

Luhrmann, Dieter. *Galatians*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992. 168 pp. \$25.00.

Dieter Luhrmann is New Testament Professor at Marburg University in Germany. The first German edition of his commentary on Galatians was published in 1978, just a little earlier than the Fortress publication of Hans Dieter Betz's great commentary on the same epistle in the Hermeneia series (1979). The book is divided into two parts—an introduction and the commentary—with 27 short chapters covering the two main divisions he proposes for the epistle and every section into which he divides them. There is an appendix about the two gospels as the Galatians' alternative, a chronology of Paul's career, and a select English bibliography about Paul's writings. Luhrmann and Betz take different approaches. Betz considers Galatians to be an apologetic letter. Luhrmann departs from traditional rhetorical genres, denying that Galatians is a "letter of friendship" (viii). On the contrary, he believes that it is intended to clarify issues and relationships in a confessional context (5).

In this way, Luhrmann undertakes a new interpretation of Galatians but stays with the old concept that its main point of contention is "the question of adopting circumcision" (2). He refers to 5:1-12 as the focal point of this contention, circumcision being the most important element in the "other gospel" of the new teachers. However, he fails to see in the same text the focal point of freedom, which he only takes as "the heading for the actual conclusion of the letter" (2) and "the last of the great antitheses that Paul arranges under the fundamental alternative of faith and law" (95).

In his interpretation, Luhrmann works under six presuppositions: (1) The letter was written for another time; (2) its crucial element is the gospel; (3) Paul founds his gospel on the law, (4) it is necessary to know how the readers understood the letter; (5) consideration should be given to key words such as "faith", "law", "righteousness", and "freedom"; and (6) the letter is divided into two main parts—faith or law (1:11-5:12) and ethical consequences (5:13-6:10).

His two-part division—gospel (doctrine) and standards (ethic)—departs from the traditional three parts—history, doctrine, and ethics—by eliminating the historical part, which he assimilates to the doctrinal one. The conclusion is obvious. The subject of Galatians is the gospel. Immediately, what comes to mind is the unavoidable question: What is the gospel? Taking Luhrmann's insistent claim that faith is the antithesis of the law (66), and the circumcision law is the "other gospel," one might expect him to respond: The gospel is justification by faith. But this is not the case. Justification by faith is only "the consequence" that Paul draws from the gospel (19). The basic question remains without a direct answer. One would expect him to say: The gospel is Christ. Or, the gospel is freedom in Christ. But the closest he comes to this is a rather cold theological declaration:

"Against this 'other gospel' Paul placed his interpretation of Christology, which is the content of the gospel as well as the faith that comes from the gospel" (128).

Nevertheless, Professor Luhrmann has produced a very stimulating, short, and rich commentary on Galatians. To my understanding, he has fully reached his objective of producing a book to introduce New Testament scholarship "to readers familiar neither with the technical terms of exegesis nor with Greek as the language of the New Testament writings" (vii).

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McComiskey, Thomas Edward, ed. *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*. Vol. 1, *Hosea, Joel, Amos*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. 640 pp. \$39.99.

Edited by Thomas McComiskey, this book was written by three authors. McComiskey wrote on Hosea, Raymond Dillard on Joel, and Jeffrey Nichaus on Amos. The full commentary is projected to have three volumes.

The subtitle specifies this as an "exegetical and expository" commentary. These terms are now familiar, perhaps best known from their use in the *Interpreter's Bible*. In the current volume, though, while "expository" implies "contemporary," unlike *IB* it does not have overtones of "homiletical."

Each of the three biblical books has a short but comprehensive introduction covering the typical topics of historical background, a select bibliography, and an outline.

Each section begins with two translations, the author's own on the left, and the *NRSV* on the right. Then follows the bisectional commentary: the exegesis at the top of the page, and the exposition below it. With the page divided into two columns, a smaller typeface is possible without a sense of crowding.

Even when leafing through the volume, the reader is struck by the Hebrew: both by the fact that it is in Hebrew script and by how much of it there is. This series is dedicated to wrestling with the text, and ample opportunity is provided from the outset, since the Hebrew text of Hosea is notoriously difficult.

Rather than appearing as notes to the translation, as in *Hermeneia*, (philological, lexical, syntactical, and textual material) is part of the exegesis. Although it includes extensive reference to the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate, regrettably, the authors nowhere cite what texts they used. This is unfortunate, since the quotations are too numerous to be based solely on the apparatus of BHK or BHS (both of which *are* cited by name