

commentary on the account of the virgin birth concludes with a statement to the effect that many competent scholars do, in fact, believe in the virgin birth (1:221), which is identified as a response to C. E. B. Cranfield, the NT editor of the ICC series, who must have raised this specific issue.

The commentary has several notable strengths. Every verse receives comment; thus one is highly likely to find answers to questions of detail. Not only this, but most of the competing views are succinctly summarized, and their strengths and weakness analyzed. This, together with the extended bibliographies, provides an invaluable resource. The introduction has much valuable information, not least the summary charts showing the different positions taken by the large range of commentators surveyed over a number of crucial issues in the interpretation of the Gospel. The commentary is also rich in Rabbinic background material.

Some of these strengths have corresponding deficiencies. While all viewpoints are summarized, there is not sufficient space to comment adequately on the advantages and disadvantages of every position, or to fully develop the position taken by the commentary in some instances. The overall themes of the commentary can also be lost in the wealth of detail offered. But these restrictions are inevitable. What we have here is an excellent example of how useful this kind of work can be. It, as a matter of course, needs to be supplemented by other works on the Gospel which take individual themes and develop them at some length, and use other methodologies to enrich the meaning which can be found in the Gospel.

In sum, this commentary is a very welcome addition to the literature on the Gospel of Matthew, and it can be said with some certainty that it will become one of the works with which everyone working on the Gospel of Matthew will have to reckon.

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Dayton, Donald W., and Robert K. Johnston, eds. *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press and Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991. 285 pp. Hardcover, \$19.95.

Featuring a distinguished set of editors and contributors (such as Timothy Weber, George Marsden, and Mark Noll—to name but a few), *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, edited by Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, is one of the most important contributions to evangelical historiography and comparative evangelical theology to come out in recent years.

The project which eventuated in this volume originated out of heated discussions over the meaning of the term "evangelical" in the Evangelical Theology Group of the American Academy of Religion's annual meetings in the mid-1980s. The specific issue igniting the debate was a petition submitted by a group of scholars to the Executive Committee of the AAR to form a "consultation" on "pentecostalism," which they hoped would lead to the founding of a "pentecostalism" group "parallel" to the one on "evangelicalism" (2). The petition was denied; and, under the co-chairmanship of Dayton and Johnston, the 1986 and 1987 meetings of the Evangelical Theology Group generated the papers which form the original core of this work.

All told, twelve separate Christian groups or movements (Adventists, Baptists, Black Protestants, Calvinists and Confessional Lutherans, Fundamentalists, Mennonites, Pentecostals, Pietists, Premillennial Dispensationalists, Restorationists, and Wesleyans) were identified as commonly associated under the broad rubric of "evangelical." The contributors were asked to address three issues: "(1) to offer a careful interpretation of the theological understanding of the movement in question, (2) to root that reading of the movement in its sources, and (3) to compare and contrast this 'logic' or 'self-understanding' with what the author and/or movement understood 'evangelicalism' to be" (3). In conclusion to the work, the two final chapters offer Dayton's and Johnston's responses to the various papers.

While there seems to be considerable progress in defining fundamentalism in the American conservative Protestant scene, the broader issue of what constitutes evangelicalism continues to vex. And the vexations are painfully obvious in the challenging responses of the editors.

Dayton has rhetorically raised the issue in a very acute manner: "But can one, as my co-editor will suggest in the concluding chapter, establish a set of descriptors that allows one to argue that there is a 'family resemblance' that holds together all the movements described in this book?" Dayton is quick to register a blunt dissent. He sees such "incoherence" that he pointedly calls for a "moratorium" on the use of the term "evangelical." He strongly suggests that "the label *evangelical* is inaccurate in some of its fundamental connotations and misleads our attempts to understand the phenomenon that we are observing" (246).

The overriding issue for Dayton is not just historiographical integrity, but ecumenical and theological respect for what he has sarcastically called the Holiness-Pentecostal "Riffraff" of conservative American Protestantism (explicitly evident in such articles as "Yet Another Layer of the Onion: Or Opening the Ecumenical Door to Let the Riffraff in," *The Ecumenical Review* 40 [January 1988]:87-110). In other words, Dayton wants Princeton-oriented Neoevangelicals to understand that the Bible-believing heirs of Wesley and Parham are here not only as players limited to the world of worship,

evangelism-mission, and social action, but also as people who strive to make their distinctive contribution in theology as well. Of course, Johnston is quick to argue that the contribution of the "riffraff" can be made quite readily under the broader family rubric of "evangelical." Welcome to the debate!

While all of the chapters are theologically stimulating and historically informative and insightful, some of the more important contributions come from Paul Bassett ("The Theological Identity of the North American Holiness Movement") and C. John Weborg ("Pietism: Theology in Service of Living Toward God"). Originating out of powerful soteriological and ethical perspectives, their critiques of Calvinistic Neoevangelicalism's preoccupation with Princeton-oriented issues such as the "inerrancy" of Scripture are must reading for all admirers of Warfield and others who would "battle for the Bible."

The editors have issued an invitation to the reader "to join a larger discussion that seems in no imminent danger of resolution"—to "understand the variety of American evangelicalism" (4). This reviewer urges a hearty and affirmative response from the reader.

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Eliade, Mircea and Ioan P. Couliano, with Hillary S. Wiesner. *The Eliade Guide to World Religions: The Authoritative Compendium of the 33 Major Religious Traditions*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991. xii + 301 pp. Hardcover, \$22.95.

*The Eliade Guide to World Religions* is one of two recent references on religion published by Harper Collins and bearing the name of M. Eliade, the late pioneer in the systematic study of the history of world religions (d. 1986). The other work, *Essential Sacred Writings from around the World* (1991), is a paperback reprint of *Primitives to Zen: A Thematic Sourcebook of the History of Religions* (1967). The volume presently under review contains excerpts of religious texts and oral accounts of religious experience from non-Western traditions, areas in which Eliade has particularly distinguished himself. The title here reviewed may be seen as the culmination of the primary author's lifework on world religions—unless, of course, later editors and other publishers make further profitable use of his name and work.

*The Eliade Guide* begins with a short introduction, entitled "Religion as System," by Eliade's successor at the University of Chicago, the late I. P. Couliano (murdered there in 1991 while working on other remnants of works left by Eliade), and clarifies the author's voluminous phenomenological method in the study of religion.