

moral approval. As the number of states liberalizing abortion laws grew, the focus of antiabortion groups widened to include the national arena. When the movement failed to gain wide public support, violence seemed justifiable to enforce the fundamentalist world view which was founded on supposed divine authority.

The relationship of the antiabortion movements to the rise of the religious right is clarified by understanding the political ambitions of the political right wing; it supported the antiabortion movement as a means to gain political support for the election campaigns of Ronald Reagan and George Bush. The financial and technological capabilities of the antiabortion movement were employed to enlarge the membership and influence of the Republican Party, thus increasing its political power. The growth of this power has affected not only the political and cultural landscape, but the freedom to do scientific research; namely, fetal-tissue research and research into the use of abortifacient drugs for other conditions, including cancer and AIDS.

The book gives a wealth of information on corporate support for the antiabortion movement, and the use of rhetoric, sex, and technology for advancing its goals. Anyone interested in a well-researched explanation for the rise of the antiabortion movements and their relationship to the religious right, and who wonders about the future of this religiopolitical phenomenon, will find this book required reading.

Andrews University

A. JOSEF GREIG

Brown, Raymond E. *The Death of the Messiah. From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels*. 2 vols. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1994. Vol. 1, 864 pp., \$37.50. Vol. 2, 672 pp., \$37.50. Boxed set, \$75.00.

Raymond Brown sets forth in this two-volume, 1500-page work, a commentary on the Passion Narratives (PN) of the four canonical Gospels from the Garden of Gethsemane to the burial of Jesus. *The Death of the Messiah* is Brown's companion to his earlier *The Birth of the Messiah*. In the former work he had only two birth narratives to deal with (Matthew and Luke) and treated each separately. However, in the present work such a presentation would have been cumbersome, and comparisons between Evangelists quite difficult. Thus Brown chooses to present all four Gospel narratives in parallel for each scene of the PN.

Brown's stated primary goal is "to explain in detail what the evangelists intended and conveyed to their audiences by their narratives of the passion and death of Jesus," (4). To achieve this goal he first sets forth his methodology in the introduction—an explanation of his primary goal,

a discussion of the question of historicity, a brief description of the Evangelists' theology, the limitations of the PN for his commentary, a discussion of the Synoptic Problem (Brown opts for Markan priority), and the interrelationships of the PN in the four Gospels.

Having set forth his methodology, Brown proceeds to comment on each section of the PN he has delineated. He breaks the PN into four major acts: Jesus prays and is arrested, Jesus before the Jewish authorities, Jesus before Pilate, and finally, in the second volume, Jesus crucified and buried. The second volume is completed with nine appendixes covering the Gospel of Peter, dating the crucifixion, difficult passages to translate, Judas Iscariot, Jewish groups, the sacrifice of Isaac and the Passion, Old Testament backgrounds to the PN, Jesus' predictions of His Passion and death, and the Pre-Markan PN question (this last appendix by Marion Soards).

Brown, of course, is a master commentator whose mature and balanced opinions cannot be disregarded. He has never been accused of a laconic style, and, true to his reputation, he will not be vulnerable to such a charge here. The work is a treasure trove of information, comprehensive on the sections of the PN it covers. Brown's acquaintance with the literature is impressive and he helps the reader by providing ample bibliographies. His balanced judgment on passages helps to bring clarity out of the radical positions taken by some scholars (e.g., his opposition to Kelber's position on the disciples in Mark).

Regarding the historicity of the Gospel accounts, and the theological significance of this judgment (13-24), Brown contends that orthodox Christianity does not require one to believe that all of the details of the Scriptural narrative are historical, but that God at times communicates through parables, poetry, and "didactic historical fiction" (22, n. 28). Brown's critical criteria lead him to conclude, for instance, that the falling down of the crowd at Jesus' feet in Gethsemane when He says "I am He" (John 18:5-6) is not historical in nature, but rather "parable" (262).

While Brown applies his historical criteria with a moderate hand, the application does not seem to coincide with the viewpoint of the Evangelists themselves. There is no indication that they saw their works as anything less than historical. The very nature of their narratives (cf. Luke 1:1-4), and the early Church's willingness to die for what they preached, points towards something more profound than "parable" in the miraculous deeds of Jesus.

Brown often goes to great lengths comparing the stories of an incident in the various Gospels. As commendable and important as this task is, the lengthy comparisons back and forth in such detail have a tendency to blunt the "hearing of the story" that each Evangelist tells. Taking more of one Gospel at length, and then the others in turn, would have made the story of each Evangelist stand out in clearer relief.

A note of errata on pages 1373-1374 in the discussion of the dating of the crucifixion—Brown refers to the birth of Jesus in about 6 B.C. He then refers to the approximate age of Jesus at the beginning of His ministry as 30 from Luke 3:23 and notes that this would be circa A.D. 24. However, since there is no zero year between B.C. and A.D. the 30 years should take one to circa A.D. 25.

Brown's work is monumental, cogently written and conservative in the application of its criteria. It has earned a place of primacy in PN research, a credit to the dedication of its author.

Union College
Lincoln, NE 68506-1734

TOM SHEPHERD

Bruce, Robert, and Debra Bruce. *Reclaiming Your Family: Seven Ways to Take Control of What Goes on in Your Home*. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994. 257 pp. Cloth, \$11.99.

The CBS television documentary, "In the Killing Fields of America," graphically portrays the rapidly escalating violence that constitutes one of the symptoms of family and societal disintegration. A medical model might suggest approaching these symptoms from a perspective of diagnosis and prescription. The diagnosis appears to be: a major loss of moral values with paralleling family disintegration. One prescription is set forth in *Reclaiming Your Family: Seven Ways to Take Control of What Goes on in Your Home*.

Robert and Debra Bruce, parents of three teens, have written a comprehensive prescription for parents, "a how-to" handbook that describes step-by-step how to build or rebuild strong families that teach moral values in a spiritual environment. The Bruces admit that parenting has been a learning experience for them which they have shared with their readers. They are a real-life laboratory for the principles they write about, principles that have sound biblical and psychological foundations plus a lot of common sense.

The chapters focus on seven basic areas which need to be managed if one is to have a healthy family and healthy children. The introduction, "Is Your Family Out of Control?" contains assessment tools to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the family. It ends with a Family Assessment Quiz and scoring information to help the reader answer this question about her/his own family.

Seven chapter titles begin with the words "Take control." The first chapter discusses the spiritual health of the family. "Take Control Through Faith in Jesus Christ" stresses the importance of spending time with God and contains many suggestions that will help families build a strong spiritual base.