

concludes with a five-page list of authors, and a six-page list of books.

As I read through the introductions and annotations, I had a deep sense of listening in as Peterson shared his faith. I was challenged to look at my own faith, to review the written sources of my own spiritual journey, and to begin creating my personal annotated list.

This book would be helpful for any person who is intentional in his or her own spiritual journey. For spiritual leaders at all levels it would provide not only personal insight, but a significant resource for ministry.

Andrews University

DELCEY KUHLMAN

Rodriguez, Angel Manuel. *Esther: A Theological Approach*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995. 162 pp. \$16.99.

The book of Esther has always intrigued its readers. From the ancient rabbis who questioned its place in the Holy Scriptures on account of its omission of the name of God to the modern interpreter who stumbles on its ethical problems, the story remains puzzling and disturbing.

Using the "close reading" approach, Rodriguez follows the text through its unexpected turns and surprises. To the vexing problem of the absence of the reference to God, Rodriguez proposes the paradoxical solution of a theological intention. Indeed, this systematic silence about God appears "even when the context demands it" (18). Cultic actions and expressions which are usually associated with God deliberately avoid mentioning His name. Rodriguez explains the intentionality of this "literary device" from the historical setting of the book. As the exilic people had experienced God's silence, both through the catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem and in their subsequent oppression, they began to wonder about and even doubt God's faithful and powerful providence. The writer of the story uses this silence about God to show that in spite of His apparent absence, God is actually still present. Connections with other biblical stories of God's miracles, especially Joseph and the Exodus, and the many coincidences within the story of Esther itself, skillfully brought out through humor and irony, undoubtedly betray God's intelligent control over the events. Thus the book of Esther witnesses both to God's transcendence and immanence. The absence of God hints at His transcendence while His actual presence with His people and within history hints at His immanence. The lesson concerns Jews who may have thought that God is to be found only in religious acts, as well as "atheistic" pagans who ignored God's existence. Rodriguez rightly emphasizes the universal impact of the book. Yet his appeal to the exilic background of the book to justify its silence about God is not totally satisfactory. The Song of Songs is another book of the Old Testament which omits mentioning the name of God, a case which Rodriguez does not seem to recognize. In this instance, Rodriguez' explanation would hardly fit. The same holds with a large portion of wisdom literature with its anthropocentric character and its relatively few references to God, to revelation, or to covenant; and there the omission of God's name stems from different grounds. Rodriguez is aware of the wisdom connection; yet his treatment on this matter is too furtive. Also some attention to biblical texts dealing with the issue of God's silence may have been rewarding. The book of Job and some shouts

in the Psalms place God's silence in other perspectives.

Indeed, the quest on this biblical silence, whether it is about God or from God, may well go beyond the mere apologetic concern and pertain also to an existential anguish. After Auschwitz, the silence about God takes on a different meaning than before. Fackenheim's contribution on that matter should not be ignored (see Emil L. Fackenheim, *The Jewish Bible after the Holocaust*, and especially regarding the book of Esther, 60-62). On the first page of his book, Rodriguez notes that the book of Esther is relevant today because its story is told from a "secular perspective" (xi). If Rodriguez had gone further to explore this dimension of silence, the relevance of Esther would have perhaps sounded more loudly.

These reservations do not diminish in any way the value of Rodriguez' essay. The book is well written and well organized. Its limpid language, along with its many profound insights, qualifies *Esther, A Theological Approach* not only as an useful textbook but also as an interesting reflection for any serious student of the book of Esther and of the biblical message at large.

Andrews University

JACQUES DOUKHAN

Spicq, Ceslas. *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*. 3 vols. Trans. and ed. by James D. Ernest. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. (ixiv + 492 pp., xi + 603 pp., x + 691 pp.) Cloth, \$99.95.

This new lexicon is a translation of the last work of the internationally recognized New Testament scholar Ceslas Spicq, who did not live to see the publication of this English edition. A two-volume work was published first in French in 1978; in 1982 there was added a supplement entitled *Notes de lexicographie neotestamentaire*. The English text follows the one-volume reissue of the original set published in 1995 under the title *Lexique Théologique du Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Cerf/Fribourg: Editions Universitaires), which merged the articles of the original three volumes into alphabetical order.

J. D. Ernest's edition has made this important work available to the English-speaking world, and despite the disadvantages of any translation, it represents at the editorial level a technical improvement of the original. The English glosses given with each article, which indicate concisely the range of approximative meanings, are not original to Père Spicq.

This lexicon summarizes the history and meaning of a restricted choice of approximately 350 Greek words of the New Testament, in the light of their occurrences in a vast spectrum of literary sources: the Greek OT, Hellenistic epigraphy, classical literature, and all the available information on Greek Koiné. Although special attention is paid to Jewish writers (mainly Philo and Josephus) and contemporary pagan writers (such as Plutarch), the special value of this work is on the nonliterary papyri and the inscriptions. This vast treasure of references to the documents that are closest to the first century B.C. or A.D. is certainly the main contribution of this work. In fact, more than half of the words of this new lexicon do not receive significant treatment in Kittel's famous TDNT.

Though many of the studied words are neither theological in themselves, nor theologically relevant, Spicq's quest pretends to have a theological purpose: "My