy, for I Jehovah your God am holy" (19:2).¹³ The revolutionary command, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18), closes the first division in chapter 19 and forms a summary statement encapsulating the specific commands concerning fellow Israelites.¹⁴ It refers to previous injunctions to leave gleanings for the poor (vv. 9-10), as well as to prohibitions against withholding an employee's wages (v. 13b), malicious gossip (v. 16), theft (v. 11), etc.¹⁵ The second division likewise contains legislation regulating interpersonal

⁹R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 590.

¹⁰John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 344; Cf. John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*, vol. 4 of *WBC* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1992) xxxii.

¹¹Brevard S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985) 159.

¹²Harrison, *Introduction* 597.

¹³Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative* 349.

¹⁴Hartley, *Leviticus* 312.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

relationships, the details of which are not relevant to this article. With these introductory matters in mind, it is in order to proceed with the task of analyzing word meanings.

Meaning of Self-Love in the OT

— ('_hab)

The Hebrew verb '_hab, "to love," occurs 208 times in the OT and carries the primary meaning of "love" or "affection," with a broad spectrum of secondary meanings.¹⁶ One must resort to the surroundings of Lev 19:18 to determine the secondary sense of '_hab in that verse, a meaning that relates to the primary meaning. Fortunately, much in the immediate context can assist in understanding the specific nuance that the author wished to accompany the letters '-h-b. Since '_hab incorporates the previous commands in chapter 19 that refer to fellow Israelites, those commands by and large define its meaning.

Leviticus 19 orders the Israelite not to steal, lie, oppress another, withhold wages, curse the deaf, and place a stumbling block before the blind. It also forbids gossip, hatred, bearing grudges, and revenge. On the positive side, the chapter commands to honor parents and leave gleanings for the poor. As mentioned earlier, the regulations in Leviticus 19 are not exhaustive but illustrative; that is, they require the Israelite to do more than comply with these injunctions alone. They expect him to respond similarly in situations for which there are no specific guidelines. Moreover, because the list consists mostly of prohibitions, the self-love implied here often refers to how one would wish to be treated by another—since one can hardly rob, slander, or financially defraud one's self.

The love that is commanded covers two areas. The first is more tangible in that it entails caring for the physical and material well-being of another. The second concerns the emotional welfare of others by instructing the Israelite to care for his neighbor's reputation, honor, dignity, and happiness. Consequently, the self-love mentioned in 19:18 refers to the innate preoccupation of human beings in pursuing procedures that promote their physical and emotional well-being, whether they can achieve the outcome themselves or are desirous of that treatment from others.

¹⁶BDB, s.v. "אָב." Osborne recommends Beekman and Callow's three levels of word meaning: primary, secondary, and figurative. The primary meaning is considered to be the default or basic meaning of a word, the kind that can be identified without context. The secondary meaning is more refined, occurring in limited settings. The figurative meaning, as its name indicates, is the figurative application of a word (Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1991] 83).

Another clue to this sense of ' *hab* is in a passage which gives the same command concerning a stranger who sojourns in the land: "And when a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress him. The stranger who is staying with you shall be to you as the native who is among you, and you shall love him as yourself" (Lev 19:33-34). The nature of love expressed here prohibits mistreatment of a stranger. The verb (*y_n_h*, "to oppress") refers most often to the despotic mistreatment of the poor, weak, or alien by the higher echelons of society.¹⁷ The author's analogy with the Israelites' stay in Egypt in the very next clause confirms that sense: "For you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am Jehovah your God." Therefore ' *hab* here entails kindness, fair treatment, and perhaps even condescension to those who are disadvantaged. Further, the comparative clause "as yourself" reveals the meaning of self-love to be the inborn desire for fair treatment and charity. ' *hab* in this chapter conveys the concept of proper treatment to such a degree that it would do no injustice to the text to translate both occurrences of the verb as "treat fairly" or "care for." That proposal receives support from another study on the same topic, to which the discussion now turns.

' *hab* as "Benefit"

In a noteworthy article, Abraham Malamat contends that the English word "love" misrepresents the true meaning of ' *hab* in Lev 19:18.¹⁸ Malamat cites two reasons for his conclusion. First, ' *hab* is most often used to refer to love relationships between man and God, man and woman, and parents and children. It seldom alludes to a man's love for his fellow. Second, and more conclusive to Malamat, is the fact that ' *hab* in Lev 19:18 takes its direct object with the preposition (*l_*-) rather than (*'_t*), the normal particle to introduce the direct object. He explains that because "neighbor" is joined to the sign of the indirect object (*l_*-) instead of the direct object '*_t*', the verb ' *hab* becomes intransitive (i.e., "to be loving toward").¹⁹ He then locates the three other instances where the preposition *l_*- precedes the object of ' *hab*: Lev 19:33; 1 Kgs 5:15; 2 Chr 19:2. He finds a major breakthrough in 2 Chr 19:2 where ' *hab* combines with *l_*- and receives further definition through its parallelism with (*'_zar*, "to help") in the preceding half verse. He remarks, "This [synonymous use] suggests that here ' *hab* means not what we would call 'love,' but rather 'to be of use to,' 'to be beneficial to,' 'to assist or help.'"²⁰ Further, he maintains that the two other instances of ' *hab*, one in Lev 19:33 and the other in 1 Kgs 5:15, support that translation. Consequently, Malamat with little hesitation suggests that the sense of love in Lev 19:18, 34, etc.,

¹⁷BDB, 413.

¹⁸Abraham Malamat, "Love Your Neighbor as Yourself: What It Really Means," *BAR* 16 (1990): 50.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., 51.

is concrete and pragmatic and means "to benefit." For purposes of this essay, Malamut's approach is instructive in that it reveals that the semantic range of ' *hab* can include the idea of being practically beneficial, upholding the earlier understanding of ' *hab* in Lev 19:18, 34.²¹

Jonathan and David

One more passage in the OT alludes to Lev 19:18 and offers insight into its meaning and application. In 1 Sam 18:1, 3 the narrator describes the friendship between Jonathan and David—first explaining that the souls of Jonathan and David were bound together (i.e., they were of one mind, purpose, and outlook). Following this disclosure come two proclamations (vv. 1, 3) that Jonathan loved David as himself (lit. "as his own soul").

²¹ Although most of Malamut's conclusions are convincing, especially his tactical use of ' *zar* to define the nuances of ' *hab* in 2 Chr 19:2, we must hold one or two reservations. Malamut may overstate his case when he refuses to allow the preposition *l* - the possibility of acting as the sign for the direct object. *L* - functions elsewhere as a *nota accusativi* (probably as an Aramaism), as in 2 Chr 10:6, 9, where it is used interchangeably with ' *t*. (Hartley, *Leviticus* 318). Further, verbs denoting an emotional state, such as ' *hab*, are considered loosely intransitive anyway, even with ' *t*. This is true despite the fact that this class of verbs takes a direct object, since there is no transfer of action from the subject to the object (Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990] 366). Therefore, in this case context rather than syntax should be more determinative for meaning.

The second occurrence (18:3) is especially valuable since it explains how this love was expressed: "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor—even his sword, bow, and belt" (18:3-4). That act implied that Jonathan recognized and accepted the fact that David rather than himself would succeed Saul as king.²² By surrendering to David his kingly articles, Jonathan symbolized the release of his rightful succession to the throne as Saul's son. Additionally, in light of the scarcity of weapons in Israel at the time (1 Sam 13:22), the forfeiture of his sword and bow exhibited the practicality of his love.²³

The narrator probably based his description of Jonathan's love on the commandment in Lev 19:18,²⁴ inasmuch as the historical books reveal themselves to be conscious outworkings of normative standards derived from the Pentateuch. The function of *'_hab* in 1 Sam 18:1, 3; 20:17, brings to light additional aspects of self-love not specifically mentioned in Leviticus 19. Loving self refers to the human ambition for position, status, power, honor, and success—all of which Jonathan gave to David. The author could find no deeper way to express Jonathan's love for David than to compare it with Jonathan's desire for personal success. So then, loving self in 1 Samuel 18 appends to the earlier definition the idea of desiring one's own occupational or vocational success.²⁵

One factor makes the references to self-love in 1 Samuel 18 and 20 especially

²²See also 1 Sam 20:14-15, 31; 23:17.

²³Although the covenant was mutual and benefited both, the above passages clearly reveal that Jonathan made unparalleled sacrifices.

²⁴Cf. Hartley, *Leviticus* 318.

²⁵J. A. Thompson is willing to narrow the semantic field even further by suggesting that *'_hab* here refers to a political or diplomatic friendship or benefit. Thompson marshals some impressive evidence to substantiate his theory, including the political use of the equivalent verb in Akkadian texts. We prefer, however, the phrase "occupational" success over "political," since the term "political," though appropriate here, would not apply to those who long for rank and success outside the political arena. Unfortunately, Thompson fails to interact with the powerful modifier "as himself"—which has a definite bearing on the meaning of *'_hab*—and neglects to mention any connection, whether direct or implicit, with Lev 19:18 (J. A. Thompson, "The Significance of the Verb Love in the David-Jonathan Narratives in 1 Samuel," *VT* 24 [1974]:334-38).

valuable, namely, that of forfeiture. Jonathan's expression of love toward David was only possible at his own expense. In other words, Jonathan had to abandon his natural propensity for himself to prosper and lay claim to his inheritance in order to promote David to the throne. The context of the narrative does not allow the possibility of Jonathan exalting both himself and David, since only one could succeed Saul as king. So apparent and important is this idea of brotherly love replacing self-love that the elided verb in 1 Sam 18:1, 3 could be supplied as follows: "He loved him as he would have loved himself."

So then, when the OT commands to love one's neighbor as himself, an overall understanding of what it means must include the vital ingredient of suppressing self-love to execute brotherly love. Subsequent discussion will show how the NT develops more acutely that element of self-denial.

NT USAGE OF THE SECOND GREATEST COMMANDMENT

The NT refers to the OT command to love one's neighbor as self ten times in eight passages: Matt 19:19; 22:39; Mark 12:31, 33; Luke 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Eph 5:28, 33; Jas 2:8.²⁶ In every instance the Greek equivalent for ' *hab* is *ἀγαπᾶω* (*agapa*_, "I love"). A familiarity with the noun *agapa*_ and the popular definition of "selfless, unconditional love" should not cloud *agapa*_ here. Properly ascertaining the meaning of *agapa*_ in these self-love texts involves two considerations. The first is diachronic or historical. The historical source of the concept of self and neighborly love in all the NT texts is ultimately Lev 19:18. That makes them, in one way or another, dependent on the meaning of ' *hab* in Lev 19:18. Furthermore, that the NT writers adopted the Septuagintal reading of Lev 19:18,²⁷ whose translator considered *agapa*_ to be the most suitable rendering for ' *hab*, is important to remember. LXX translators regularly used *agapa*_ because in Hellenistic times it had developed into the standard word for love, possessing a broad semantic domain that included the sense of ' *hab* in Lev 19:18.²⁸ Therefore, *mutatis mutandis*, one should expect no difference in meaning if the NT writers had used the Hebrew text in citing Lev 19:18.

