

Cranfield, C.E.B. *On Romans and Other New Testament Essays*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998. ix + 191 pp. \$44.95.

In this tome, Professor Cranfield pulls together essays on various topics related to the book of Romans as well as other NT discussions. While some of these essays have been published before, many are new. Since the volume has the very briefest preface and is void of any introductory material, the reader is bereft of the author's stated purpose. Furthermore, since there is no epilogue or concluding chapter, one is left with a volume of independent essays. What can be deduced, however, is that many of the essays are in dialogue with a challenge of recent publications—some of a seminal nature.

Lacking a central thesis, the book is held together by the fact that it covers issues that are in current debate. The initial chapter acknowledges the contributions Professor Dunn has made to Romans scholarship in his work on the phrase  $\epsilon\rho\gamma\alpha$   $\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\upsilon$  in Romans, but challenges his conclusions. Using Gal 3:2, 5, 10—written before Romans—Cranfield persuasively argues that Dunn's argumentation is unconvincing and his position on Rom 3:20 untenable and must therefore be rejected. He suggests, contrary to Dunn's claims that Paul was "polemicizing against his Jewish contemporaries' complacent reliance on their privileged status as God's covenant people and their exclusiveness to the Gentiles" (2), that the phrase actually refers to an attempt to earn salvation through works of law.

Chapter 9 addresses the question whether the OT law has a place in the Christian life. This essay responds to Professor Westerholm's *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith: Paul and His Recent Interpreters*. Cranfield rejects Westerholm's contention that Paul saw no continuing role for the law in the life of Christians and instead affirms that it has an integral part, which he does not explicitly state. The fact is that while law cannot save, it does serve an essential purpose in that it gives knowledge of sin (Rom 7:7-12). He acknowledges Westerholm's contention that  $\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\upsilon$  for Paul can refer to the Pentateuch, or the "sum of specific divine requirements" (119). While this is correct, they have both missed the point that Paul uses  $\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\upsilon$  in at least four other ways. He also employs it to refer to law as a principle (3:27), as ceremonial law (2:25-27), as moral law (7:7-8), and as a means of salvation (3:20-21a). Indeed, there is opposition to law in the writings of Paul, but it is primarily to the latter—law as a means of salvation.

Cranfield's chapter on "Sanctification as Freedom" is very insightful. His conclusion that the liberation in Rom 8:2 is a setting free to participate gladly and hopefully in the common life of the community of believers in shared responsibility/obedience to Jesus is instructive. He is correct that Paul views the believer's role in the process as active rather than passive. However, I disagree with his view on the identity of the person depicted in Rom 7:14-25. He outlines seven prominent and possible interpretations; dismissing five, he argues for one of the remaining two. He postulates that the reference is to Christians generally and is expressed vividly in the first person to indicate personal involvement. I agree that the reference could not be to a nonbelieving wicked person, for such a one could not have the lofty opinion of the law. I disagree with his conclusion, however, for must sin be the resident master of a Christian whose dictates are slavishly

followed? If he is correct, then Paul would be contradicting his own thesis in Rom 6, where he argues that Christ should be the justified Christian's only master.

Perhaps there is another explanation. Could the preponderance of first-person pronouns and verbs be indicating an emphasis on self? Could this be reference to a person who is trying to keep the law in his or her own strength? Could this be a neophyte Christian or even a mature Christian who has shifted focus from Christ-centeredness to self-centeredness? Indeed, such an interpretation would be compatible with his argument. He correctly states that "the essence of sin is the attempt to put oneself in God's place, to make one's own ego and the satisfaction of its desires the center of one's life. This is the fundamental sin of every one of us whether we are unbelievers or believers" (see 34-35).

Cranfield's arguments contra Professors Dunn, Hays, Heikki Raisanen, and S. W. Gray are convincing. His defense of the resurrection of Jesus and the virgin birth are welcome additions to NT scholarship. His caution regarding interpretations which limit the use of πιστις Χριστου to the faith of Jesus should be noted. Indeed, Professor Cranfield has made a significant contribution, in his typical fashion, to Pauline scholarship generally and to the understanding of Romans particularly. It is a must-read for those who question the role of the law in the Christian life, Pauline scholars, graduate students—especially those pursuing studies in Romans—and thoughtful pastors. They will doubtless find this volume stimulating and thought-provoking. I recommend it, the lack of a subject index and an introduction notwithstanding.

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Crenshaw, James. L. *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence*. Anchor Bible Reference Library, ed. David Noel Freedman. New York: Doubleday, 1998. 320 pp. Hardcover, \$34.95.

James L. Crenshaw is the Robert L. Flowers Professor of Old Testament at Duke University and is well-known for his scholarship in wisdom literature. His latest book explores the possibility that ancient Israel possessed an educational infrastructure to ensure knowledge acquisition and values transmission from one generation to the next. Because of the paucity of direct historical evidence for an established tutoring system in Israel (in comparison to Egypt and Mesopotamia, where evidence abounds) Crenshaw develops a hypothesis for its existence on the basis of Israel's wisdom literature.

He first discusses the variety of possible reading audiences for ancient literature, stating that although some texts were purely aesthetic, most were for functional purposes, providing a vehicle of training for the many court officials, secretaries, and clerks needed for the smooth running of a sophisticated bureaucratic system as in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Crenshaw presumes that Israel must have had training institutions in place, similar to other parts of the ancient Near-Eastern milieu.

There is evidence to suggest that although writing was not welcomed at first during the era of oral tradition, it was used quite extensively during the last 150 years