

(1984) are all missing, even though the *Encyclopedia* was published in 1988. (This is particularly surprising in that Bruce and Davids are among the writers of the *Encyclopedia*.) By contrast, the fourth volume of *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, published around the same time, contains a multitude of references to works in the 1980s, right up to 1985. Since many of the commentaries which were left out are superior to items in the respective bibliographies, one can only conclude that most of the content of this *Encyclopedia* is at least ten years old.

Such quibbling, however, needs to be placed in perspective. The primary intent of the *Encyclopedia* is simplicity and clarity combined with scholarly accuracy. In this, it succeeds admirably. Its closest competitor is *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, a more critical work also aimed at the general reader, even though produced by the Society of Biblical Literature. In content the two are fairly equal, but the *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* is much more complete. *Harper's* leaves out many minor entries without providing any significant improvement in the quantity and quality of the bibliographies. Of the two, the Baker approach is to be preferred. Though not as complete as the *ISBE* or even *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, the *Baker Encyclopedia* should be given careful consideration by non-specialists who are appreciative of its style, intent, and theological stance. Specialists, on the other hand, are advised to stick with the *ISBE* and/or *IDB* until the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* makes its long-awaited debut in a couple of years.

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JON PAULIEN

Grant, Robert M. *Greek Apologists of the Second Century*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988. 254 pp. \$19.95.

Robert M. Grant, Professor Emeritus of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of Chicago, is deservedly recognized as one of the greatest living authorities on the crucial second century of Christian history. In this book he shares the ripe fruits of a lifetime of study.

The book offers a rather complete survey, from the Jewish and pagan background of apologetic and its Christian beginnings (he rightly sees Acts 14 and 17 as the earliest Christian specimens of the genre) through to the use of the second-century Christian apologists by writers in later centuries. All major and minor figures are dealt with.

Greek Apologists of the Second Century consists of twenty-three short chapters, three appendices, notes, and a useful bibliography. The chapters deal not only with the apologists themselves but also with the political and religious situations which they addressed. Able attention is given to the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, and Commodus; and

there is a chapter on Celsus. Three chapters are devoted to Justin Martyr and four to Theophilus of Antioch, reflecting not only the importance of the former but also the special interest of the author in the latter.

The volume demonstrates rich classical erudition and charm, and even flashes of wry humor; but while it adds up to a cumulative picture, it gives the impression of being more a description of individual trees than a portrait of a forest. A thesis is stated at the outset: "While there is a certain timeless character to the Christian apologists of the second century, they are deeply involved in the political and social struggles of their time and cannot be understood apart from the precise circumstances in which they are writing" (p. 10). But such a thesis, as it is carried out, borders on being platitudinous. One is left wishing for something a bit more striking and insightful, something that might enhance the value of a knowledge of the apologists for the church today.

Such a purpose could have been accomplished had the author undertaken to demonstrate explicitly the generalizations with which he begins his very first page: "Apologetic literature emerges from minority groups that are trying to come to terms with the larger culture within which they live. . . . The apologist is not completely at home in either his own group or the larger society. He is too much of a generalizer for his own people, and too closely related to minority specifics for society at large. . . . An apologist's efforts are likely to produce significant changes in the ways the minority looks at itself. . . ." (p. 9). But these introductory insights are left, for the most part, undeveloped. The addressing of the apologies to emperors and officials is accepted at face value, with little consideration given to the importance of these writings for the intramural audience which, after all, preserved them.

The aim and audience of the book are unclear in that the earlier chapters often spell out matters which are probably common knowledge to the kind of reader likely to be interested in such a subject; but, as the book progresses, it becomes more and more technical and narrow in its focus. Grant is especially concerned to uncover sources—those sources used by the apologists and the apologists themselves as used by later writers. It is fair to say that this becomes more and more the dominant interest as the book proceeds. This aspect is covered so thoroughly that it is hard to imagine that anyone will want to take it up again.

Though the chapters follow a largely chronological sequence, they could all be read intelligibly as self-standing articles. In addition, material is sometimes duplicated. Thus we read of Numenius's allegorizing of Gen 1:2 on pp. 49 and 62; of Justin's denunciation of pornography on pp. 67 and 73; of the Montanists on pp. 78 and 87-88; of the Twelfth Legion on pp. 78 and 85; of Origen's criticism of Melito on pp. 189 and 193; and one finds the same list of works which were falsely attributed to Justin on pp. 191 and 199. Sometimes, even within the same chapter, there is needless

repetition and what appears to be contradiction. Thus on p. 175 Grant seems to accept the study by J. van Pottelberge of Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation* and to deduce from it that "Clement must be viewed not as an apologist but as an independent literary figure," but on p. 179 he states: "Clement himself was undoubtedly the most significant Alexandrian apologist, . . . for he wrote the important *Exhortation*." The whole effect is what one might expect if the chapters had been written as separate articles over an extended period of time, with minimal reference among them, and then strung together without much editing.

The book has not escaped its quota of typographical errors, incomplete sentences, and minor errors of fact. Thus, contrary to what is said on p. 195, the apology of Aristides as it is incorporated into *Barlaam and Ioasaph* is not found on the lips of a Christian missionary in India but in the mouth of Nachor, a pagan hermit who is persuaded to utter it under threat.

In spite of these problems, the author knows his subject thoroughly, and his readers will learn much.

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Hedrick, Charles W., and Robert Hodgson, Jr., eds. *Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986. xlv + 332 pp. Paperback, \$14.95.

The present volume is a landmark of scholarship devoted to a discipline which until the middle of the twentieth century was dependent on the writings of the opponents of gnosticism in the early church. With the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices and the subsequent editions of the texts, scholars have arrived at a much fairer understanding of this very distinct movement within early Christianity. The present volume takes the student and the scholar alike to the frontier of scholarship on Nag Hammadi, gnosticism, and their place in the theological discord of the early church.

Twelve of the thirteen papers included in this book were presented at the 1983 Springfield, Missouri, Working Seminar on Gnosticism and Early Christianity, organized by the two editors.

After a generous preface by Hodgson and an illuminating introduction by Hedrick, the volume is divided into three parts: (1) non-Christian gnosticism; (2) gnosticism, the NT, and early Christian literature; and (3) gnosticism and the early church. The topical coverage and distribution of the papers are well balanced. Three papers are devoted to the question of non-Christian gnosticism—all dwelling on the Sethian tradition (B. Pearson, B. Layton, and J. Turner). Three of the five papers on gnosticism, the