The second factor for determining meaning is synchronic, in that it takes into

²⁶Matt 5:43, "You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy," is not one of these passages because it lacks a reference to self-love.

²⁷For convenient comparative tables consult Gleason L. Archer and C. G. Chirichingo, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1983) 22-23, 30-33.

²⁸The LXX preferred *agapa*_ over *phile*_ because in Hellenistic times *phile*_ came to mean "kiss" and so was taken over by *agapa*_, which became the standard verb for love (Moisés Silva, *Biblical Words and Their Meaning* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983] 96, citing Robert Joly, *Le vocabulaire chrétien de l'amour est il original? Φύλε_ν et Αγαπ_ν dans le grec antique* [Bruxelles: Presses Universitaires, 1968] 33).

account the context of the verb in each instance—a procedure demonstrated earlier in examining *'_hab*. These criteria will help in ascertaining the meaning of self-love in the NT.

enhanced the largely "prohibitive" notion of love in Lev 19:18 with the idea of extending kindness to those who are wounded. In other words, where Lev 19:13 enjoins, "You shall not oppress your neighbor," Christ adds, "You shall help those who are already oppressed."

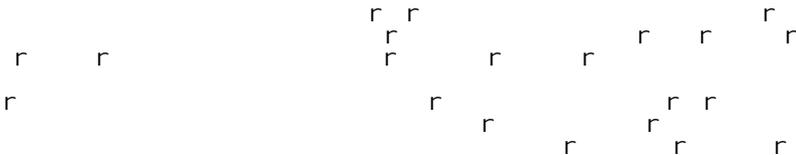
The aspect of forfeiture, so evident in Jonathan's love for David, is also clear in this parable since the Samaritan was inconvenienced not only in his schedule, but also in his finances. So then, Christ emphasized the obligatory³⁰ and sacrificial facets of loving one's neighbor, which are attested, though sparingly, in Leviticus 19 (vv. 9-10). The Golden Rule in Luke 6:31 includes both classifications of this love, preventative and obligatory, and expresses the same sentiments as Lev 19:18: "And just as you want men to treat you, treat them in the same way" (NASB).

Epistles

Dealing with the second greatest commandment in the epistles is slightly more complicated since the primary source of the epistolary writers in question, Paul and James, may have been the teachings of Jesus rather than Leviticus 19. That would distance the same commandment from the OT command by an added layer of text or tradition. This is most likely the case in Rom 13:9 where Paul defines *agapa* with prohibitions from the Decalogue much like those in Matt 19:18-19.³¹ The problem is not so great, however, because Christ's utterances in the gospels were entirely in cadence with the original intent and meaning of the command in Lev 19:18. Further, each of the epistolary uses provides sufficient context for contextual criteria to supersede the historical background in determining the meaning.

Rom 13:9-10

Paul's use of the command to love neighbor as self in Rom 13:9-10 scarcely differs from Jesus' command in Matt 19:19. Compare Rom 13:9-10 with Matt 19:18-19:



³⁰This term will be used throughout this article to specify that aspect of neighborly love that responds to needs that already exist, rather than simply indicating a refusal to do harm (preventative love).

³¹James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, vol. 7 of *WBC* (Waco Tex.: Word, 1988) 779.

The verses command husbands to love their wives according to Christ's love for the church and their love for themselves. That "self" means "body" in this passage is clear from the interchangeability of the two terms in v. 28.³³

Moreover, Paul probably derived his concept of self-love from Lev 19:18 (or ultimately so through Christ's own words), especially the command in v. 33.³⁴

This is the first and only time to appear in the Scriptures an uncamouflaged definition of self-love that does not depend upon an analogy with neighborly love for its meaning. Paul invokes a disjunctive statement, thesis and antithesis, to define self-love. He states in v. 29, "For no one ever hated his own body [thesis], but nourishes and cherishes it [antithesis]."³⁵ Concerning this statement F. F. Bruce comments, "It is natural conduct that is in view in the present context: just as a man provides for his own comfort and well-being, so he should provide for his wife."³⁶ It is clear then that self-love here consists of a person's natural desire for food, clothing, shelter, comfort, protection, etc. The husband's love for his wife, modeled on his own self-love, involves providing for her general physical well-being and so coincides with an understanding of love elsewhere in these passages.

Jas 2:8

³³Note that in v. 29 σάρξ (*sarx*, "flesh") and σῶμα (*s. ma*, "body") are synonymous. Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, vol. 42 of *WBC* (Waco, Tex.: Word, 1990) 378.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 361; J. Paul Sampley, *'And the Two Shall Become One Flesh': A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1971) 32.

³⁵According to Lincoln, Paul's argument to husbands proceeds as follows: "since all men love their own bodies and since a husband and wife are one flesh (body), as Gen 2:24 states, the husband is obligated to love his wife as his own body" (Lincoln, *Ephesians* 378).

³⁶F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 391.

Jas 2:8 furnishes the Bible's final clear reference to self-love in Lev 19:18: "If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well." The concept of fairness to the unfortunate flavors the meaning of neighborly love here. To James, brotherly love entails not preferring the rich over the poor in social and economic matters. At least two connections between Jas 2:8 and Leviticus 19 are detectable.³⁷ In Lev 19:15 God condemns partiality for either the rich or poor in judgment. Also in Lev 19:9-10 God commands the Israelite to extend obligational love to the poor by leaving them gleanings from the harvest. Therefore to love one's neighbor as self in Jas 2:8 entails treating the poor as one would want to be treated if he were impoverished. Anything else would be a violation of the royal law.

DEFINITION OF SELF-LOVE

A survey of those passages in the Bible that draw from Lev 19:18 provides information to compose a working definition of self-love. Although the definition will be eclectic, combining all the data from the various passages, it will not impose every element of the meaning on each of the respective texts ("illegitimate totality transfer"). Each context determines which of the many shades of meaning an author had in mind. For example, Paul chose both the physical and emotional aspects of self-love in Rom 13:9 to modify his command, whereas in Luke 10:25-37 Christ focused primarily on the physical aspect.³⁸

Therefore self-love in these texts refers to a person's natural compulsion for his own welfare in every facet of life physical and emotional. In the physical realm, it is the characteristic that allows people to survive being an instinctive, basal motivation that does not require a lengthy decision-making process. It seeks to gain pleasure and avoid pain as a simple matter of reflex; it compels a person to eat when he is hungry and sleep when he is tired. This drive can result in an action as simple as a child flinching when pricked by a thorn or as complex as an outdoorsman building a cabin for shelter. In simpler terms, it is that unlearned, intuitive prompting that gives human beings enough sense to "get in out of the rain."

A person's love for his own physical body is rivaled only by his concern for his emotional well-being. This element of self-love within man seeks honor, position, acceptance, love, loyalty, and companionship from others. Consequently it deplors shame, humiliation, ridicule, and bigotry against self (Lev 19:14). It is also this factor that makes it so difficult for someone to

³⁷For more connections with Leviticus 19, see L. T. Johnson, "The Use of Leviticus 19 in the Letter of James," *JBL* 101 (1982): 391-401.

³⁸In defining self-love, one should remember that in many instances (especially preventative love) self-love does not refer to how an individual treats himself, but how he desires to be treated by others, since certain acts like stealing and assault are impossible to commit against self.

admit wrongdoing or confess sins. Moreover, this type of desire is most apparent when it goes unfulfilled. For instance, one seldom considers his own longing for acceptance or love until he experiences reproach, rejection, or mistreatment by others. Without self-love, no pain or disappointment would come on occasions like this. Therefore, people usually choose situations and relationships that contribute to their emotional happiness.

As is apparent, examples of both forms of self-love, physical and emotional, are limitless. Some general observations and delineations are possible, however:

(1) This kind of love is instinctive, spontaneous, and basic to all human beings everywhere (Eph 5:28-29). Consequently, this behavior does not need to be taught, developed, or nurtured.

(2) This love is not evil in itself when employed within reasonable constraints. For example, to desire food when hungry is not sinful, but to stretch the desire to excess becomes the sin of gluttony or indulgence. Neither is it wrong to expect reasonable kindness and respect from one's peers, unless it develops into a craving for popularity and attention.

(3) Loving another sometimes requires personal sacrifice and thus the abandonment of self-love, as witnessed in the cases of the good Samaritan and Jonathan's sacrifice for David.

(4) Christian discipleship may require the divestment of every form of self-love, including life itself. Cross-bearing, as described in the famous discipleship passages (Matt 10:37-39; 16:24-25; Mark 8:34-35; Luke 9:23-24; 14:26-27; John 12:25), requires that even necessary and reasonable forms of self-love such as food, shelter, friendship, love, and acceptance be relinquished to follow Christ. When Jesus announced, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and let him take up his cross and follow me" (Matt 16:24), he meant nothing less than renouncing the very self-love just described.

For the Christian may have to face the physical hardships of missionary service in equatorial jungles or to bear the reproaches of colleagues at work because of his Christian testimony. In other cases, a believer may have to sacrifice food and sleep when the Spirit prompts him to fast and spend long hours in intercession through the night. Again, as with self-love, the examples of cross-bearing are legion.

(5) Self-love does not refer to self-esteem as Christian psychologists claim.

They base their "biblical" version of self-esteem on a calculated assessment of the Christian's worth to God as expressed by Christ's sacrifice and his possession of the *imago Dei*, both of which result in his ability to love, honor, respect, and value himself as a significant member of God's kingdom.³⁹

³⁹As noble and biblical as this concept may seem, it in effect denies God's self-sufficiency, unconditional love, and unmerited grace to sinners, since it posits intrinsic worth to man.

Moreover, most psychologists admit that self-esteem is difficult to achieve because a person must first grasp the concept, and then develop and protect it.⁴⁰ Finally, with self-esteem as the key or one of the keys to other relationships, psychologists insist that it never be relinquished.

Clearly, this definition of self-esteem does not accord with the meaning of self-love in the examined texts. Biblical self-love is common to all, Christian and non-Christian, and in neither is it based on a conscious understanding of a person's value to God or the *imago Dei*. Further, self-love is instinctive, spontaneous, and effortless. It needs no lessons, encouragement, or therapy; impulse drives it and consistency characterizes it. In contrast to what psychologists hold, the respect and honor that it entails is not from self but from others. Finally, sometimes service to others requires suppression of this love and Christian discipleship requires abandonment of it.

