

reference to papal authority and infallibility. Added as appendices to the book are the statements on the Eucharist and the ministry in the English language recently agreed upon by Roman Catholic-Anglican, Methodist-Roman Catholic, and Lutheran-Roman Catholic conferences (pp. 667-681).

Beyond all doubt, this volume portrays a remarkable ecumenical achievement. It mirrors the conviction that "the statements that we can make in common are quantitatively and qualitatively more important than any contradictions" (p. x). But, following the trend of German scholarship, it also puts considerable limitations on the Bible. Thus, we are no longer to say "The Bible is the word of God," but rather that it *becomes* God's word for anyone who accepts it as such (pp. 100-101). The Ten Commandments are "to a large extent conditioned by their age and their cultural environment" (p. 436). Likewise, in the gospels we have stories about Jesus which cannot be regarded simply as events from the Lord's life, and sayings of his "which the historical Jesus never uttered" (p. 96). The authors also hold that "we can learn virtually nothing" from the Scriptures on specific questions of sexual morality (p. 498). One frequently wonders whether the catechism was meant for mutual enlightenment and edification or for the instruction of enquirers.

The English translation made by eight English-speaking experts under the editorship of John Cumming achieves a level of readability rarely found in works whose original language was German. Still, the book remains too technical for most lay readers and insufficiently documented for scholars. Many of the subjects are treated on the basis of recent theological investigations, but the policy of omitting references and footnotes makes it often difficult for the reader to follow up the discussion. While this is indeed a work of Continental theology, the lack of inclusion of either Eastern Orthodox or scholars from the English-speaking world will to some be a definite weakness.

The book, however, should not be faulted for its European flavor. It may very well be what makes it so commandingly contemporary. Not only the catechumens, but the initiated members and even the theologically trained ministers and pastors or priests will find here plenty to chew and thrive on.

Andrews University

RAOUL DEDEREN

Hanson, Anthony T. *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974. xiv + 329 pp. \$8.95.

The focus of Hanson's study is the question of the significance and validity of Paul's interpretation of Scripture. Logically this question requires prior clarification of Paul's method of interpretation, and Hanson sets out to provide this in his first seven chapters. These are really a series of separate studies of important passages primarily in Romans and Galatians, including Col 2:14-15; Rom 3:1-20, 5:1-8:36; Rom 4; Gal 2-3; Rom 3-4; Rom 9:6-13, Gal 4:21f; Rom 11:1-23; and Rom 12:9-13:10. In harmony with the overall theme, particular attention is paid in each study to Paul's use of the OT and also to the influence of traditional, especially rabbinic, interpretations. The

exegesis is carefully done, and the author reveals a good knowledge of relevant literature, both ancient and modern.

The last five chapters, upon which the unity of the book depend, draw out the implications of the initial studies and raise a number of fresh issues, such as: Did Paul have a different approach for the various divisions of Scripture? Did he use *testimonia*? Did he read the Scriptures in Hebrew? Throughout Paul is seen to be more disciplined in his use of Scripture than is frequently thought. Hanson persuasively demonstrates that what may appear at first to be a "fantastic and far-fetched" interpretation of a particular passage is often simply the generally accepted understanding of it at the time (p. 129).

On the basic question of the validity of Paul's interpretation, Hanson declares that "it is plainly impossible for modern exegetes to accept or themselves adopt the New Testament method of scriptural interpretation in anything remotely resembling a literal manner" (p. 228). Among other reasons for this is the fact that the validity of so much of it depends on the acceptance as history of a great deal of what must be regarded today as "legend" or "myth." Here Hanson concurs with James Barr when he says that formulating the center of the tradition as an event or series of events described as the "acts of God" is "most unsatisfactory" (p. 233). As an alternative, Hanson proposes that "the relation of the Old Testament to the New can be best defined in terms of the revelation of the character of God" (p. 269). Paul, with other NT writers, intended to present a "consistent picture of God, one which is judged by the criterion of Jesus Christ, one which does not repudiate the Old Testament revelation" (p. 278).

In taking this approach Hanson joins those scholars who see the continuity of Scripture in terms of the concept of God portrayed. The weakness of his articulation of this position is that it does not come to grips with the relationship between the revelation of the character of God and history. If what is known about God is known through "his mighty acts," then it makes a significant difference whether or not he has actually acted as portrayed. If there is, as Hanson contends, a consistency of person and character behind the mighty acts of God in history, this consistency would have to be known through this very activity. Also, for the writers of Scripture at least, it would appear that the purpose of God's action in history was not only that he be known (revelation), but also that his purpose within history be realized.

Hanson's approach, then, would be more persuasive if he would give greater attention to the relationship between history and revelation, specifically to the question as to what extent Paul's concept of God is intrinsically associated with his cosmological and apocalyptic presuppositions. Nonetheless, Hanson has made an important contribution to the understanding not only of Paul's writings, but also of the relationship between the OT and NT. The value of his work is enhanced by chapter notes, a bibliography, indices of names, Scripture references, and references to non-canonical Jewish and Christian works.