

grammatical-historical interpretation with insights that derive only from considering earlier and later Scriptures together" (p. 116), especially within OT prophetic passages.

Chap. 12 is especially valuable since it deals with Heb 12:22-24 as one of the crucial, yet often neglected, passages in the discussion with dispensationalism. The author shows that the option of either "application" or "fulfillment" in the church cannot be sustained in Heb 12, although the glorious apocalyptic fulfillment is still future. All believers will enjoy one common destiny.

Reasoning from salvation through justification by faith in Christ, Poythress concludes that "one cannot now contemplate splitting apart the new humanity that is under one head, under Christ," in the coming millennium (p. 129). Also Rev 21:1-22:5 does integrate heaven and earth as the one destiny for the united people of God in all dispensations.

A helpful bibliography (pp. 133-137) is added at the close of the book for further study. It was a joyful surprise to discover that a conservative Protestant Bible scholar arrived independently at basically the same evaluation and conclusions as the present reviewer had described earlier in *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Andrews University Monographs Studies in Religion, vol. 13 [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983]).

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Ross, Allen P. *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988. 744 pp. \$29.95.

Among the numerous works on Genesis, this book is unique. It is not a new commentary, theological essay, or methodological introduction. It does not convey new information nor bring out new insights. It is essentially the pedagogic concern of the author that makes this book different.

Of the four parts of the book, the first is an introduction to the author's method and the book of Genesis itself. Various methodological approaches (literary-analytical, form-critical, traditio-historical, rhetorical) are discussed. Their strengths, weaknesses, and specific contributions are pointed out. Then, against this background and in dialogue with these approaches, the author defines his own. On the "delimited text," the author proposes a "close-reading" approach which would take into consideration the philological, grammatical, syntactical, and literary data without ignoring critical matters. This step-by-step analysis is designed to ultimately produce an exegetical and theological synthesis which can serve as the basis of the homiletic exposition.

Regarding the nature and composition of Genesis, the author addresses such issues as the interference of myths, etiological sagas, and traditions in relation to the delicate question of the historicity of the recorded events. Then the book of Genesis itself is systematically studied in four steps following the structure of Genesis: 1) the primeval events (1-11), 2) the patriarchal narratives about Abraham (12-25:11), 3) the patriarchal narratives about Abraham's descendants (25:12-36:43), and 4) the story of Joseph (37-50). Chapter by chapter the book of Genesis is unfolded; first drawing out the theological ideas and structure of each passage, then expounding the text point by point according to the already established structure. Each chapter is followed by a select bibliography in addition to the general one at the end of the book. Four appendices, dealing with specific questions related to the creation story and the patriarch Abraham, close the book.

The book is easy to read, and the presentation follows a clear outline. This deductive procedure has pedagogic value. The author builds upon the reader's logic. This concern for clarity, however, has its counterpart in the often superficial tone of the book in general, as well as in the sketchy and sometimes inconsistent treatment of complex methodological questions. On the one hand, the author holds a conservative approach and strongly argues against critical views; on the other hand, he is interested in the "best" of those critical approaches. But Ross does not provide lucid and definite criteria to distinguish "the best" from the rest. Also, we are not taught how theological ideas, especially the central one, are drawn from the text. Moreover, although it is stated that the exegetical assignment is supposed to lead to the theological point (p. 44), the exact process by which this is to be accomplished is unclear in the book.

In spite of some tentative statements, Ross did not establish the theological unity of Genesis. He did not demonstrate that the covenant is indeed the central idea of the book (p. 44). On the other hand, the title, *Creation and Blessing*, implies that the author thought of these two concepts as being the theological leitmotifs of the book. Yet if the motif of blessing is often referred to and explicitly proposed as the "theme of Genesis" (p. 65), the motif of creation is not as central to the book. It is also disappointing that in spite of the author's promise to stress literary and theological considerations (p. 37), the application of this intention often remains poor or unconvincing. The genealogical articulation of the structure could have been used as an indication of the theological direction of the whole. Although the author often displays chiasmic structures (pp. 446, 474, 498, 649, etc.), he seems to ignore the possible chiasmic structure of the whole book of Genesis (see Y. T. Radday, "On Chiasm in the Biblical Narrative," *Beth Mikra* 20 [1964]: 65-66).

In spite of these reservations, Ross's *Creation and Blessing* should be highly commended as a practical and helpful tool; it alerts readers to

crucial methodological issues and eases the way into the intricacies of the first book of the Bible. As Ross is fully aware, however, his work is not a replacement of other deeper and more specialized studies (p. 14); it is to be viewed as a starting point and an encouragement for further research.

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Schwarz, Hans. *Responsible Faith: Christian Theology in the Light of 20th-Century Questions*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986. 448 pp. \$23.95.

Hans Schwarz, professor of theology at the University of Regensburg, West Germany, has produced a comprehensive, one-volume summary covering the main themes of Christian faith: revelation, Scripture, God, creation, anthropology, sin, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, church, grace, resurrection, and the final judgment. The limited space allowed for each theme precludes in-depth treatment. Nevertheless, the book offers an informative and helpful presentation of Christian theology in our ecumenical age and serves as an excellent scholarly introduction to the main Christian themes.

Schwarz's concern is to present Christianity as truthful, thought-provoking, and growing, in distinction from other world religions, such as Buddhism (meditative) or Islam (obedience-oriented). Christian faith is intrinsically a responsible faith (p. 27). To remain credible and living, theology must function in "critical, apologetic, and doxological" ways (p. 34). Each era requires new accents in different places. "If this critical dimension is missing, the church will be in danger of becoming anachronistic, an archaic remnant in a changed world, rather than a beacon beckoning to new shores" (p. 35).

Theological reflection is, for Schwarz, the attempt "to raise into consciousness what we are doing." In other words, a responsible faith makes the difference between being a habitual or a conscious Christian. Anselm's dictum, "I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand," motivates Schwarz's summary of Christian faith. Since his point of reference is not the exegetical foundation of Christian faith, but rather the scientific and philosophical trends of our times, the book is characterized by a strong rational structure and terminology.

The historical introductions to the formation of the classical Christian doctrines are clear and contribute to a better understanding of the orthodox creeds. Most of all, Schwarz shows an overall respect for the biblical text and the history of salvation. His views of creation and redemption are basically in harmony with conservative biblical theology. On the other hand, he assumes that the creation accounts of Gen 1-2 "hardly take us back beyond the 7th or 8th century B.C." (p. 98).