Source of Error

⁴⁰Wright, *Self Image* 55; Trobisch, *Love Yourself* 8.

How then does the psychological community commit an error of this magnitude so consistently? The answer lies in the unwillingness of advocates of that dogma to allow the text to speak for itself. Rather, they have imported a psychological notion and forced it into the text, without giving much consideration to the context of the passage(s). They have in every case committed the lexical fallacy sometimes known as "misuse of subsequent meaning."⁴¹ This mistake involves implanting twentieth-century ideas into ancient words and concepts.⁴² Such anachronistic readings almost always result in distorted meanings and inaccurate applications.

Bruce Narramore's word study on *agapa*, undertaken to demonstrate that the second greatest commandment refers to self-esteem, provides a serviceable example of the misdirected trajectory that analyses of this ilk often take. He summarizes his findings as follows: "Agape love is a deep attitude of esteem and respect. This is the basic meaning of Biblical self-love."⁴³ As reasonable as his conclusion sounds, under closer scrutiny it proves to be defective.

⁴¹Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral* 71.

⁴²Ibid., 72.

⁴³Narramore, *You're Someone Special* 38. Narramore's explanations are quite puzzling since earlier in the same book (pp. 21-22) he admits that the second greatest commandment has been incorrectly used to substantiate self-esteem.

To begin with, Narramore seriously jeopardizes the outcome of his thesis by teasing out two elements of the meaning of *agapa*_, "respect" and "esteem," and applying them at his convenience to the second greatest commandment.⁴⁴

In undertaking this procedure, Narramore commits the lexical fallacy known as "misuse of parallels." That error consists of determining the sense of a word by invoking only those parallel meanings that support a predetermined position.⁴⁵ Since two of the secondary meanings of *agapa*_ are "esteem" and "respect," he laminates them to *agapa*_ in the self-love texts without realizing that the nuances of "esteem" and "respect" apply only in certain contexts.⁴⁶ In doing so, he limits the semantic range of *agapa*_ to one or two meanings at best and gives the mistaken impression that the sense of *agapa*_ is resident within the word rather than its context. A survey of the many hues of *agapa*_ in major lexicons will reveal its wide semantic range and dispel any notion that it inherently refers to a special kind of divine or otherwise noble and elevated love.⁴⁷

Narramore's contrast with φιλέω (*phile*_, "I love/like") intended to show that *agapa*_ is a loftier, more responsible form of love, is also flawed, in that it makes too sharp a distinction between *agapa*_ and *phile*_. Narramore fails to realize that *agapa*_ appears in these texts because the NT writers are either directly quoting the LXX (which uses *agapa*_) or alluding to it. Nor has he considered the fact that by this period *agapa*_ was replacing *phile*_ as the standard word for love.⁴⁸ Finally, *agapa*_ and *phile*_ were often interchangeable, as in John's gospel.⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

This article has concerned itself with the question of whether loving self in Lev 19:18 and related passages coincides with modern concepts of self-esteem. Research indicates that the second greatest commandment's likeness to psychological notions of self-esteem is superficial at best and is unsupported by the collective testimony of the texts in question. Rather, the concept of self-love in these texts is inseparably bound with one's natural disposition for his own well-being, in both body and soul. Further, seriously flawed

⁴⁴Ibid., 37.

⁴⁵Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral* 73.

⁴⁶Narramore confuses the secondary meaning with the primary meaning. "Love" is the primary meaning of *agapa*_, with "respect" and "esteem" being two of the secondary meanings.

⁴⁷In 2 Pet 2:15 *agapa*_ refers to Balaam's love for the wages of unrighteousness, and in 2 Tim 4:10 Paul selects *agapa*_ to describe Demas' love for this present age. Also see Luke 11:43; John 12:43; 1 John 2:15 (BAGD, s.v. "γάπαω").

⁴⁸Silva, *Biblical Words* 96.

⁴⁹D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 30, 52. Also compare Luke 11:43 with 20:46, where both *agapa*_ (11:43) and *phile*_ (20:46) designate the same kind of ambition for position and recognition possessed by the Pharisees and scribes.

reformulations of lexical and contextual evidence distort the interpretation of these passages. Psychologists have allowed a resolute commitment to self-esteem as the *sine qua non* of mental health to determine *a priori* what the text will mean. Lamentably this procedure has obscured much of the true intent of this command which is to love others and has fostered needless confusion over the meaning of a passage (Lev 19:18) designed to be as easy to understand and apply as "getting in out of the rain."

BOOK REVIEWS

Donald K. Berry. *An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament*. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1995. xvi + 463 pp. \$24.99 (cloth).
Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Author Donald K. Berry is Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Mobile, Alabama. He received his Ph.D. at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has done additional studies in comparative literature at Indiana University. He also wrote *The Psalms and Their Readers: Interpretative Strategies for Psalm 18* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993). Dr. Berry has also pastored churches in Kentucky and Alabama.

This volume has the format of a textbook for colleges and seminaries, with chapters carefully organized. Questions for discussion come at the conclusion of each chapter. In addition, it includes 27 tables of detailed studies spread throughout the text. These studies cover the types of poetic units in the Hebrew Bible (210-14), poetic units in Sirach (348), speakers in the Song of Songs (385), garden images in the Song of Songs (406), and many more. The tables convey a wealth of material in short compass, enabling the author to point the reader to more detailed studies without departing from the introductory nature of the volume. In addition to recognizing the sources for citations, the footnotes provide definitions, additional comments regarding more detailed studies, and bibliographic references to additional resources.

End materials include a glossary of selected terms (423-29). Some terms defined within the text are not in the glossary, but can be located through the subject index (e.g., acrostic, envelope structure, meter, parallelism, and wasf). However, some terms escape definition anywhere (e.g., chiasmus, ellipsis, apocryphon, proem, and taunt song). The work gives four separate, select bibliographies for Wisdom, Poetry, History of Interpretation, and Ancient Near Eastern Literature (431-40). It has indexes for names, subjects, and Scripture. The subject index is impressive because of its amount of detail.

Subject matter is broader than just Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Psalms, Lamentations, and the Song of Songs. It also discusses Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) literature, the deuterocanonical books, the pseudepigrapha, early Jewish literature, and materials in the nonpoetic and non-wisdom biblical corpus. It traces the history of interpretation from the ANE setting to modern times, including the

patristic period, the medieval period, and the Reformation. Section titles in the text highlight contributions to the study of biblical wisdom literature and biblical poetry by Crenshaw, Delitzsch, Donne, Driver, Eissfeldt, Ewald, Gerstenberger, Herder, Hobbes, Mead, Rinkart, Rylaarsdam, Spinoza, von Rad, Whybray, and Wolff. Specialized studies that advanced the respective fields also receive attention, but without separate section titles referring to the individuals. These include studies by Berlin, Camp, Collins, Cross, Duhm, Gevirtz, Sievers, Gunkel, Hrushovski, Köhler, Kugel, Lowth, McKane, Mowinckel, O'Connor, Schökel, Watson, and others.

Berry carefully lays out his approach to the study of wisdom in Part One of the volume (1):

- Which books do we include in the scope of wisdom?
- What interests do the books of wisdom share with wisdom materials from other ancient civilizations?
- How did the wisdom sayings fit within the community of worship in ancient Israel?
- How were the books understood and interpreted in subsequent history?
- What are the unique and common features of each of the wisdom books?
- How does the combination of the books' unique features expand the general concept of wisdom?

In this reviewer's opinion, the author does an excellent job of accomplishing exactly what he set out to do. Unfortunately, he does not introduce Part Two of the volume by a similar plan (173). However, he does arrange the material of the second part in much the same way as that of the first part.

The author's view of Ecclesiastes is too negative. It places too much stress on skepticism. Michael A. Eaton and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., have sounder interpretations of Ecclesiastes. The author refers to neither of these commentaries in his presentation of the history of interpretation.

In the brief definitions of the Hebrew vocabulary of wisdom, the only resource cited is BDB (once, 23). The author himself admits to oversimplification in the discussion of the Hebrew terms (5 n. 5). He could improve the discussions by providing some guidance for the student desiring more information.

Sometimes the author makes statements without explanation that leave the reader wondering what he intended. He implies that giving thanks to God has some sort of controlling effect upon God's actions (189). In yet another instance, he seems to indicate that God Himself receives blessing by His association with Zion (191). His exegesis of Psalm 49:14-15 misses the mark when he says that "the psalmist is confident personal integrity brings deliverance" (372), implying a works form of salvation. Some statements are inaccurate, as in the comment that 2 Samuel 22 contains a "hymn identical to Psalm 18" (197). Psalm 18 has many differences that can be accounted for by the different functions served by the two versions of the hymn.

The author's neglect of conservative scholars shows up in their omission

from his references in text, footnotes, and bibliographies. He makes only passing references to the Job commentaries by Robert Alden and F. I. Andersen. Conservative commentaries and studies are pretty much ignored. The lone exception is *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Literary Forms* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995) by D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr., to which Berry refers four times. One of the disappointments is the lack of any reference to John H. Sailhamer's presentation of narrative/poetic seams in the Pentateuch.

In the treatment of poetry in the Pentateuch, the volume has overlooked Leviticus 26 in spite of the fact that its poetic content was long ago identified by Karl Elliger. The covenant curse text has many similarities to Deuteronomy 28, which Berry and many others identify as poetic. Leviticus employs chiasmus, proverbial numbers, inclusio, repetition, assonance, and even parallelism (see esp. v. 42). The author probably ignored it because of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia's* prose formatting of the entire chapter. The chapter could at least have received as much attention as Berry gave to "measured prose" or "narrative poetry" in 1 Samuel 17:42-47 (313).

Berry repeatedly refers to Daniel's poetry as "Hebrew poetry," even when it is in Aramaic (204-5, 343-45). This oversimplification needs further exploration, especially with regard to the poem of Nebuchadnezzar.

The author's redactional stance on the date and authorship of books of the OT becomes clearer as the reader progresses through this volume. He questions that Solomon produced any finished work such as Ecclesiastes (25). He proposes the righteous sufferer of Ugarit as "the basis of the prose framework of Job" (33). Berry implies that there is even a difference in the view of Yahweh's inspiration of scriptural wisdom in Proverbs 1-9 as compared to chapters 10-31 (37). He also claims that "the model for royal wisdom could have been adapted from the Assyrians or Babylonians and applied to Solomon retroactively" (38). He dismisses a patriarchal date for the book of Job as an early Jewish attempt to associate the book with the Pentateuch (51)—even though he later admits that "Job may come from originals dating to the patriarchal period" (95). His identification of Job as a postexilic production is based upon "its philosophical debate style" (95).

