

"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 bisectational 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

in the list of abbreviations). It is to be hoped that this matter can be remedied for the subsequent two volumes. No other versions receive comparable levels of reference, although the Targum and Peshitta are referred to from time to time, but at times no indication is given of just what one may expect to find. Rabbinic material such as the Mishnah, Tosefta, Commentaries, Midrash, and Talmud are not primary sources.

The exegetical section is the strength of the commentary, principally because it is comprehensive and detailed. The analysis is firmly based in the historico-grammatical context. Particularly prominent in its absence is avoidance of the all-too-common futurist reinterpretation of these books.

While the commentary is written from a conservative perspective, the conclusions are not thereby preordained. A good case in point is the dating of the book of Joel. After careful evaluation of the evidence, Dillard acknowledges that no definitive conclusion is possible, but indicates that he leans toward a date significantly later than that implied by its position between Hosea and Amos, the traditional conservative position.

The second section, the exposition, seems at first glance to be an accommodation to the non-academic, since the Hebrew and Greek are in transliteration. Reading only the exposition proved frustrating, since often there is insufficient detail for one to be able to grasp the issues under discussion. Rather, it is necessary to read the expository section in connection with the exegetical, as daunting as that can be.

To sample the volume, three well-known perennial problems are selected, one from each book. First is the question in Hosea of whether Gomer was a prostitute when Hosea married her. One of the more extended analyses, the drama is played out in the expository section, since the problem is not the meaning of the individual Hebrew words so much as their interpretation in the context. Conclusion: McComiskey argues in the affirmative.

The passage from Joel is 2:28-30 (3:1, 2 Heb.). Though he recognizes the apocalyptic nature of the book and the application in Acts 2, Dillard is deaf to the siren of modern eschatology. Rather his primary interpretation is in the context of Num 11:1-12:8.

The third passage is Amos 6:12 בְּסֻלֵעַ סוּסִים אִם-יִחְרוֹשׁ בְּבִקְרִים הֲיִרְצִין which was translated in the KJV as: "Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow there with oxen?" Driver proposed dividing the last word as בְּבִקְרִים to yield the sense "... (does one plow) the sea with an ox?" and several translations have accepted this. Niehaus sidesteps the issue by translating "Would horses run on a crag, or would one plow a crag with oxen?" with סֻלֵעַ serving both clauses, thus preserving the Hebrew text unamended.

In the final analysis, what recommends this volume is not the scholarship, *per se*, or the facility with the ancient languages, as helpful as

they are. Ironically, it is the determination to be true to the text in its religious, political, and social context. Today, nothing is more relevant.

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Newsome, James D. *Greeks, Romans, Jews: Currents of Culture and Belief in the New Testament World*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992. 496 pp. \$29.95

Newsome wrote this book for the benefit of his students. He hoped that his work "would not only deepen their perspectives on both Old and New Testaments," but also entice them to become well acquainted with the fascinating times and culture of the intertestamental period. He also intended his work to benefit "interested lay people who want to know more about the 'world of the Bible'" (xiii).

The book is divided into two parts, "The Hellenistic Period" and "The Roman Period." Of the 377 pages of text, 108 are devoted to history and 269 to cultural developments of the intertestamental period. This distribution shows quite clearly where the emphasis of the book lies. The notes contain both additional information about and bibliographical sources for the main events of the period, stretching from the times of Alexander the Great to those of Hadrian and the last Jewish attempt for independence under Bar Kokhba.

Newsome's main thrust seems to be that the historical milieu provides the reason for works written under those circumstances. In other words, the literary expression of thoughts and feelings is no more than reflection on the circumstances. Although this approach is reasonable, it might not necessarily hold when concepts of divine providence, revelation/inspiration, and prophecy, all deeply embedded in the "world of the Bible" and in the Jewish conception and interpretation of history, are taken into consideration.

For the author, there is no basic difference between the authority of the books of the Old Testament and those written during the intertestamental period. Moreover, in describing each of these, which Newsome does in a scholarly manner, he attempts to show how each of them could have influenced the New Testament writers—in his view, to a rather significant degree.

Newsome appears to work under the more or less outdated shadow of Julius Wellhausen and the historical-critical hermeneutical methodology, which is regrettable. Thus the victories of Alexander the Great were depicted by "some anonymous Jewish poet . . . in Zech 9:1-10"—vs. 9 being the description of the Macedonian conqueror "as a peacemaker sent from