

manuscripts and to show how they have affected modern translations. Section 3 will give scholars a quick way to check which papyri-supported readings were selected by modern translations.

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Dunn, James D. G. *Romans*. 2 vols. Word Biblical Commentary, vols. 38A and 38B. Dallas: Word Books, 1988. lxxii + 976 pp. \$24.99.

Since, by the author's own admission, the book of Romans has attracted more commentaries than any other NT book, it is understandable that Professor Dunn looked upon his assignment in this continuing series as a "daunting undertaking" which he almost declined (p. xiii). On further reflection, however, he concluded that there were two areas in which he could make a further contribution to the study of Romans: 1) in previous commentaries, the movement of Paul's thought is often lost in the maze of details, such as word studies and alternative readings, and 2) most commentaries do not do justice to the historical context.

In the format of this series, the exegetical "Comment" sections are followed by less technical sections of "Explanation." Dunn suggests that such a format is ideal for meeting his objectives, particularly the first one. In fact, he feels that his explanations provide clear insights into Paul's flow of thought and should be read before the "Comment" sections. Hence, the person who does not want to pursue the technical issues and approaches of exegesis can simply read the "Explanation" sections and thereby get Dunn's reconstruction of Paul's reasoning. Since the "Explanation" sections provide a "full exposition" of Paul's argument, Dunn advises that the "Comment" sections be consulted only after first reading the "Explanation," if the reader wants to do more than "consult specific verses or issues" (p. xv). It is a helpful format for the non-technical reader.

Dunn's second objective, doing justice to the historical context, seems less auspicious, since it is hardly a new or unusual goal. But in spite of the formidable body of historical background information already available in many excellent exegetical commentaries, Dunn does make a contribution here. In his research and writing he has spent considerable time on Christianity's early history, and this commentary reflects his interest and expertise in that area.

In his introduction, Dunn appears to be writing more for the popular reader than for the scholar, as his language is quite non-technical. Also, he is true to his objective of showing the relationship between Paul's setting or situation and his subject matter. When he occasionally comes to a controversial or technical point, rather than marshal the evidence pro and con, he refers the reader to sources where such evidence can be found.

Dunn is unusually thorough in his introductory treatment of the political/historical background material as he reconstructs the history and setting of the Jewish community in Rome out of which the Christian community sprang. Still, because of the earlier expulsion of the Jews from Rome, Dunn is convinced that the bulk of Paul's readership was Gentile-Christian.

The commentary argues not only for the internal coherence of the letter but also for the inclusion of chap. 16. The author feels that the christological emphasis throughout the letter ties together not only the main body of the document but also the introduction and conclusion.

Dunn's final section of introduction deals with Paul and the law. Here Dunn argues against the long-held view that Paul, in his negative thrust against the law, was protesting against Pharisaic Judaism as a coldly legalistic system of earning salvation through the merit of good works, with little or no room for the free forgiveness and grace of God (p. lxxv). After extensive comment Dunn concludes that there was more involved in Paul's use of *nomos* than a simple concept of salvation by works. Rather, he feels that Paul was doing battle with a broader misuse of law—a belief that the law represented a kind of “privileged distinctiveness” (p. lxxii). He holds that the law had become too narrowly equated with “boundary-marking” and nationalistic zeal.

Consequently, only when the law is freed from that kind of nationalistic narrowness can the reader of Romans do justice to both the positive and negative thrusts of Paul's treatment of law in Romans. Thus Dunn concludes that “the law still has an important part to play in the ‘obedience of faith’” (p. lxxii).

Even though Dunn is convinced that the bulk of Paul's readers are Gentile in background, he still spends much time showing that Paul's thoughts and expressions are paralleled only in early Jewish sources. Given this paradox, at some point it seems that Dunn should discuss how and to what extent Jewish forms of thought would impact a Gentile audience. In other words, it seems that Dunn either overstressed the Gentile background of Paul's audience or spent too little time explaining why Paul used so many Jewish expressions and addressed so many Jewish-Christian concerns.

This is a helpful commentary that will benefit the beginning student by its almost narrative style in the “Explanation” sections, and the expert by its dialogue with the most recent research on Romans. However, Dunn's treatment of recent research, while it reflects his impressive awareness of a formidable body of literature, contributes to an awkward style in the “Comment” sections, as he is constantly inserting references in support of the various lines of thought. Paradoxically, Dunn's concern that in other commentaries Paul's thought is often “lost in a maze of detail” (p. xiii) is frequently weakened by his own maze of references and conflicting arguments in his “Comment” sections.

While it should not replace such classic works as those by Cranfield and Barrett, Dunn's commentary is an excellent up-to-date resource that is both thorough and, for the most part, readable. Volume one covers Rom 1-8, and volume two treats chaps. 9-16. The preface, abbreviations, and general bibliography of volume one are repeated nearly verbatim in the second volume.

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Ferch, Arthur J., ed. *Towards Righteousness by Faith: 1888 in Retrospect*. Wahroonga, Australia: South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, 1989. viii + 131 pp. Paperback, \$6.00.

*Towards Righteousness by Faith* is composed of five papers presented at the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists' commemoration of the centennial of the historic 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session. The meeting took place at Dunmore Lang College, Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia, on September 25-26, 1988.

The year 1888 stands large in the development of Adventist theology. Up to that time the church had emphasized its distinctively Adventist doctrines (e.g., seventh-day Sabbath, heavenly ministry of Christ, his pre-millennial advent, and so on) to the detriment of those truths it held in common with other Christians. The 1888 General Conference session saw a challenge to that historical trend as two young editors from California (A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner) uplifted Christ and his saving righteousness. Their "new" teaching was seen by denominational leaders G. I. Butler and Uriah Smith to be a threat to the sacred place of the law and obedience in Adventist theology. Thus the conference was one of dissension.

Because of the importance of the Minneapolis General Conference session, a large literature has developed around it. In fact, that meeting probably has had more written about it than any other event in Seventh-day Adventist history. Unfortunately, the literature is just as ideologically divided as were the participants in the 1888 meetings themselves (see my *Angry Saints: Tensions and Possibilities in the Adventist Struggle over Righteousness by Faith* [Washington, DC, 1989]). One of the latest contributions to this growing body of literature is Arthur Ferch's volume. The editor's preface captures the central significance of the meetings when he writes that "one of the elements which has made the Minneapolis meetings memorable was the exaltation of Jesus" in a religious body in which many had "lost sight" of him (p. 3).

The volume's first paper is by Arthur N. Patrick, who hypothesizes that the 1888 crisis was in essence a struggle between the stabilizing influences of the older leaders, with their desire for continuity, and the "second-generation