He even dismisses the NT's citation of Proverbs 8 as a reference to a person of the Godhead as being influenced by Greek hypostatic thought (46-47, 62-63). Berry does not consider that the personification of wisdom as a person of the Godhead may have arisen in the deuterocanon and the NT as a result of Proverbs 8 *per se*. Some of his illustrations of Jesus' dependence on Sirach and Paul's employment of the Wisdom of Solomon are tenuous, at best. Similarity of thought or of illustration does not prove a common source. This would be especially true within the same cultural setting. Writers within the same culture may be expected to utilize some amount of similar phraseology, observations, and illustrations independent of one another. Berry himself admits that "the mere presence of wisdom

terminology serves as poor support for the claim of dependence. The scholar needs to be sensitive to the shades of distinction between supposition and proof" (90).

The author's reluctance to date any biblical poetry prior to 1300 B.C. (209), indicates the degree of redactionism he accepts. He would evidently follow either a late dating for Moses or deny Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch since Genesis 4, Genesis 49, and Exodus 15 contain examples of poetry that the conservative scholar would date no later than 1400 B.C. for Moses' editing. These compositions existed prior to Moses recording them. The oral forms of the Genesis poems predate Moses by centuries.

In spite of his redactional viewpoint and the various shortcomings identified by this review, Berry has produced a very readable and informative volume. It has a wealth of information in its pages. Berry's ready wit and awareness of his own times contribute to the volume's readability. At one point he wryly observes that a certain Babylonian document mentioned incantations, "especially their lack of effect" (34). In his discussion of Bernard of Clairvaux's allegorical interpretation of the Song of Songs, he observes that Bernard's "interpretations show amazing agility" (258). One of the many pieces of information included by the author is the account of Sebastian Castellio (1515-1563) being denied ordination in Geneva because of his literal interpretation of the Song of Songs (270). The author also employs contemporary rap music to describe the lively performance involved in biblical poetry (292 n. 133).

The histories of interpretation and the book by book analyses are worth enduring the frustrations of its shortcomings. The professor teaching courses in either OT wisdom literature or poetry will appreciate this volume's sound pedagogical approach to the materials.

Mal Couch, gen. ed. *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996. 442 pp. \$22.99 (cloth). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Fifty-five scholars contribute more than 280 alphabetical entries. Couch is founder and president of Tyndale Theological Seminary and Biblical Institute in Fort Worth, Texas. The dictionary attempts to show major tenets of premillennial belief, more particularly dispensationalism. Seminary administrators, seminary faculty, pastors, and other speakers and writers articulate much about leading figures in premillennialism, key concepts, crucial Bible chapters, main views of certain systems that disagree, etc. The format of 2 columns has very readable print, with bold-faced subject headings. An index appears at the end (437-42).

Subjects range from the Abrahamic Covenant (6 pp.) and Acts 2 and Pentecost (1 page), to Zechariah, Eschatology of (7 1/2), and Zephaniah (2). The

New Covenant receives 5 pp. The work sketches many key leaders in premillennial teaching, such as David Baron, James Brookes, L. S. Chafer, Arno Gaebelein, James Gray, H. A. Ironside, Samuel Kellogg, J. D. Pentecost, George N. H. Peters, C. C. Ryrie, C. I. Scofield, John F. Walvoord, and Nathaniel West. The work also devotes entries to certain key writers for other views related to the debate, such as Augustine for the amillennial perspective.

Robert L. Thomas, Professor of New Testament, The Master's Seminary, contributes articles, for example, "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" and "Progressive Dispensationalism."

One feature is a sketch of the eschatology in every book of the Bible; another is articles on certain facets of hermeneutics. Key Bible books are Genesis, Daniel, Isaiah, Gospels, Romans, Hebrews, and Revelation. The entries on the Psalms include such key psalms as 2, 8, 16, 22, 89 and 110. On the book of Revelation, the study delves into topics like the Two Witnesses, Dating the Book around A.D. 95, the False Prophet, Interpretive Views of the Book, Structure, 24 Elders, etc. "Rapture" draws about 28 pp., including various views of the same (Partial, Pre-tribulational, Pre-wrath, and Post-tribulational). "Reconstruction" theology receives 3 pp.

The *Dictionary* tries to correct a common misrepresentation of dispensationalism as teaching opposing ways of salvation in different ages, saying that the system teaches salvation to be by grace through faith in every age (388).

On Daniel's Seventy Weeks, features deal helpfully with amillennial interpretation, dispensational logic, and rabbinic thought. Throughout the dictionary, entries conclude with a bibliography listing further readings. These offer some of the best books, journal literature, doctoral studies, and the like.

Key texts and their issues naturally invest much reasoning for a premillennial-dispensational view—e.g., Genesis 12 and 15; Psalm 89; Isaiah 11; Daniel 2, 7, 9; Zechariah 1–6 and 14; Matthew 13 and 24–25; 2 Thessalonians 2; Revelation 4–5 (elders), 6–9 (judgments), 11 (two witnesses), 17 (Babylon), 19 (Bride). In Genesis 12–15, six reasons argue for the unconditional nature of the covenant God made with Abraham (30).

One can be a firm premillennial dispensationalist and yet differ from several interpretations favored on passages here. For example, in contrast to seeing no fulfillment of Joel 2 in Acts 2, he can see at least a partial fulfillment of certain details in Joel 2:28 ff.; he can say that the 24 elders in the Revelation are celestial beings, not humans; he can reason that the Treasure and Pearl (Matthew 13) do not distinguish Israel (Treasure) and the Church (Pearl), yet both emphasize the value of believers to God; he can view as finally artificial the dictionary's view that Revelation 2–3 (the seven church sections) develop blocks of particular years spanning church history, and can think contrived a supposed similarity of Matthew 13 with Revelation 2–3, viewed as giving blocks of history (at least p. 313 acknowledges that "not all dispensationalists hold to this view").

One interesting section, on H. A. Ironside, offers several arguments defending against the theory that Ironside in later years gave up loyalty to his premillennial dispensational conviction.

In the midst of much that offers valuable benefit, the dictionary does have some drawbacks. One is the lack of a scriptural index that would help in locating certain discussions. Another is that some statements are more speculative opinion than necessary even to a premillennial view (an example is a list of claimed "types" of the Antichrist, even the serpent in Eden, Amalek, Balaam, and Sennacherib, 43-44). A still further one is the problem of careless proofreading at times, permitting needless errors. And the value of articles differs greatly, some done with apparently great carefulness that offers much help, others generalized as if written "off the cuff" to meet a deadline.

All in all, though, the work will be a welcome tool for teachers, church staff, and students seeking handy reference. Those of a premillennial persuasion or other viewpoints on matters of the prophetic word can find value here, varying between the entries.

Thomas R. Edgar. *Satisfied by the Promise of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996. 283 pp. \$12.99 (cloth). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Ten chapters attempt to answer recent charismatic arguments, especially as articulated by Jack S. Deere (*Surprised By the Power of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993). Readers will also find a response to Deere's book in Richard Mayhue, "Who Surprised Whom? The Holy Spirit or Jack Deere?" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 5/2 (Fall, 1994):123-40. Edgar is Professor of New Testament, Capital Bible Seminary, Lanham, Maryland. He writes from the standpoint of the cessationist view of certain New Testament gifts of the Spirit, such as tongues, healings, and signs and wonders.

His book deals with the issue of whether all the miracle gifts of the NT era are fully operative today, as claimed by many writers in Pentecostal, charismatic, and signs and wonders groups. Deere, whose work Edgar is chiefly addressing, was on the faculty of Dallas Theological Seminary before he left the doctrinal position there and subscribed to his present views about the gifts.

The reasoning of Edgar is that NT passages, which he discusses sometimes in considerable detail, show God's intent for some gifts to be permanent and others temporary, in the early church only. He also takes up a number of accusations from Deere and others to the effect that those not practicing miraculous gifts now are living sub-par spiritual lives. His quest in a nutshell is to show that Christians can be satisfied and fulfilled by the Spirit in a God-pleasing, fruitful life sufficient

through Scripture apart from these particular gifts.

To accomplish his objectives, Edgar devotes his main chapters to the priority of what the Scripture says over claimed experiences (Chap. 1), biblical information on the gifts (Chap. 3), the temporary nature of NT apostles and prophets (Chap. 4), miracles and healing (Chap. 5), the nature and purpose of tongues (Chap. 6-7), the temporary purpose of certain gifts in the early church era (Chap. 9), and a conclusion (Chap. 10). The last chapter, among other things, points out Deere accusations of cessationist unspirituality and Deere misrepresentations of statements Edgar made in an earlier book, *Miraculous Gifts*.

In Chap. 1, Edgar says it is legitimate for a Christian to want more power and passion for God (11), but believers should draw on the supply according to proper interpretation of God's Word. This will be sufficient without overt, visible evidence of God's presence in experiencing miraculous gifts, or in a health and wealth gospel, exorcisms, etc. The focus is wrong, he believes, when one puts emphasis on miraculous experiences for their own sake. It also is askew when claiming that Christians are unbelieving or without spiritual power if they do not feel that Scripture validates present seeking of these.

Edgar is convinced that Deere wrongly conveys the impression that religious experience ("It happened to me") itself validates his case. Such a focus on experience is a frequent assertion by Deere, rather than consistently acknowledging that Scripture has persuaded him. Edgar claims that Deere did not demonstrate in the book above that he had carefully studied all the crucial passages in the discussion yet (19).

In dealing with Scripture, Chap. 2 asserts that "scriptural argument will seldom convince charismatics that their interpretation of the experience is wrong" (23). The chapter insists that the only proper standard by which to evaluate experience is Scripture. He mentions Deere's admission that he originally chose a cessationist system so that it would permit him an excuse for not having a passion for God (25). This, Edgar contends, is a misrepresentation of motives in the many cessationists who have had a passion for the Lord, have led many to the Savior, and have shown sacrificial love to Him and His people, sometimes even sealing their testimony in martyrdom for Christ's sake.

Besides, says Edgar, many have switched from a charismatic view to a cessationist position. They would argue their experience if experience is to be decisive. Again, what God's Word says and means is the objective guide (26). He claims it is a fallacy of Deere to reason that people are not cessationists because of what Scripture teaches but because they have not experienced the gifts (28).

Chapter 2 also argues for a difference between NT miraculous gifts and those claimed today. One distinction is that Jesus and the apostles never failed, as advocates of miracles do today. Many charismatics admit that alleged gifts today are different from NT gifts, saying that people now do not have the gift of *infallible* prophecy as in the early church, thus conceding what cessationists basically argue.

Other charismatics have shifted to an effort to establish that their lesser, fallible prophecies are also in Scripture, in NT prophets as distinguished from OT prophets.

