

Davies, W. D., and Dale C. Allison, Jr. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*. Vol 3. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997. 789 pp. \$69.95.

Those familiar with the first two volumes of this commentary will find much that is familiar in the organization and style of this third volume. It contains the same detailed attention to the text and extensive, useful bibliographies as the other two volumes.

This volume of the commentary includes some interesting illustrative information, such as the note concerning the Russian Skoptsy sect, which in its understanding of the phrase "there are some eunuchs who are eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of heaven" (19:12), believed that Jesus emasculated himself and sought to gain 144,000 castrates so that the end might come (23); or that there is the "tantalizing possibility" of the discovery of the ossuary of Simon of Cyrene who carried the crossbeam of Jesus' cross (610). Furthermore, the text is at times enlivened by vigorous and entertaining imagery. For example, in making the case for the possibility of rapid social change, and in opposition to the adage of "the inevitability of gradualness," the following comment is found: "We suggest that history is not a faculty meeting. There are times when something has to be done, not just discussed" (700). There is also an occasional refreshing departure from previous academic constraints, as, for example, when the parables of the foolish virgins and the servant are both described as allegory ("plainly 'an allegory'" and "transparent allegory" [392, 286]).

The commentary concludes with a thirty-five page section entitled, "Matthew: A Retrospect." This section is illuminating in many ways. It begins by reaffirming the thesis, advanced by Davies in *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, that the evangelist Matthew consciously engaged post-Jamnian Judaism. Many of the issues distinctive to Matthew are concerns shared with the rabbis, although, of course, with quite different outcomes. This is not to say that this distracts the evangelist from his focus on Jesus, his life, and his message.

The commentary goes on to express itself agnostic on the possibility of constructing a theology of Matthew. The schemas put forward by such scholars as Strecker, Walker, Kingsbury and Meier are all considered to be "antecedently improbable if we take seriously the unsystematic way of thinking prevalent amongst the rabbis" (706). This is because Messianism is inherently revolutionary, which in its turn provokes complex, confusing, and often highly contradictory reactions. The commentary as a whole has an admirable focus on the text, although at times it does speak in theological terms (e.g., 477, 605, 625, 639). Even in a commentary of this length, if the focus is primarily on the text, there is little space for long theological asides. One should not complain about this if it performs its primary task well, and it does. But perhaps in this pointed rejection of the possibility of systematizing Matthew's thought is found the explanation why so little is made of the opportunity to summarize Matthew's theological perspective, missing both from the introduction in volume 1 and from the retrospective in volume 3.

Finally, the commentary places Matthew in the wider context of Christian history. Written at a time of great crisis—the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of

temple, as well as the clear possibility that Christianity would become dominated by Gentiles in the near future—Matthew “hoped through his Gospel to help keep Jewish and Gentile Christians together” (723). Allison (it is apparent that this section is primarily his work—cf. his comments about himself in the first person, 698) makes the curious observation that Matthew’s silence on the subject of circumcision means that he takes the Pauline position that Gentiles do not have to become Jews to be saved, and furthermore claims that in his interpretation of the law, Matthew swims in the mainstream. This is certainly a more centrist reading of Matthew’s understanding of the law than is usually found in Matthean scholarship. It is all the more surprising that Allison considers Matthew’s position on the law “mainstream” when he traces the inheritors of Matthean Christianity to the Nazoraeans, which fit the necessary profile, in that they were Jewish-Christians who accepted the Gentile mission.

How, then, should this massive work of scholarship be assessed? The three volumes stand as one of the major commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew in which all future interpreters of the Gospel will find a source of fruitful dialogue and helpful ideas. It is a “must have,” both in libraries and in footnotes. Davies and Allison are to be thoroughly commended on the fruits of their considerable toil.

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Dawes, Gregory W. *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33*. Leiden/Boston/Koln: Brill, 1998. xiv + 264. \$85.50.

*The Body in Question* is a revision of a University of Otago Ph.D. dissertation, written under the supervision of Paul Trebilco and Brendan Byrne. Published in Brill’s “Biblical Interpretation Series,” this study provides a contribution to the debate surrounding the interpretation of Eph 5:32-33, which is a part of a larger discussion—mainly among conservative scholars—concerning male headship and female subordination in the NT.

In the introduction, Dawes offers a summary of the interpretive debate as he outlines four prevalent interpretations of the pericope: (a) a defense of patriarchal order (Clark, Knight), (b) a rejection of patriarchal order (Schüssler-Fiorenza), (c) reinterpretation of patriarchal passages (Mickelsen, Kroeger, Hardesty, Dawson), and (d) ambivalent evaluations (Witherington). His study builds on the work of Marlis Gielen which “anticipates some of the conclusions of the present study” (10). The book’s thesis is summed up in the conclusion: “Both the command to ‘be subordinate’ and the command to ‘love’ can and should be retained in any interpretation of the passage. . . . But a comprehensive and consistent reading of Eph 5:21-33, within the context of the letter as a whole, will redirect these injunctions, so that they apply to both partners” (232). The book is divided into three parts.

Part 1, “The Theory of Metaphor” (25-78), contains two chapters. Chapter 1 establishes “the functioning of metaphor” as Dawes examines the theories of I. A. Richards, Max Black, and Monroe Beardsley. He concludes that we can detect the presence of a metaphor when (a) the term(s) “which we suspect to be the ‘focus’ of a metaphor cannot be understood literally . . .” (55), and (b) “although the