

agree with Doukhan's explanation of the chapter and its symbols, the biblical approach espoused there can only be commended.

Translated into English, the book could serve well as a beginning-level college textbook. I would suggest a few minor changes before this is done: (1) The plans of the chapters would be more useful if placed at the beginnings of the chapter divisions. (2) At least a short bibliography would be of great help. (3) The dates assigned to chapters 7 and 8 respectively should be reexamined and brought into line with W. H. Shea's and G. F. Hasel's work on these chapters. (4) I suggest a second look at the popular view of a "rêve oublié" (chap. 2:5). This was based on older translations like L. Segond's rendering of the Aramaic 'azdā as "la chose échappé," which La Bible de Jérusalem translates more correctly, "que mon propos vous soit connu."

These minor improvements can make the book even more commendable for its translation into other languages such as English. In any case, Professor Doukhan deserves a high score for this excellent tool in the field of Danielic studies.

Adventist International Institute  
of Advanced Studies  
Silang, Cavite, Philippines

ZDRAVKO STEFANOVIC

Ferguson, Everett., ed. *Christian Life: Ethics, Morality, and Discipline in the Early Church*. Studies in Early Christianity, vol. 16. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993. 376 pp. Cloth, \$60.00.

The present work is volume 16 of an 18-volume series devoted to interpreting the beliefs and practices of early Christianity. The series is arranged topically and covers biography, literature, doctrines, practices, institutions, worship, missions, and daily life in early Christianity. The series confines itself to the formative first six hundred years after the birth of Jesus. The premise behind the series is that no one can really understand today's Western civilization, much less religious history, without some understanding of the early history of Christianity. In covering such a broad range of topics, both early Christian documents and secondary sources were evaluated, with preference given to English articles.

The volume, introduced and edited by Everett Ferguson, evaluates the claim that Christianity offered not only a higher standard of life and motives, but that this higher standard was achievable by ordinary people, not just the philosophically trained. While much of the moral teaching of Christianity can be duplicated in the moralistic literature of Hellenism, Christianity offered a distinctive theological motivation as well as spiritual power to live above the standards of the world. Still, some of the most

vexing modern problems such as divorce, abortion, war, adultery, and discipline were faced in those early centuries. The teachings of some of the Christian authors who wrote most on these moral questions are represented in the articles in this volume. Since many of the early Christians did not live up to the standards set out by the church, it is helpful to see what practices were acceptable and also the procedures that were formalized for dealing with those who fell short. Authors and articles include: "The Decalogue in Early Christianity," by Robert Grant; "Christianity and Morality in the Roman Empire," by John Whittaker; "Athenagoras on Christian Ethics," by Abraham J. Malherbe; "The Transformation of the Stoic Ethic in Clement of Alexandria," by Denis J. M. Bradley; "The Unity of the Two Charities in Greek Patristic Exegesis," by Thomas Barrosse; "The Distinction Between Love for God and Love for Neighbour, in St. Augustine," by Raymond Canning; "Marriage in the New Testament and in the Early church," by Willy Rordorf; "The Origins of Nuptial Blessing," by Kenneth Stevenson; "Ante-Nicene Interpretations of the Sayings on Divorce," by J. P. Arendzen; "Abortion and the Catholic Church: A Summary History," by John T. Noonan, Jr.; "The Early Church and War," by Roland Bainton; "The Rejection of Military Service by the Early Christians," by Edward A. Ryan; "Penitential Discipline in the First Three Centuries," by H. B. Swete; "Disciplinary Procedures in the Early Church," by Frans van de Paverd; "The Sacrament of Penance and St. Cyprian's *De lapsis*," by Maurice Bevenot; "Private Penance in the Early Church," by G. H. Joyce.

Of all the Old Testament laws, the Decalogue was felt by Christians to be still binding and so provided the framework for Christian morality. (Everett Ferguson asserts that the only exception made by early Christians to the binding nature of the law was to the Sabbath command). Accordingly, the first article is "The Decalogue in Early Christianity" by Robert Grant. Grant rather briefly analyses Jesus' teaching about the law, but asserts that what the law meant in Judaism and early Christianity is best seen in Paul. After declaring that Paul had a low view of the law for Christians, Grant proceeds to give numerous Pauline references to the law that were very positive.

Since many slanderous accusations were leveled against the early Christians, the apologists rose to their defense and Athenagoras was one of the most vigorous. Chapter three, by Abraham Malherbe, stresses Athenagoras' position that Christianity attained not only the conduct commended by the best philosophers, but a new and higher standard of morality. In his chapter on marriage, Willy Rordorf focused his comments on four aspects: marriage and eschatology; adultery, divorce, and second marriages; attitudes toward women and sexuality; marriage as a sacrament. Concerning marriage and eschatology, Rordorf believes that Jesus and Paul are in agreement that the primary human responsibility is to prepare to

enter the kingdom, and marriage and celibacy are both honorable to the degree that they help or hinder our readiness to enter the kingdom. Concerning adultery, which was widely accepted in the culture surrounding early Christianity, the Christian belief was that sexual love was to be animated and even validated by Christian love. Also, divorce was allowed only in the case of adultery, but remarriage was allowed only if the first spouse died. Concerning the rather low view of women, Rordorf states that the Christian message was not interested in changing the social structures of the age. Instead, the Christian was to "live in the Lord" within the framework of his/her culture. In the accepted house rules of the day, subjection of wives to husbands was central. Finally, Rordorf concludes that in the early years, marriage was not considered a sacrament, as no nuptial blessing was presided over by any minister of the church.

Concerning abortion, John Noonan makes clear that in the Greco-Roman world, abortion was widely practiced, sometimes for trivial reasons (e.g. to maintain feminine beauty). Aristotle believed it should be allowed for the good of the state, but only before there was "sensation and life." Of course that observation calls to mind the noisy current debates on when human life and sensation truly begin. It is interesting, however, that the early Christian works, beginning with the *Didache* (c. 100 A.D.), consistently include abortion in the many lists of "thou shalt nots."

The list of topics covered in this volume is a rather short one and the space devoted to them is quite uneven. Most chapters or topics run from 12 to 35 pages while the topics of penance and discipline cover well over a hundred pages. Such uneven treatment either suggests an arbitrary choice of the editor, or more likely, reflects the preoccupation the early church had with this particular topic. For the most part the writing is clear, but the terms "Ethics" and "Morality" used in the subtitle suggest a wider coverage of topics than is represented in the book.

Andrews University

WILLIAM RICHARDSON

Fitzmyer, Joseph A., S.J. *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle*. S. J. New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993. xi + 177 pp. \$12.95.

According to the preface, this book is intended as further elaboration of topics that received summary treatment in Fitzmyer's earlier works. Three of the eight essays are first-time publications.

Fitzmyer, a well-known figure in Pauline studies, is professor emeritus of biblical studies in the School of Religious Studies at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and a past president of both the Society of Biblical Literature and the Catholic Biblical Association.