A notable advocate is Wayne Grudem (*The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* [Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1988] 109-12). In a 4-part series, David Farnell has answered Grudem and others (“Does the New Testament Teach Two Prophetic Gifts?”, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149/596, 150/597, 150/598, 150/599 [1992-1993]). Edgar’s survey of various passages admits no case of the NT, rightly interpreted, giving a lesser, defective type of gift matching those alleged today.

The writer being reviewed here uses Chap. 4 to argue for the temporary (early church) duration of apostles and prophets. He uses Eph 2:20 as a key text to claim this (cf. 72-85).

A case develops in Chap. 5 against the presence today of any who have the NT sign gifts such as miracles and healing. God does heal in answer to prayer, Edgar writes, but this does not mean that individuals with sign gifts are present. Even James 5:14-15 directed the church to deal with sickness as noncharismatic churches do today; evidently healers and miracle workers were not available. Chapter 6, a very long one (120-64), reasons that NT tongues were human languages as in Acts 2:4-11. In 10:46 Peter testifies that tongues at Caesarea were the same as in 2:4-11. Edgar sees no evidence in Scripture of *gl_ssa* ever meaning ecstatic speech (153). Verses in 1 Corinthians speak of foreign languages: 12:2 refers to tongues that are intelligible; 13:1 to tongues of men; 14:22 is a deduction based on Isaiah 28:11 that speaks of invaders’ foreign language. The author answers alleged problems for a human language view in 1 Corinthians 12–14 in ways fitting earthly languages. Glossalalia (ecstatic speech), common in various parts of the world, are non-supernatural and can be self-induced, in contrast to NT tongues that are miraculous from God (154-55).

Edgar sees the purpose of tongues as a sign to unbelievers, not only Jews but Gentiles relevant at Corinth (1 Cor 14:22). Supernatural tongues gained a hearing for the gospel. Their purpose was not to transmit angelic tongues or enhance personal devotions, for they always were for ministry to *others*. Romans 8:26 precludes the need for devotional help in this way since the Holy Spirit helps all believers in prayer without tongues. In addition, tongues are not evidence for a post-conversion baptism of the Spirit. Edgar develops at length his arguments against a private, devotional use (166-81).

The conclusion (10) shows that Deere’s approach has been endorsed by well-known charismatics. Deere pled for fairness, yet Edgar documents many citations where Deere attacks cessationists—their motives, honesty, humility, warmth, spiritual wholeness, confidence in God’s ability, living by grace, love, and morality (251). Another point here concerns many definite misrepresentations Deere makes of Edgar’s statements in *Miraculous Gifts*. Edgar asks how charismatic leaders can fail to recognize the weakness and improbability of Deere’s allegations, also his biblical interpretation, and can laud Deere’s book highly (253-55).

A 9-page bibliography and indexes of Scripture and subjects finish the book.

Edgar's book is a clear, detailed, closely-reasoned one obviously arising from diligent probing of Bible passages and currents of thought in the cessationist and charismatic views. For one who has read the volume by Deere, this response offers a provocative appeal not to be surprised by the Spirit but satisfied, based on allowing Scripture to be the basis, and assessing experiential claims by it.

John S. Feinberg. *Deceived by God?* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1997. 141 pp. \$9.99 (paper). Reviewed by Larry D. Pettegrew, Professor of Theology.

Most of us will need this little book sometime in our lives—either for ourselves, or for others. John Feinberg, Professor of Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has written a book which he “never wanted to write” (9). In 1987, Feinberg's wife, Patricia, was diagnosed with Huntington's Disease, a genetically transmitted illness that attacks part of the brain, causing gradual loss of control of one's voluntary movements, plus memory loss and depression. Dr. Feinberg was devastated, especially since before he proposed marriage to Patricia years earlier, he had been assured by doctors and seemingly God, that something like this would not happen. It was almost as though he had been deceived by God.

Feinberg has really wrestled with his situation—and clearly is still wrestling with it. But he has made great progress, and he shares the lessons he has learned. He relates his feelings of hopelessness and helplessness (Chap. 2). He offers advice on “how **not** to help the afflicted” (Chap. 3). He explains how he has been able to continue to appreciate the goodness of God (Chap. 4); why God hides the future from us (Chap. 5); the seeming unfairness of God (Chap. 6); how to use our afflictions for good (Chap. 7); and how suffering can produce holiness (Chap. 8). The book also includes an “Afterword” by Patricia, wherein she graciously and firmly expresses her abiding confidence in her Lord.

The underlying reason that this book is so valuable is that John Feinberg is an excellent theologian and student of Scripture. More specifically, he has specialized in the study of evil during his academic career. His doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago and some of his previous books deal with theodicy, the problem of evil. Of course, as he himself admits, his personal struggle with his wife's suffering is fundamentally an emotional problem rather than an intellectual one. Still, his many practical suggestions are undergirded with theological and biblical insights.

This book will be useful for laypeople, pastors, and biblical counselors. I recommend it.

Everet Ferguson, ed.. *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*. 2nd Edition. New York: Garland, 1997. 2 volumes. 1213 pp. \$75.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian.

With the recent resurgence of interest in the early church and church Fathers (as evidenced by the upcoming release of a 22-volume anthological commentary on the Scriptures, based on the writings of the church Fathers and edited by Thomas Oden [InterVarsity], due March 1998), a revision of this classic reference work is a welcome addition.

The editor, Distinguished Professor at Abilene Christian University and author of *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Eerdman's 1987, 1993, reviewed in *TMSJ* 5/2, 216-17), oversaw the revision that included over 250 new entries and a significant updating of the more than 1,000 others. The major purpose of the expansion of articles was to give "greater attention to the eastward expansion of Christianity" (viii). The two volumes are of the highest quality in both binding and paper, with a two-column per page layout. Though not profuse, the photographs, maps, and drawings to illustrate various articles are adequate. Every entry supplies a bibliography ranging from a single citation to over 25. A time-line at the beginning of Volume One covers the major events and personalities from the birth of Christ (ca. 4 B.C.) through roughly the Second Council of Nicea (A.D. 769). Additionally, the volume has an excellent 24-page subject index. The index lists all references to a particular subject, with page numbers representing the main entry given in bold type.

The strength of the work is in the clear and concise writing of the articles that vary in length from a single paragraph to several pages. Those who are not well-versed in the background and beliefs of the Orthodox Church will welcome the greater emphasis given to the eastern church in this edition. Many noteworthy articles deal with topics such as the "Interpretation of the Bible" and "Preaching." In addition, the articles on the various personalities and issues in the early doctrinal and Christological controversies are very thorough. The articles all serve the purpose of providing a basic overview and introduction, with a bibliography directing to sources for more specialized study.

While the price will be a hindrance to those of limited means, this is a valuable resource that will certainly be a standard reference source for years to come. I highly recommend this work and, for those unable to afford it personally, would advise them to recommend its purchase by their local public or university library.

S. Gerstenberger. *Leviticus: A Commentary*. Translated by Douglas W. Stott. OTL.

Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1996. xiv + 450 pp. \$42.00 (cloth).
Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Gerstenberger is Professor of Old Testament at Philipps-Universität, Marburg, Germany. He has written a number of books including *Yahweh the Patriarch: Ancient Images of God and Feminist Theology* (Fortress, 1996). *Leviticus* replaces the volume by Martin Noth (Westminster, 1965) in *The Old Testament Library* commentaries.

This volume contains a select bibliography at the beginning (xi-xiv) and a cursory subject index at the end (448-50). The translation of Leviticus follows the NRSV when there is essential agreement with Gerstenberger's own German translation of the Hebrew text. The main purpose of the commentary is to provide a translation and a discussion of the "sociotheological significance" of the text (19). Gerstenberger then applies the teachings of Leviticus to contemporary questions regarding the worship of God within a community of faith.

At times the translator of Gerstenberger's German text utilizes unusual collocations such as "hand leaning" for "laying on of hands" or "hand placement" (26), "blood aspersion" for "sprinkling blood" (27), and "stepwise burning" for "step by step burning" or "progressive burning" (30).

The author assumes a date for the composition of Leviticus in the Persian period between the fifth and third centuries B.C. There is no room for Mosaic authorship in his presentation. Indeed, he associates himself with a traditio-historical viewpoint that proposes an accretion of the parts of Leviticus like rings in a tree. "If a text grows like a tree in annual rings, then one can free oneself from the notion of an ordered, continuing narrative and focus on the thematically centered growth of individual textual groups" (6). Such presuppositions create their own set of interpretative problems. The author later admits that "theory and practice do not seem quite to coincide in the third book of Moses. The requirement of presenting an offering at the entrance to the tent of meeting, that is, at the one holy site and through the mediation of the one Aaronid priesthood, disregards the dispersal of the postexilic communities" (35). With this viewpoint the author must also devise an explanation for the constant references to Moses and Aaron as the recipients of divine revelation. Such problems are almost nonexistent if one accepts Mosaic authorship and an early setting for the book.

In 2:2 the NRSV has "token portion" (cf. "memorial portion" in NASB). Gerstenberger translates and annotates as follows: "sacrificial portion [literally 'memorial offering']" (37). He goes on to explain that it most likely involves encomiastic confession or invocation (42). His discussion surpasses the less than convincing explanation previously given by Noth.

"Semolina" in Gerstenberger's translation of 2:1 is another departure from NRSV ("choice flour"). The translation represents something quite different from the traditional definition of a finely ground wheat flour. "Semolina," according to

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, is “the gritty, coarse particles of wheat left after the finer flour has passed through the bolting machine, used for pasta.”

Gerstenberger correctly describes the exegetical significance of the use of the second person direct address in Leviticus (cf. 1:2, “When any of you . . .”). He argues that the present title of the book was based upon a misunderstanding of the contents, originating in the Greek and Latin traditions. The text is not a manual for Levites, but an instruction manual for the congregation of Israel (1, 43). However, the author also utilizes the direct address in support of his traditio-historical argument for composition in the Persian period and editorial projection of the materials back into the Mosaic period (25).

In contrast to the consistent format of Noth’s volume, Gerstenberger’s inconsistency in format is frustrating. Some sections (e.g., Chap. 1) are granted an interpretative “Analysis” (24) while other sections have none (Chaps. 2–3). Other sections receive more detailed attention under the headings of “Structure and Content” (65) and “Details” (93). “Structure and Analysis” (160) for Chap. 13 does not follow the format of previous sections containing these elements in their headings. The treatment of Chap. 17 (235-40) bears none of the previous headings but follows the same format as Chap. 1’s analysis. Several sections have verse-reference outlines and present the reader with what approximates a verse-by-verse commentary (e.g., 251-54 on 18:18-23, 315-16 on 21:8, 12, and 374-92 on 25:2-55). Since this commentary is arranged mainly by topics, the reader in search of verse-by-verse comment will often not find it.

