

ments. Unfortunately, he never cross-examines his sources, or establishes any critical distance from them. Damsteegt does well to depart from Froom's providentialist history but argues no alternative historical explanations. He deems virtually anything in early Adventist thought germane to his topic—apocalypticism and soteriology, ecclesiology and ecumenism, revelation and hermeneutics—until the mission motif at times almost drops from view. The hermeneutics of an arcane biblical apocalypticism becomes entirely too much of a preoccupation in the volume. It raises the question for me of whether early Adventists can be attributed a "method" of interpreting Scripture when their biblical literalism seemed to preclude, for the most part, the need for a hermeneutic.

The volume is well organized, and a careful reading of it, though tedious, does not go unrewarded. I think, e.g., of the point (on p. 37) that a Millerite emphasis on the definite time for Christ's return was defended on the grounds that it produced evangelistic results. Thus, if the book is short on analysis, it will provide valuable grist for the mill of a more imaginative interpreter.

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Erb, Paul. *Bible Prophecy: Questions and Answers*. Scottdale, Pa., and Kitchener, Ont.: Herald Press, 1978. 208 pp. \$5.55/\$4.95.

This handy volume endeavors to answer some 90 basic questions on the general topic of "Bible Prophecy" under the following main categories: "The Meaning of Prophecy," "The Place of Christ in Prophecy," "Promise and Assurance in Salvation History," "The Church in God's Plan," "The Kingdom of Christ," "The Coming of Christ," "The Hope of the Resurrection," and "The Ultimate Judgment." The answers are necessarily quite brief, but usually represent well-thought-out solutions. They vary considerably as to the amount of biblical or other support they provide for the positions taken.

As an illustration of the kinds of questions asked, the following may be mentioned: "Is prophecy the foretelling of future events?," "Why are there so many differences among the students of prophecy?," "What is eschatology?," "What is apocalyptic literature?," "What is the chief focus of Old Testament prophecy?," "Why does prophecy center in the person and work of Jesus Christ?," "Is salvation past, present, or future?," "Was Pentecost a second coming of Christ?," "What is the kingdom of Christ?," "Are there valid reasons for believing in a future millennium?," "What is the goal of history?," "Why was the resurrection of Christ a crucial event?," "Which is it: immortality or resurrection?," "What is the purpose of the final judgment?"

In spite of my misgivings about certain aspects of this publication (some of these will be noted below), I must express deep appreciation for the balance that is generally characteristic throughout the work. Although the author recognizes that "prophecy includes a large element of prediction," he also indicates that "the prophet is primarily a spokesman for God," and that the "goal of prophecy is the holiness of God, experienced in and beyond history" (see p. 22). Indeed, later in the volume he states, "We are not looking for *something to happen*. We are looking for *Someone to come* who already has been here, and who must come again to bring God's plan of redemption to its completion" (p. 70). And he goes on to say that eschatology "is not only about last things, but about first things also. In Christ there is a unity of past, present, and future. What He will do when He comes again is not so much new things, as to bring beginnings to their purposed ends" (ibid.).

It is apparent that the interpreter is evangelical, but he is obviously opposed to dispensationalist theology. This is evident in a number of instances where dispensationalism is not specifically mentioned (e.g., in the statement on p. 57 about some "teachers of prophecy" who think of the present church age as "a mere parenthesis between the reign He [Christ] intended and the kingdom He will set up when He comes again"), as well as where dispensationalism is mentioned (as on pp. 106-109, 117, 122, 124, etc.).

Erb at times presents alternative suggestions in answer to the questions posed, and does not in every instance decide between the alternatives. Moreover, he is generally kind and fair in his presentation of other views, whether he agrees with them or not. His questions 40-45, e.g., deal specifically with various positions relating to the millennium, with a definition of "chiliasm" first, followed by discussions of "post-millennialism," "amillennialism," "premillennialism," "dispensationalism," and "transmillennialism" (pp. 100-111); and his basic fairness in relating the views is to be commended. His recognition that the antichrist of Revelation may be a system, not just a personage, is another evidence of his fairness in endeavoring to present alternatives (though he apparently himself favors the latter view); but in this case, his referring to the antichrist as a person on p. 149 and as possibly a "system of thought" on p. 153 is somewhat confusing inasmuch as adequate explanation is not furnished for the switch in concept.

The brevity of discussion for each question has imposed severe limits throughout the volume, and this brevity may at times be responsible for incongruities and ambiguities which appear. For instance, this reviewer was unable to determine from the discussion on pp. 109-111 what "transmillennialism" really means. Moreover, at times the discussion borders on inaccuracy, or may indeed be inaccurate. It is debatable, e.g., that Augustine was the father of postmillennialism (pp. 101-102); rather he should be called the father of amillennialism. Also, to refer to postmillennialism as "the system of thought of liberal Christianity" (p. 102) is questionable; for in contrast to what is generally called "liberal Christianity," postmillennialism accepts the concept of a real *literal* return of Christ.

