

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.

Madison, WI 53713

JAMES E. MILLER

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

theonomists' commitment to the transformation of every area of life, including the socio-political realm, in accordance with the biblical principles, against the "misguided American conception" of the separation of church and state (129), and claims that "the civil precepts of the Old Testament are a model of perfect social justice for all cultures, even in the punishment of criminals" (142).

Besides the very positive points out to this presentation, the critiques observe that Bahnsen's reconstructionism does not give sufficient attention to Christ's sacrifice and to the new position in Christ of the believers whom he has delivered from the condemnation of the law. The Bible agrees with the reconstructionists that God desires to remake our society and not just the individual, it does not share, however, their optimism about the likelihood of this happening before the return of Christ. (For the full controversy see W. S. Baker and W. R. Godfrey, eds., *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990], and G. North, ed., *Theonomy: An Informed Response* [Tyler: Institute for Christian Economics, 1991]).

Chapter 3 presents the position of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., on "the Law as God's gracious guidance for the promotion of holiness." Although this essay is not as extensive as the others in this book, its methodological strength, exegetical vigor and conceptual clarity, surpasses many. The author addresses, among other topics: the unity of the law; the hypothetical offer of eternal life to all who obey the law (against Alva J. McClain), the legalistic "if" of Lev 18:5, Ex 19:8, and 23:3, 7 (190); and the understanding of *Tora nomos* as "law" instead of "teaching and instruction" (194). Keeping in tension both value and discontinuity, he concludes that only "the weightier matters of the law of Moses are binding on believers today" (227). He fails to prove exactly what these weightier matters include.

In chapter Four, dispensationalist Wayne G. Strickland pretends to depart from "the traditional dispensational view which advocates two ways of salvation in the Bible, one based on compliance with Mosaic law and the second based on faith in Christ" (232), but keeps rooted, on the assumption that "the economy of the law has been superseded by the dispensation of grace" (247). On the basis of his understanding of Rom 10:4 and other "classic" proof texts, he concludes that "the Mosaic law is antithetical to the gospel and has no part of it" (279). The discontinuity between law and Gospel is therefore a systemic issue in Strickland's presentation, which raises important questions regarding the place of God's law in the new covenant, the relationships between Israel and the church, and the events related to the millenium and biblical eschatology. The reasoning, questionable on linguistics (namely on *plerosai* and on *nomos* and *telos*), never proves why the essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be incompatible with the essence of the law given by God to Israel. The interpretation of the texts, especially Mt 5:17-19, runs against the logic of the Bible itself, forced by the dispensational *a priori* ("The law is not eternal," "The law was for Israel only") as Bahnsen (290-301) and Kaiser (302-308) show in their reactions.

The fifth and last chapter, by Douglas J. Moo, is entitled "The Law of Christ: A Modified Lutheran View." Despite the encouraging statement, at the

beginning, that "the traditional approach needs to be modified by greater attention to the salvation-historical perspective of the Scripture" (321), the author fails to accomplish his good intentions, giving a rather negative picture of the Mosaic law as "no longer a *direct and immediate* source of, or judge of, the conduct of God's people" (343). D. Moo's position is, consequently, not very different from that of the dispensationalists. His radical separation of law and gospel into respective eras, "before" and "after" Christ, as well as his principle that only what is clearly repeated in the NT is binding for Christians, is not supported by the biblical evidence, and fails to explain why the law of Christ needs to be incompatible with the law of God.

In conclusion, each of the contributors to this volume argue that his approach is best able to solve the gospel and law problem, but, in fact, none seems to have all the answers. The diverse theological and hermeneutical framework of the different confessions still dictate which texts are given precedence and must be used to interpret others. So, despite the tremendous amount of homework accomplished by our authors, much work remains still to be done, whether in textual exegesis, cultural analysis, or theological and moral reasoning. Their stimulating essays, with their rich bibliography (available only in footnotes) provide helps for further research. Everybody may agree with Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., that "the time for a powerful proclamation of the proper uses of the law is now long overdue. . . . It is time for the dispute to come to an end" (75). It is time, also, that the energies be focused on discerning, by the work of the Spirit, how the law of God can be both understood and applied in a way that is faithful to Scripture.

Institut Adventiste du Salève  
Collonges Sous Salève, France

ROBERTO BADENAS

Underwood, Grant. *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993. vi + 213 pp. \$24.95.

*The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* seeks to unite the scholarly worlds of Mormonism and millennialism. Both areas of scholarship have blossomed in recent years, but for various reasons the study of Mormonism as a millennial movement has received scant attention in spite of the seeming obviousness of the topic. It is into that vacuum that Grant Underwood, associate professor of religion at Brigham Young University in Hawaii, moves with his book.

Correctly interpreting millenarianism as a comprehensive way of looking at life, Underwood demonstrates that the millennial model best helps us understand the entire universe of Mormon thought and action during the church's earliest years.

One of the important tasks accomplished by Underwood is that of definitely demonstrating that early Mormonism's eschatology was thoroughly premillennial. That task was crucial to the book, since earlier treatments of