

characterizes as showing a "religion essentially ignored as irrelevant, religion regarded with condescension and contempt as if religion had never existed" (225).

If I were teaching a course in literary aesthetics at a Christian college, *Dismissing God* would be a required text (along with Gene Edward Veith, Jr.'s *Reading Between the Lines: A Christian Guide to Literature*). I would also recommend it as a required text in American literature classes (it primarily covers American authors). Indeed, any literate reader could benefit from this book. Lockerbie is a sensitive reader of poetry, and he writes gracefully.

What does it do to the beliefs of students when so many of the major literary figures they study have rejected God? English majors often virtually worship literature, soak up ideas, adopt borrowed postures as their own. Can English teachers fairly claim that these authors' dismissal of God does not affect students? I think not. To my mind, Lockerbie's failure to conclude with a chapter devoted to this question weakens his book. It is interesting and useful as it is, but its conclusion is too brief, even though I agree with his closing sentence: "Can there be anything more ironic than to have given one's intellectual and moral energies to the extirpation of the only truth that matters?"

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ED CHRISTIAN

Mackey, James, ed. *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993. 432 pp. Paper, \$34.95.

In his introduction, James Mackey claims that this collection of essays is intended to serve as "a map for beginners" commencing research on Celtic Christianity, an introduction to its major locations, events, and characters.

If the reader assumes from this that the book might serve as some sort of "handy introduction" to the Celtic Christianity prevalent in Britain and Ireland before the arrival of Pope Gregory's "official" missionary, Augustine Canterbury, in 698, then he or she is going to be very disappointed. It is a disparate collection of essays, of varying quality, which represent vignettes on aspects of Christianity in Ireland, Wales, and Scotland from the birth of Patrick (c. 390) to the eighteenth-century Welsh Revival.

The only adequate window on Celtic beginnings is provided by R. P. C. Hanson in his essay, "The Mission of St. Patrick" (22-44). However, there is no equivalent essay on St. Ninian's work in Strathclyde, the Mission of St. Columba, the influence of the Celts of Lindisfarne, or the Mission of St. David in Wales. The essays on "Protestantism and Scottish Highland Culture" and "Medieval Wales and the Reformation" are of value, but do not adequately establish links with the distinctive Celtic Christianity prevalent in the first six centuries of the Christian era. Even in the overview of the theology of the Celts given by M. Forthomme Nicholson (386-413), there is only one reference to Columba and that, a flippant one. "Windows on Celtic Lands over Eighteen Centuries" would not have been a penny-catching title, but would have given a more accurate reflection of the book's contents.

In his Introduction (5) Mackey refers to the Celts' having held out longest

against "the enormously imperialistic Roman Church." He also has references to "cultural vandalism" (8) and "thought imperialism" (13). Nevertheless, the greatest single flaw in the book is the tendency to use the sparse primary sources in such a way as to select for reference only those religious practices and theological tenets which reflect contemporary mainstream Christianity. Had the book provided even a superficial coverage of the beliefs and practices of either St. Columba or St. David, and had Pelagius not been chosen as "our sample Celtic theologian" (16-17)—a very doubtful, even perverse choice—then we should have read of the aspects of Celtic Christianity that made it distinctive. Among these would have been the Saturday Sabbath, baptism by immersion, and a belief in the imminent return of Jesus. Is this, perhaps, "cultural vandalism"? To avoid reference to these distinctives is, arguably, to remove the reason why the Celts held out longest against Roman "imperialism."

Hanson's new slant on Patrick arises out of the evidence he adduces for the strength of Christianity in Britain at the time the legions were withdrawing—and Patrick was beginning to evangelize Ireland, c. 431. Patrick is seen as a missionary neither from Rome nor Auxerre, but from Britain. "The British Church was Patrick's Church. It was to the leaders of this Church that he addressed his *Confessions* at the end of his life" (30). Patrick was almost certainly attracted to Ireland by the fact that it had never been colonized by Rome (35).

The closest the book comes to a conscientious treatment of Celtic Christianity and to making a distinctive contribution to its history is in R. P. C. Hanson's essay, "The Mission of St. Patrick." Hanson candidly admits that our knowledge of Patrick is limited to two primary sources only—The *Confessions* and Patrick's *Letter to Coroticus*—but makes intelligent use of what they contain, cracking the crust of legend created by the various *Lives* of Patrick. Thus there are no meetings with High Kings at Tara, no treks up Croagh Patrick, and no precise locations. On the other hand, a distant, strong figure does emerge, preaching from his pre-Vulgate Latin Bible salvation in Christ and preparation for the return of Christ (*Confession* 40, 42, 47, 50 cited on 33, 40).

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Martens, Elmer A. *Old Testament Theology*. IBR Bibliographies, 13. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997. 138 pp. Paper, \$12.99.

"Of making many books there is no end," asserts Qoheleth, "and much study is a weariness of the flesh" (Eccl 12:12, NRSV). For researchers whose focus is OT theology, Elmer Martens' new compilation of sources admirably contributes toward a diminution of this weariness. Martens' bibliography is one of six already in print, of a series of fourteen contemplated by the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR) in collaboration with Baker Book House. Already available in the area of OT studies are Peter Enns' *Poetry & Wisdom* and Edwin Hostetter's *OT Introduction*. Published volumes in NT studies include *Jesus*, by Craig Evans, *Luke-Acts* by Joel Green and Michael McKeever, and *NT Introduction*, by Stanley Porter and Lee Martin McDonald. When completed, this product of evangelical