

new applications of the meaning of a parable are possible, new meanings, e.g. of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, are difficult to come by except through new approaches and methods which may not be acceptable.

It seems to me that in understanding the parable as metaphor there is great gain, but something is lost in the meaning of words when it is stated that even if it is described in a form of a simile it is a metaphor (p. 196). It is claimed that the function rather than the form is determinative. If this is true, then it cannot be limited to the parable itself. Many other forms of literature open up new potentialities of meaning.

This detailed historical survey of modern investigations of the kingdom and the parables is to be applauded, especially since the one who directs us in the survey is one who has been intimately connected with their discussion. It is a delight to read Perrin because of his expertise and incisiveness in laying bare the issues. He is very frank in indicating where he differs from the writer under discussion and even where he feels that he himself was in error previously. The book shows some evidence of having been written in haste and suffers in some places from lack of careful organization.

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Roetzel, Calvin J. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1975. viii + 114 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

The aim of the book is to provide the beginning student with information relative to the background and setting of Paul's epistles, with particular emphasis given to the conversational character and tone of the letters. The discussion, insofar as it has to do with specific letters, is confined to those epistles "whose authenticity is not seriously questioned" (p. 82), namely, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, the Corinthian correspondence, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. Unfortunately, the author does not review the arguments traditionally advanced against the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles. A brief summary of the evidence would have been helpful to the beginner (see, for example, William G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973], pp. 69-70).

In his introduction, Roetzel relates in capsule form and in a somewhat amusing way "contrary impressions" individuals have had of Paul. The main part of the book is divided into six chapters which treat respectively the social and cultural background of Paul and of his readers (pp. 6-16), the literary form and structure of the epistles (pp. 17-28), the traditions behind the letters (pp. 29-37), the conversational nature of Paul's writings (pp. 38-68), Paul's use of mythological language (pp. 69-80), and basic issues which governed the course of Pauline studies from the second century of the Christian era to the present (pp. 81-102).

The central questions treated in an introduction are in the main dealt with in a concise and a nontechnical way. There are a few instances, however, where the author has hedged in discussing issues of a more complex nature, and consequently has left the reader somewhat bewildered. Specifically I have in mind chap. 5, "Paul and His Myths." Roetzel makes a distinction between

myth and metaphor, and then concludes: "No definition of myth will entirely do" (p. 69). We are sympathetic with the definitional difficulties to which the author calls attention, but at the same time we are left wondering why he insists on using the word *myth* to describe Paul's language and conceptual world after having failed to define myth adequately.

In his treatment of Paul's references to demons, principalities and powers, Roetzel exhibits the same tendency to hedge or write ambiguously. We are told, for example, that science has "ostensibly freed us" from superstitious belief in the reality of demons, that "our scientific better judgments" can no longer allow us to accept the existence of a personal Devil (p. 75), and that our understanding of world reality might lead us to take offense at Paul's views of personalized evil (p. 76). At the same time, he suggests that Paul's beliefs do not arise out of fear and ignorance (pp. 75-76), but may well express a profound and highly original understanding of human existence (p. 69). What Roetzel appears to have branded as superstition (p. 75), moreover, becomes, in his thinking, comprehensible in the light of the Nazi treatment of the Jews and of the racial hatred exhibited in the world today (p. 76).

One additional example deserves attention. In the concluding paragraph of the book, the author suggests that Paul might well have opposed the canonization of his letters, but then proceeds to soften this opinion with a positive assessment of Paul's contribution. We may seriously question whether a reader, after having carefully analyzed the language and thought of the Apostle, particularly as exhibited in the letter to the Galatians, could "easily imagine that Paul would be embarrassed . . . if not horrified that his personal letters were canonized as Scripture" (p. 102). Despite Roetzel's efforts to emphasize the importance of Paul's writings, we are left in doubt as to their authoritative value for faith and practice.

These criticisms should not obscure the good features of the book. Of particular value for students are the chapters dealing with Paul's use of traditions and the conversational style of the letters.

In conclusion, we call attention to printing errors which have escaped the notice of the proofreader: p. 20, "Writing a church" should read "Writing to a church"; p. 54, "then" should be changed to "that"; p. 81, "the" should be inserted before "gospel"; and on the back cover, "fo" should read "of."

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Running, Leona Glidden, and Freedman, David Noel. *William Foxwell Albright—A Twentieth Century Genius*. New York: The Two Continents Publishing Group, Ltd./Morgan, 1975. xiii + 447 pp., frontispiece. \$15.00.

This biography is a work of love, produced by two of Albright's former pupils, of whom the first named was also for longer and shorter periods his scholarly assistant during the last years of his life. The life story of this greatest biblical archaeologist of modern times is based on data obtained from his voluminous published works, from numerous interviews with