Various interpretative discussions throughout the commentary are significantly more detailed than in Noth’s volume. For example, Gerstenberger discusses the presence of invocations or hymns at the time of sacrifice (31). In the handling of the important 26th chapter, the present volume has 34 pages of material as compared to Noth’s 6 pages. The author takes the time and space to discuss such things as the paronomasia involved in the word for “idols” (26:1; 403), the relationship to prophetic texts like Amos 4:6-11 (413), and the significance of “sevenfold” (26:18, 21, 24, 27; 413-14). Although Gerstenberger does not discuss whether Chap. 26 contains poetry, he does state that “the main melody is thus stated, and is then picked up and varied in the subsections” (412). He also mentions the use of poetic terminology. Ultimately, he classifies Chap. 26 as a comminatory sermon (423-26).

One of the outstanding characteristics of this commentary is the multitude of investigative questions that it asks. An interpreter must first know what questions to ask of the text before he can provide answers. Gerstenberger employs questions to guide the reader in a reasoned contemplation of the source for the text, the wording of the text, its purpose, and its application. For example, in his treatment of Chap. 13, the author poses 37 interpretative questions (156-73). The evangelical scholar may not agree with all the answers the author offers, but he certainly must

give due consideration to the questions.

Anyone involved in a detailed study of Leviticus will do well to include this volume in his library. In spite of his redactional and traditio-historical perspective, Gerstenberger has made a significant contribution to the interpretation of Leviticus.

Grant R. Jeffrey. *The Signature of God: Astonishing Biblical Discoveries*. Toronto: Frontier Research, 1996. 278 pp. \$13.95 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Grant Jeffrey has authored a number of volumes on biblical studies. Most of those books have been published by Frontier Research Publications of Toronto. The majority deal with the prophetic materials of Scripture. Both Hal Lindsey and Jack Van Impe have recommended Jeffrey's publications. *The Signature of God* went through five printings in its first six months (July-December 1996) due to its popularity. Its claims are similar to those contained in a recent national best seller: Michale Drosnin, *The Bible Code* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997). Ronald S. Hendel and Shlomo Steinberg have written an excellent response to *The Bible Code* in their article "The Bible Code: Cracked and Crumbling," *Bible Review* 13 (August 1997):22-25.

The profile, popularity, and claims of *The Signature of God* demand its review in this journal. It is not the practice of *The Master's Seminary Journal* to multiply negative reviews, but some volumes cannot be ignored because of their popularity, even though their content is debatable. A warning sometimes needs to be given concerning such works. This will be that kind of review.

The thesis of Jeffrey's work is "that the Bible contains a number of fascinating proofs that absolutely authenticate the Scriptures as the inspired and authoritative Word of God" (9). The evidences marshaled include that of historical documents, archeology, science, medicine, fulfillment of prophecy, coded words and phrases hidden in the Hebrew text, mathematical characteristics hidden in the Hebrew text, and "undesigned coincidences."

Jeffrey's intentions are good and his format is fascinating. However, his treatment of the material is not always sound. To begin with, he engages in a cavalier and unsubstantiated use of numbers. For example, he claims that within 40-50 years of NT events "millions of Gentile and Jewish believers" existed (29) and that during the 2nd and 3rd centuries "millions of these converts died horribly as martyrs" (30). He cites statistics for the use of "heart" in the OT in a context dealing with the physical organ, but he gives no indication that most of the references do not refer to the organ (155). In addition, Jeffrey cites statistical probabilities for the fulfillment of various OT prophecies without proof of the accuracy of the probabilities—in fact, many are admittedly estimates (172-81).

Another characteristic of Jeffrey's approach is his utilization of impressive numbers without supporting documentation. Examples include the percentages of early American colleges which were Christian and of the classes of those schools in 1855 who became ministers of the gospel (20), the number of recovered manuscripts and letters from the first few centuries which were written by Christians (22), and the claim that 98% of the content of the NT is found in those materials (22). Other undocumented and questionable statistics include the claim that there are more than 85,000 converts to Christianity every day worldwide (31-32) and that more than 100 million true Christians live in China today (197).

Some of Jeffrey's claims are definitely erroneous. In regard to codes and mathematical characteristics, he dogmatically asserts that "while these incredible patterns exist in the Hebrew text of the Torah, no other apocryphal texts display this pattern, nor can they find it in any other Hebrew religious or secular texts" (11). However, Muslim scholars make exactly the same kind of claims for the Quran. During this reviewer's fifteen years of missionary service in a Muslim country, he learned that Muslim scholars cite numerical "codes" in the Quran as proof that it is a God-given book. The number "nineteen," for example, occurs in a large number of varied situations in the Quran, a feature that cannot be attributed to mere coincidence. The statistics for this Quranic number include chapters, verses, words, letters, and sequences. Consider the following quotes from Muhammad Zamir, *Dreams, Miracles and Supplications in Islam* (Dhaka, Bangladesh: The University Press Ltd., 1995), 25-26 (emphasis added):

The mystery continues. 'Basmalah' (in Arabic) or 'Besmele' (in Turkish) or 'Bismillah' (in the languages of the Indian Sub-continent) all refer to 'Bismillah ar Rahman ar Rahim' (In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful). Almost all the chapters of the Holy Quran start with this sentence (except the ninth Sura Tauba), and this consists of 19 letters. It is also interesting to note that the first word "Ism" meaning "Name" occurs 19 times in the Quran. It is also extraordinary that the word Allah occurs 2698 times in the Quran—which again is divisible by 19 ($19 \times 142 = 2698$). This incredible series of coincidences continues. 'Al Rahman' (the Most Gracious) occurs 57 times (divisible by 19) and 'Al Rahim' (the Most Merciful) occurs 114 times (again divisible by 19). *These are unmistakable signs of divine authorship.*

Any discussion of the mathematical aspects in the Quran would remain incomplete without reference to the *Code* letters or 'Muqatta-aat' as they appear at the heading of certain Chapters (Suras) in the Quran. It has been pointed out by Deedat that out of a total of 28 letters of the Arabic alphabet, exactly half of them are involved in these Quranic initials (Alif, Lam, Mim, Re, Kaf, Small Hey, Ya, Ain, Swad, Toeh, Seen, Qaf, Nun, Big Hey). These 14 letters are constituted into 14 different combinations These 14 different combinations are repeated in 29 different Chapters of the Quran. If one adds the 14 initials to the 14 Combinations and the 29 Suras, one obtains a total of 57 (a multiple of 19). Another coincidence?

The miraculous nature of the Holy Quran and the great importance of 19 throughout the Holy Book has been also dealt with by other Islamic theologians. In this

context they refer to Sura Qaf, Sura Sad and Sura As-Shura and point out the the divine strain of 19 continues in the use of the Heys, the Mims, the Ains, the Seens and the Qafs in these Suras.

One would indeed be a fool if one did not understand from these *divine marks* the underlying indication of Allah. *No human author could have possibly written such a Book with its complicated dovetailing method and its numerical factors.*

This kind of argumentation is not a new discovery by Christian writers like Grant Jeffrey. If such arguments and demonstrations are proofs of divine inspiration, then the Quran also qualifies. In fact, his claims of certain sequences can be applied to the King James Version to show that its translation was a product of divine inspiration. Consider the following example: in the KJV Psalm 46's 46th word from the beginning is "shake" and the 46th word from the end is "spear." William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and was 46 years old in 1610. Therefore, on the basis of Jeffrey's reasoning, the Hebrew OT, the KJV (at least the latest revision of the original 1611 version), and the Quran all bear the divine imprimatur.

Other erroneous claims to be found in *The Signature of God* include: "The New Testament was widely copied and translated into many other languages during the first few decades following the resurrection of Christ" (30); "the original Greek manuscript of the New Testament was translated faithfully into Hebrew, Syriac, Egyptian, Coptic, Latin, and other languages between A.D. 60-70" (31); "the Torah, or the Law, recorded by Moses approximately 1491-1451 B.C." (139); and, "the Bible has now been translated in more than 3,850 languages in every nation" (196). All of these statements are demonstrably false.

Jeffrey avoids recent archeological research and evaluations (even by staunch evangelicals) for the Sinai inscriptions, the tower of Babel, and the walls of Jericho. Much of the support for his very questionable interpretations of these archaeological materials comes from nineteenth-century sources.

As if this were not enough to dissuade the thinking person from getting caught up in Jeffrey's claims, the actual evidence he presents in equidistant letter sequences is also flawed dramatically. In order to find "Hitler" in Deut 10:17-22, he had to omit one letter in accordance with a rabbinical abbreviation. In order to obtain "*be-yam marah Auschwitz*" ("in the bitter sea of Auschwitz"), in the same passage, however, he had to retain the letter twice (avoiding rabbinical abbreviations) and include it once (209-10).

This reviewer was unable to confirm Jeffrey's claim that "Yeshua Shmi" ("my name is Jesus") occurs in Isa 53:10—it did not compute. The same can be said of "Yoshiah" ("he will save") in Gen 3:20. Based on these few samples, this reviewer is sure that most claims are either completely false or involve the manipulation of either text or numbers allowing for aberrations that produced the desired conclusion. Arbitrary omission and inclusion of letters in accordance with some rabbinical abbreviations clearly forces the text to fit preconceived notions.

Utilizing the same technique of equidistant letter sequences, computer-

aided research has revealed references to 13 assassinations of world leaders in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Melville's book was published in 1851. One of the assassination references is to Indira Ghandi's death in 1984. Is *Moby Dick* to be considered divinely inspired?

Caution is commended any time someone claims that God has hidden something for centuries in order to reveal the secrets to him/her at the end of time. Jeffrey makes this claim repeatedly (204, 211, 246, 247). Such subjective theologizing confirms the dangerous errors contained in *The Signature of God*. The book and its views cannot be recommended by anyone who believes in the unique nature of the inspiration of Scripture.

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Brauch. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1996. 808 pp. (cloth). \$29.99. Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This work is one of the best recent evangelical works on problem texts. As a re-editing of four previous books, now combined in one volume, it adds new material on more than a hundred verses. It includes a Subject Index and a Scripture Index. A general introduction answers twelve questions, such as "How Do We Know Who Wrote the Bible?" Other questions are on matters like how we can believe in miracles, why God is angry (OT), then loving (NT), so-called discrepancies in numbers, whether archaeology supports the Bible, whether prophecies are accurate, NT quotes of the OT, and why there are four gospels. From the introduction on, the book lists 64 Bible books consecutively and discusses problem passages in sequence (it omits Obadiah and Zephaniah).

