

evaluation runs the risk of turning them into the private property of a gnostic sect.

Traditional evidentialist apologetics are undoubtedly deficient; evidentialism is worth rejecting. But this is a problem faced by evidentialism not only in theology but in all other areas of life—science, history, morals—as well. New “postmodern” models of rationality can justify appropriate confidence without rendering some or all Christian beliefs immune to rational criticism. This path—reflected in such works as Nicholas Wolterstorff’s *Reason within the Bounds of Religion* and William Placher’s *Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation*—holds out the promise of taking rationality seriously without allowing Christian convictions to be undercut by a dubious rationalism. I would argue that it is to such an approach that we would do best to look in our attempts to find a basis for confidence in the face of our realization of the human element in Scripture.

Adventists and others will therefore no doubt continue to be stimulated by Pinnock’s ongoing exploration of difficult theological questions. The process of understanding his further contributions to Christian thought will doubtless be facilitated by the systematic analysis provided by Roennfeldt’s study of his theology of Scripture, for which we can thus be grateful. Because of its focus on Pinnock, this book does not directly resolve—or attempt to resolve—the broader issues with which its subject has been preoccupied. It is thus to be hoped that Ray Roennfeldt will follow his study of Pinnock with a constructive statement of his own regarding the topic of inspiration and authority, drawing on the insights gained in the course of writing this book and calculated to carry an important conversation further.

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Sanders, Jack T. *Schismatics, Sectarians, Dissidents, Deviants: The First One Hundred Years of Jewish-Christian Relations*. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1993. xxiii + 404 pp. Paper, \$30.00.

There are many works which study the split between early Christianity and Judaism. Sanders’ work sets itself apart from the others by taking a sociological approach to the problem. Sanders reaches beyond the question of what beliefs and practices divided the two, and asks how these differences affected the members of the two groups and how they responded to the growing division.

Sanders’ book is divided into six sections. The first two sections deal with Jewish-Christian relations in Palestine before A.D. 70 and between 70 and 135 (the Bar-Kochba revolt), with a third section for further social analysis. The next two sections deal with the situation in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome, again with a third section for further analysis. A one-page Concluding Postscript completes the text. There are 89 pages of endnotes (the book is best read with two bookmarks), a bibliography and three indexes.

Almost all analyses of the split between Judaism and Christianity suffer from the ideological bias of the authors. Sanders's work is certainly no exception. Ostensibly Sanders is suspicious of the evidence found in Acts because of its sectarian stance and because its explanations do not fit sociological categories. However, Sanders' distrust of Acts is more personal than scientific. On the last page (258) Sanders states that Acts "caricatured" the Jews, one of a multitude of denigrating remarks about Acts in this book, and thus Sanders is incapable of finding any historical value in Acts at all. Far from being impartial, Sanders is offended, and this attitude is obvious throughout the book.

Hints of Sanders' bias are felt early. On pages 2-3 Sanders expresses his doubts over the persecution accounts of Acts. He describes his reaction as "incredulous" and notes that Acts gives "no credible reason for the persecution of the church." In this case Sanders assumes far more uniformity of Jewish identity and Roman provincial administration than is warranted from historical accounts. Rather, the various mob actions described in Acts are well within the realm of the probable. As noted, Sanders is incapable of finding historical reliability of any kind in Acts.

Sanders' bias becomes even more obvious in a major blunder on page 45. On the basis of John 7:20 Sanders concludes that the Jews of the period when the gospel was written were *not* trying to kill Christians. However, this statement accuses Jesus (the subject of the book) of having a demon, and occurs within a Christian work. The Gospel does not intend that the statement by the Jews be taken at face value. In light of chapters 18-19, John 7:19-20 is a foreshadowing of the crucifixion. If this text has sociological significance for the period in which it was written, it makes clear that Christians feared for their lives where Jews held power. As this is a Christian text, it is a poor witness to how the Jews themselves expressed their attitude. Even so, Sanders uses this text to show that Jews were not trying to kill Christians. Sanders simply cannot accept the idea that early Christianity could arouse the level of persecution indicated in Acts and implied in the Gospel of John. All texts are bent in support of this bias.

Not even Sanders is able to fend off the various textual witnesses to anti-Christian violence in this period. On page 89 he studies the Josephus account in which James and other Christian leaders are executed during a period of Roman absence. Thus he admits to the possibility that "official Judaism" would have done likewise earlier if it had possessed the temporal power to do so. Even here he does not specify execution or mob violence as part of that possibility, though Josephus does so.

In spite of his shortcomings, Sanders' sociological analysis is helpful. Relying on a sociological construct of deviance reaction, Sanders finds that the split between Christianity and Judaism in Palestine was conditioned, if not propelled by a social-identity crisis within Judaism, and such crises tend to result in boundary maintenance and exclusion of deviant groups (133-141).

In the second half of the book Sanders finds almost no evidence concerning Jewish-Christian relations (excluding Acts, as well as any other literature which *does* describe Jewish-Christian relations). Here the emphasis

ends up on gentile-Christian relations, and Sanders' model is social evolution, in particular allopatric speciation. Again, in spite of his biases Sanders does manage to provide useful constructs for understanding Christian development as well as opposition from the imperium.

For all its deficiencies, this book is an interesting foray into the social questions of the split between Judaism and Christianity. If Sanders' answers are suspect, the types of questions he asks and the sociological models he employs are seminal.

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Strickland, Wayne G., ed. *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian: Five Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993. 256 pp. Softcover, \$12.99.

Using the more and more familiar format of a "Views" book, this collection of essays presents five major approaches to the law-gospel issue in Protestant circles. After each of the five essays of this volume, the other four contributors offer their personal responses.

In chapter 1, under the title "The Law is the Perfection of Righteousness in Jesus Christ: A Reformed Perspective," Willem A. vanGemen presents the "non-theonomic Reformed view" (11). Arguing from the premises of Covenant Theology, with constant references to John Calvin and the Westminster Confession, Professor vanGemen exposes his view on the law through the history of Redemption. His main point is that, since God does not change, the law of God remains virtually the same throughout redemptive history. The new covenant "is the same in substance as the old covenant" (36). Jesus not only did not abrogate the law, but "he called for a more radical observance" (38). Grace is necessary for obedience of the law, but "sole dependence on grace without the responsible use of the law leads to antinomianism" (42, quoting John Murray, *Principles*, 182). This means that, of the three uses of the law, the *usus tertius* is the most important, as God's appointed instrument of sanctification (54).

W. vanGemen is particularly to be commended for recalling Calvin's two principles of interpretation: (1) "the commandment addresses inward and spiritual righteousness," and (2) "the commandments and prohibitions always contain more than expressed in words" (75). But an unsolved incoherence remains in his explanation of how the ceremonial and juridical aspects of an everlasting law have been abrogated and nailed to the cross (Col 2:14).

In chapter 2, from what Greg L. Bahnsen calls "The Theonomic Reformed Approach," he argues against dispensationalism, for the continuing validity of the moral demands of the Old Testament law. The fact that God judges the pagan nations by the same moral standard as the Mosaic law proves that he does not have a double standard of morality, one for Israel and one for the Gentiles. Consequently "it is unreasonable to expect that the coming of the Messiah and the institution of the new covenant would alter the moral demands of God revealed in his law" (112). On this rationale Bahnsen justifies the