The present reviewer wonders, too, whether the author's positions regarding the "intermediate state" (pp. 179-180) and regarding "hades" and "gehenna" (pp. 195-196) have not failed to take into account an adequate exegesis of texts referred to, as well as overlooking certain historical backgrounds essential to the discussion. And at times the author makes historical allusions without adequate grounds, as in the statement that J. N. Darby "got the idea of a 'rapture' [pretribulation "secret" rapture] of true believers from Margaret Macdonald, a Scotch [sic] woman who claimed it as a revelation" (p. 107). Obviously Erb here bases his conclusions on sources brought to light by Dave MacPherson, but the presentation by MacPherson is not at all decisive as to whether or not Darby really did borrow the "secret-rapture" hypothesis from Margaret Macdonald (see my review of two of MacPherson's books in *AUSS* 13 [1975]: 86-87 and *AUSS* 15 [1977]: 238-239). Erb has missed, both here and in his bibliography, a much more substantial and basic source on Darby and the early Plymouth Brethren: namely, Clarence Bass, *Backgrounds to Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1950).

Also unfortunate, in my opinion, is the fact that frequently when reference is made to the work of other scholars or writers, no footnote or other kind of specific source citation is given; e.g., for Ladd and Manley on p. 83, for Sampey on p. 94, for Augustine on p. 151, etc. In some instances authors and works are not even listed in the bibliography though referred to in the main text; e.g., D. T. Niles on p. 175 (no title is given), C. S. Lewis on p. 196, and Wilkerson and Biedewolf on p. 33. But the omission of some of these may not be as glaring as that of Hal Lindsey's *The Late*

*Great Planet Earth*, referred to on p. 33 (Lindsey's *The Terminal Generation* is listed in the bibliography, however, on p. 203). Incidentally, Lindsey's name is misspelled "Lindsay" in each of several occurrences in the book (pp. 33, 155, 203).

On the whole Erb's presentation provides a useful tool for the lay person in providing brief answers to many of the varied questions relating to "Bible Prophecy." It is generally balanced, as already noted; but caution must be exercised to recognize where there is actual scriptural and historical support for the positions taken and where the matter is one merely of the author's own interpretation.

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Harvey, A. E. *Jesus on Trial: A Study of the Fourth Gospel*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1977. vii + 140 pp. \$6.95.

The thesis of this interesting work on the Fourth Gospel is that it is "a presentation of the claims of Jesus in the form of an extended trial" (p. 17). Harvey sets forth his case by first pointing out the problem caused by the condemnation of Jesus. One might question the verdict of a Roman court, but Jesus was also tried before a Jewish court and in the eyes of the Jews the presumption would be that the latter was correct. The Synoptics imply that the Jewish court was corrupt rather than that Jesus was guilty. But John instead lets the reader decide for himself by setting forth before him the charges of the accusers and the defense of the accused in a series of different situations.

To support his contention, the author first attempts to show that the Gospel writer deliberately used legal terms in pointing to judicial witnesses necessary for a legal procedure. Since the important thing was not the facts as such but the credibility of the witnesses, these last had to be chosen with the view of their being trusted by the readers. Thus John the Baptist is the first witness. John is not only a credible but early witness. The Fourth Gospel is distinctive in not identifying John with Elijah but simply identifying him as a voice, according to Harvey, "a speaker giving evidence" (p. 28).

The early disciples are also witnesses. Among them is Nathanael, who is specifically called an Israelite (not a Jew), and one without guile — "and this, of course, is precisely what is required of a reliable witness" (p. 36). Judas is called a *diabolos* which really refers to a slanderer, an adversary, i.e., one who gives a negative witness. The statement in John 18:5, "Judas who betrayed him stood with them," is compared with Zech 3:1, with emphasis upon "standing." Harvey's conclusion is that "here Judas, by 'standing' with Jesus' enemies, identifies himself again as *diabolos*" (p. 38). The witnesses of beings from another world also are added to these in their witness of Jesus as "the Holy One."

In regard to legal procedures, the author mentions three. The first is that a trial does not need to take place before a formally constituted court, the second that the line between witness and judge was not always clear and that the chief concern was not the facts themselves but the reliability of the witness, and third that there could be in some cases only one witness. Harvey intends to show by these procedures that what takes place in the Gospel of John is not just a dispute between Jesus and his adversaries but indeed, in a full sense of the word, a legal procedure since all three factors mentioned above apply to the situations described in John. Especially emphasized is the third of the factors, in that Jesus claims the Father as witness that he is unique and authoritative. Such a claim would be considered blasphemous if false; but if true, it would lead to condemnation of those who would reject it, so that those