Kaiser does all the OT, Bruce the synoptics, Brauch Paul's letters, and Davids the remaining NT books. The writers purportedly believe in inspiration of Scripture, though the four differ in how they define inspiration, as evidenced by viewpoints they express that some readers will regard as explaining Scripture away rather than explaining it from a high view of Scripture.

Sometimes references guide users to other passages or introductory essays that supplement what is said (e. g., Gen 2:17 on death, linked with Rom 5:12). Where dealing with the same problem, different authors at times have varying explanations.

Kaiser says that a study of the OT problems helps in texts where no explanation seems to be offered in Scripture. Its other benefits include helping to understand when passages allegedly contradict other biblical texts; enabling a sharper understanding of God's Word and consequently spiritual growth; trying the believer's faith, patience, and commitment; illumining idioms; showing credibility and not collusion between writers of Scripture; overcoming doubts; helping to see

in the explanations the unity in the Bible; allowing one to see apparent reasons difficulties arise (multiple names for some people or places, different methods of figuring official years, abbreviated accounts, sayings in which the meaning is hard to grasp); and many more.

The work contains a profitable survey on “The History of Hard Sayings” (32-34). This study traces the history of interpreting these from early treatises such as those by Eusebius, Chrysostom, and Augustine to the present. The section lists and dates many books and essays dealing with the topics. Among them in the last century and a half are: John Haley, 1874 and later printings, *An Examination of Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*; George DeHoff, 1950, *Alleged Bible Contradictions*, F. F. Bruce, 1972, *Answers to Questions*; Robert Mounce, 1979, *Answers to Questions About the Bible*; Gleason Archer, 1982, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*, etc. Other works this discussion omits are E. J. Young, 1957, *Thy Word Is Truth*; William Neil, 1975, *What Jesus Really Meant*; Neil and Stephen Travis, 1979-1981, *More Difficult Sayings of Jesus*; William Arndt, 1932, *Bible Difficulties* and also 1926, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?*; Robert Stein, 1996, *Interpreting Puzzling Texts in the New Testament*, combining three works of 1984-1988; Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, 1992, *When Critics Ask* (includes a section on 17 mistakes people make which bring texts into supposed error, 15-26).

Beyond this “History of Hard Sayings,” the volume includes a great assortment of books in connection with discussions of separate passages. Among these are OT and NT introductions, works on archaeology and the Bible, books on Bible chronology, Bible history, manners and customs, hermeneutics, biblical inerrancy, systematic theology, and particular issues such as the role of women in the church.

The present book has entries that discuss passages in detail and others that merely list another passage where relevant details appear. It has 50 listings on Genesis, 67 on 1 Samuel through 2 Chronicles, only 7 on Ezra/Nehemiah/Esther, 37 on Psalms, only 15 on Isaiah, just 7 on Jeremiah/Lamentations, 7 on Ezekiel, a mere 27 on the Minor Prophets, 78 on Matthew, 15 on John, 26 on Romans, and only 17 on the Revelation.

Readers, according to their convictions, will react differently to viewpoints. The book denies that Gen 3:16 refers to a woman’s sexual desire for her husband or any order a husband is to observe in relation to his wife. It holds the text to mean that Eve, due to her sin, would turn from sole dependence on God to her husband, though God warns that the results of this curse will not be pleasant (98). Discussion on Gen 4:17 furnishes a good answer for where Cain got his wife; he married a sister; in those early days genetic possibilities of Adam and Eve were very good, with no biological reasons to bar marrying within the family as became necessary later (101). Five reasons support taking “sons of God” in Gen 6:2-4 to mean titularies from kings, nobles and aristocrats, despots craving power or renown (108). The same discussion advances much reasoning against other views. Another place

views Melchizedek as a historical person, not the pre-incarnate Christ (120-21).

Some will question seeing the difference between 24,000 (Num 25:9) and 23,000 (1 Cor 10:8) as a slip (error) of memory by Paul. Here the writer assumes an error, then explains it away as if it were not an issue, since it does not bother Paul's purpose in the point he intends in 1 Corinthians 10. Also, the treatment of Joshua 10 does not understand the sun standing still as a miracle. The sun was simply hidden behind clouds during a thunderstorm, allowing coolness for Joshua's men to fight. To stop the sun and moon would cause a catastrophe for the entire planet due to the force of gravity. One can question this opinion in light of the sufficiency of the God who created heaven and earth; however, the writer on this problem does not deny God's infinite ability. In Judges 11, the writer sees Jephthah as sacrificing his daughter in death; no matter what one decides on this, he will have readers who passionately agree and others who strongly disagree. The book defends Ruth's decency on the threshing floor. Samuel really appeared in spirit when Saul visited at Endor (1 Samuel 28). A good discussion of imprecations appears (Pss 5:5; 137:8-9; 139:20). In Romans 12:20, the solution explains heaping burning coals on the head by an Egyptian custom and reasons from the context; it has a positive sense in line with Prov 25:21-22, bringing a person to repentance.

In another text, the writer defends Jesus' calling the mustard seed the smallest among seeds "you plant in the ground" (Mark 4:31). Jesus did not claim it to be smallest in all the world of botany. Romans 1:27 condemns homosexuality. The "thorn" (2 Cor 12:7) refers to a human opponent of Paul because of the OT use of thorns as a figure for enemies (Num 13:55 etc.), "messenger" always denoting a person in Paul's writings and because of 2 Corinthians 10-12 pursuing the basic topic of Paul's opponents. In 1 Tim 2:11-15, women who are not to teach are not to let persuasion by false teachers spur them to undermine authority of male leaders; outside of local problems here and in 1 Cor 14:33-40, women can have authority, without a curtailed life, says the problem solver. The entry misrepresents the view that the passages deal only with roles, not nature, when it says the "roles" view makes women in some sense "inferior" (666). Those taking the "roles" view have often sought to show that proper *subordination* taught by God does not at all suggest inferiority.

Comments on some passages will stir strong opposition from those who teach perseverance of the genuinely saved and the falling away of mere professors.

The entries on Heb 6:4-6, 2 Pet 1:10 and 2:20-22, and 1 John 5:16 all assume that those once saved can lose their salvation. And in Revelation, the 144,000 are Jewish and Gentile believers (763), while the "woman" (Chap. 12) is also both Israel and the church, i.e. Christians (767-68).

Clearly the book is a mixture of viewpoints. Different readers will judge its 808 pages as outstanding, mediocre, or less. In a great number of the cases it offers helpful summaries and is quite beneficial.

Kenneth A. Mathews. *Genesis 1–11:26*. Vol. 1A in *The New American Commentary*, ed. by E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1996. xvi + 528 pp. \$36.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Kenneth A. Mathews is Professor of Old Testament at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University. He is an acknowledged expert on the Dead Sea Scrolls, textual criticism, biblical Hebrew, and the literary study of the Old Testament. Professor Mathews is co-author of *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll* and also the Associate General Editor for the Old Testament commentaries in *The New American Commentary* series. *The New American Commentary* is the continuation of the tradition established by the older *An American Commentary* series under the editorship of Alvah Hovey at the end of the nineteenth century. In keeping with that tradition, the current series affirms “the divine inspiration, inerrancy, complete truthfulness, and full authority of the Bible” (from the Editors’ Preface). The format makes the materials available to layman and scholar alike. Technical points of grammar and syntax appear in the footnotes rather than in the text. The commentaries use the NIV translation, but individual commentators have the freedom to develop their own translations of the original text where they differ with the NIV.

A detailed 90-page introduction begins with a helpful outline of its contents (21-22). A brief outline of Genesis 1–11 commences the commentary proper (112). More detailed outlines precede subsequent commentary sections. Occasional charts are helpful in two ways: (1) providing detailed material pertinent to the discussion at hand and (2) visualizing the genealogical records. Three excellent charts fall into the first category. Two are tabulations of the chronologies of Genesis 5 (300) and 11:10-26 (495) according to the MT, LXX, and Samaritan Pentateuch. The other is a modification of Richard Longacre’s structural analysis of the flood narrative based on discourse type and linguistic features (354).

Excursuses present five topics in the commentary. They include the translation of 1:1-2 (136-44), the image of God (164-72), the human soul (197-99), the origin of civilization in ANE mythology (283-84), and the revelation of the divine name (293-94). Mathews favors a view of the image of God which includes the aspects of rulership and sonship.

Throughout the commentary, each major section begins with a discussion of literary structure and is usually followed by a presentation of the theological theme. Then it treats the pericope verse-by-verse, following the outline presented for the text. The text of NIV appears in bold type at regular intervals in the outline. Transliterations of all Hebrew and Greek words and phrases are in the body of the text. The footnotes contain citations of the non-transliterated Hebrew and Greek.

Source materials, recommendations for further study, additional technical detail, and grammatical references come only in the footnotes. End materials include a person index and limited subject and Scripture indexes.

The commentary accepts Moses as the author/compiler of Genesis. Mathews shows a healthy respect for the contributions of historical and literary criticism but refuses to allow them to be forced upon the text. Mathews sees *tôledôt* references in Genesis as evidences of pre-Genesis sources that the author incorporated with certain modifications and a degree of elasticity (31-32). He utilized the formula to give the book unity and to employ genealogy to demonstrate the narrowing focus of the book as it progresses (34).

According to Mathews, Genesis 1-11 functions as the preamble for the Pentateuch. One of its themes is the promissory blessing of humanity (51). Human disobedience postponed in part that blessing and a fivefold cursing is encountered in Genesis 1-11. A fivefold blessing (Gen 12:1-3) through Abraham and his descendants as detailed in Genesis 12-Deuteronomy 34 counters the cursing.

Under the topic of the "Theology of Genesis" (54-63), Mathews discusses patriarchal promises (blessing, seed, and land), God and His world, human life, sin, civilization, and covenant. "Interpreting Genesis" (63-85) includes innerbiblical interpretation, Jewish interpretation, Christian interpretation, and Pentateuchal criticism. The last section covers source criticism, form and tradition history, revisionist trends, and traditional criticism as well as literary readings and canon. The author accepts a second-millennium date for the composition of the Pentateuch (79-80).

In his treatment of parallel ancient literature and Genesis (86-101), the commentator demonstrates a cautious consideration of such witnesses. Nothing has been discovered which compares directly with Genesis 1-11. The biblical pericope differs substantially from contemporary myths. Although the biblical text exhibits an undertone of repudiation, it does not contain an open disputation of the pagan concepts. The topics in the parallel literature discussed by Mathews include creation and mankind, Eden, long-lived patriarchs, and flood.

The final section of the introductory materials deals with creation and contemporary interpretation (101-11). Mathews accepts the biblical creationist viewpoint and refers to a number of recent scientific treatises espousing a designed universe and an ultimate Designer, God. The commentary was published before the author could include a reference to the most recent treatise in support of this view: Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (N. Y.: Free Press, 1996). Mathews concludes that Genesis 1-11 is a theological account grounded in history. He affirms its historicity, accuracy, and authority.

In the body of the commentary, the author reaches a number of significant conclusions. He supports the *ex nihilo* creation through the context rather than by means of the Hebrew term *bara'* (128-29). In his first detailed excursus, Mathews defends the view that Genesis 1:1-2 should be included in the first day of creation

without any “gap” or divine judgment (136-44). He waffles on the meaning of “day” in the creation narrative, ultimately deciding on a nonliteral sense even though a definite answer remains elusive (149).

The following are conclusions regarding some of the remaining exegetical cruxes in Genesis 1–11:

- 2:6 ’*_d* refers to underground streams (195-96)
- 2:9 The “tree of knowledge” was probably intended as one means by which God would have dispensed His wisdom to the man and the woman by permitting them to eat its fruit at His discretion (203-6).
- 2:23 Before the fall of man, the paradigm of leadership-followship in the man-woman relationship had been established as a creation ordinance. This paradigm is especially applied to the family (218-22).
- 3:15 The woman’s “seed” is a reference to Christ, but it also includes a dimension involving the believing community (247-48).
- 3:16 This verse is best understood by comparing it with 4:7b regarding the juxtaposition of “desire” and “rule.” The woman will attempt to control her husband, but she will not succeed since God has ordained his leadership (248-52).
- 4:3-4 God’s response to the offering of Cain was due to his attitude and integrity rather than to the identity or nature of the gift itself (268).
- 4:7 Cain had to make a choice between repentance and obstinance. Choosing repentance would give him the opportunity to master his sin. If he made the wrong choice, his sin would be stirred up to consume him (269-71).
- 4:26 The last part of the verse announces a new and decisive direction in worship for the descendants of Seth (291-93).
- 5:1-32 The MT text is preferable to the LXX. The genealogy is open, but, at maximum, it telescopes only a few millennia into the selective format (299-305).
- 6:1-4 Sethites (“sons of God”) married any women (“daughters of men”) they chose, including Cainite women. Their licentious lifestyle produced a time of unprecedented wickedness (320-39).
- 6:3 The reference to 120 years was the shortening of the average human life span from what it had been (335).

The commentary in general handles various exegetical issues fully and with attention to detail. In a few instances, however, it misses an opportunity for completeness. One example is in the discussion of the dietary prescriptions found in 1:29-30 (175) and 9:3-4 (400-402). At no time does Mathews introduce the concept of progressive revelation. In fact, he seems to avoid any suggestion of how the Bible interpreter might explain the differences in dietary prescriptions throughout the corpus of Scripture.

Another example of incompleteness occurs in the comments about the four rivers watering the garden of Eden (2:10-14; 207-8). Although the commentator discourages any identification with contemporary geography, he does not indicate that the primary reason would be the geographical and geological alterations resulting from a universal flood in the days of Noah. Mathews' failure to discuss this possibility is probably related more to his waffling on the universality of the deluge.

In one of the most disappointing sections of the commentary (that dealing with the Noahic flood), the author first admits that "there can be no dispute that the narrative depicts the flood in the language of a universal deluge." Then he leaves the door open for the opposite conclusion: "Yet if the report is a phenomenological depiction, permitting the possibility of a local flood, the meaning is not substantially altered: all that Noah and his generation know is swallowed up by the waters so that none survives" (380).

Except for a footnote on page 107 listing a few references to recent creationism, the author ignores the substantial body of literature that exists regarding a universal flood. In 76 pages of commentary regarding Noah, he recommends only one source to the readers (380) which specifically deals with the current discussion: S. Austin and D. Boardman, "Did Noah's Flood Cover the Entire World?" in *The Genesis Debate*, edited by R. Youngblood (Nashville: Nelson, 1986) 210-29. That unfortunate lack of even a cursory treatment of the key issues involved mars an otherwise very good commentary.

This reviewer looks forward to the publication of the remainder of Mathews' treatment of Genesis. If the other volumes of *The New American Commentary* are as well done, the series will have accomplished its goal of being the worthy successor of *An American Commentary*.

Floyd C. McElveen. *The Mormon Illusion: What the Bible Says about the Latter-Day Saints*. 3rd ed. Revised and expanded from original, 1977. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1997. 223 pp. \$10.99 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

McElveen, a convert to Christianity after zealous efforts of a Mormon to convince him otherwise, is a graduate of Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, Oregon. He has been a missionary evangelist, church planter, pastor, and national evangelist for Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society. He adds to his earlier edition (Regal Books) Chap. 16 that contrasts the Mormon and biblical view of heaven, Appendix B answering the Mormon slogan that Christian ministers are paid hirelings, and four and a half pages annotating "Additional Resources."

Sixteen chapters are well-organized, and after them Appendixes A on the way of salvation and B (cf. above). Many citations are from Mormon sources,

and McElveen is both clear and concise in articulating how biblical claims are quite different from many Mormon points.

The Preface reasons that real love warns of error (10), and Christians are to exercise right judgment based on God's Word (Matt 7:24). An urgency compels the author to answer a religion that goes back to Joseph Smith. Smith first attacked all Christians and their churches as being wrong, their creeds as an abomination, all their professors as corrupt (10). McElveen documents a Mormon "apostle," Orson Pratt, long deceased, as writing that if Mormonism is false when examined diligently, this should be extensively published and arguments clearly, logically stated (11-12). The book urges a distinction between Mormonism (its claims) and Mormons, whom God loves and Christians should love (12).

Quite early, McElveen questions whether all Christians are corrupt, many of whom even sealed their witness with their blood. As for McElveen, discovery that he could know that he had eternal life (1 John 5:13) in Christ, which he could not know in Mormonism, was a great factor in his salvation.

The author points out contradictions in Mormonism often, such as claims that Smith's first vision was at age 14, other assertions that it was at 17, whether 1820 or 1823 (28). Another example is Smith's claim that he first saw an angel, yet the account that he saw the Father and the Son. Certain Smith prophecies did not come to pass (contra Deut 13:1-5). He claimed that the New Jerusalem and its temple (cf. Rev 21:22) would be built in Missouri in the generation related to 1832, which never occurred. He also claimed Jesus Christ's birthplace to be at Jerusalem (Book of Mormon, Alma 7:10) rather than Bethlehem, contrary to Micah 5:2 and Matthew 2:1 (cf. further examples in Chap. 3).

Chapter 4 says that Smith claimed to receive the Book of Mormon (BM) in reformed Egyptian language given around A.D. 384 to 421, yet the King James Version of 1611 has many words in the same order in hundreds of instances. Even italicized KJV words appear in the BM, though not italicized there (46). Also, Mormons claimed the BM was from God and the most correct book on earth (46), yet Mormons found it necessary to make around 4,000 changes in grammar, punctuation, and word structure in the BM (cf. examples, 47). In Mormon belief, God was not God from all eternity. Rather he was once a man, a mortal, who by advancing progressively reached His exalted state. Man may also advance and become a god. Scripture represents God only as God, with nobody else becoming a god (Isa 43:10; 44:6; 46:9). He was eternally God (Ps 90:2). Chapter 7 develops this correction. Then Chap. 8 shows that Brigham Young taught often that Adam was God, which the Mormon church in more recent times has had to correct.

In Mormonism, Christ by a process attained to the status of godhood in his pre-existent state (72). Contrary to this, the Bible says that Christ was God from everlasting (Isa 9:6; Mic. 5:2; John 1:1). McElveen here fails to supply the reference in Mormon literature to their concept (72-73).

Mormonism uses the word "grace" but believes that man must by good

works make himself worthy of God's grace (74). Christ's death will save all the human race into at least a second, lower level of salvation, all but a few "sons of perdition." Second, Mormonism teaches a conditional individual salvation by grace plus baptism and works (that would leave out the thief on the cross) (145). Chapters 14-15 develop in detail that salvation is by grace, not works, and give examples of Mormons who became Christians by embracing this.

An interesting phenomenon is that Mormonism claims that all Christian statements or creeds are abominations, yet in many specifics translate these ideas verbatim into the Mormon creed, where they are holy before God (119). Mormon denial that Christians know God rightly seems strange. Many Christians showed the fruit of the Spirit, maintained unswerving love to Christ, some even giving their lives at the stake and in other ways for His sake.

Appendix A is useful as it points out sixteen concepts for Christians to go over with Mormon friends. These show the difference between what the Bible says and what Mormon writers say. Some of the points deal with the fact of one God, God's eternity, God not originating as a man, the second Person of the Trinity always was God, fulfillment testing a prophet's genuineness, etc.

The two-page bibliography lists both Christian and Mormon sources. Among Christian writings are famous works by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, such as *Mormonism—Shadow or Reality* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., 1975). Additional resources list ten writings by the Tanners, many available through Utah Lighthouse Ministry, P. O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, UT 84110.

McElveen's book is a very readable, at times illustrated, mostly well-documented source that is one of the most usable popular tools for Christians witnessing to Mormons. The author fills it with frequent emphases on loving Mormons and seeking not to criticize them but to show them the truth and seek to win them to Christ. The book's style is one of the most engaging this reviewer has come across among popular books on the subject.

Donald K. McKim. *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster-John Knox, 1996. 310 pp. \$15.95 (paper). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian.

One author recently called our time "the golden age of reference works" (Johnson, *Recent Reference Books in Religion* [InterVarsity, 1996] 9), and this reviewer would certainly agree with that assessment. In the last several years a number of outstanding reference works have appeared which have been of immense benefit to the busy pastor.

Adding to the list of recent reference tools is Donald McKim's *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Seeking to provide "short,

one-to-three sentence definitions of theological terms from some twenty-one theological disciplines" (v), the author has listed definitions for over 6,000 theological words and terms. He highlights mainly the history of doctrine by his precision in defining words, calling them "building blocks for Christian theology" (ibid). In the scope of his stated purpose, the author has provided a valuable tool for both student and pastor. The layout is well-conceived and the text is extremely readable. Greek and Hebrew words are transliterated and Latin words and phrases are italicized.

Though the work contains an abundance of "see" and "see also" reference pointers, it does not have nearly as many as one would hope. Occasionally entries are either too brief (cf.: "Reconstructionism") or incomplete (e.g., "Theonomy" where the word is defined only in light of Paul Tillich's usage). In cases of some more recent theological identities, such as "Progressive Dispensationalism" or "Vineyard Movement," the volume has no entry at all.

However, these are minor criticisms of an otherwise excellent book. Supplemented with a more thorough work such as the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker, 1986), this work will certainly find a ready place as a quick reference tool.