

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

scholarship will have covered the OT books in four volumes (including *Pentateuch*, *Historical Books*, *Prophecy*, and *Apocalyptic*), and the NT books in five (including *Synoptic Gospels*, *Johannine Writings*, *Pauline Writings*, *Hebrews*, and *General Epistles*). Overviews of works in the fields of NT and OT Theology, NT and OT Introduction, and Evans' compilation of studies on Jesus, round out the bibliographic picture as contemplated by series sponsors. Collaborators' goals, as outlined in the preface, include the annotation of approximately 500 titles per volume (7), and updates every five years (8). Those interested in original scholarship in languages other than English must look elsewhere, since these bibliographies are designed particularly for American and British students, "with a five-percent limit on titles not translated into English" (8).

Martens' categories deserve as much attention as do his brief comments. He begins, as might be expected, with "Reference Works," and continues through a total of nine major headings. Category two covers "Serial Literature," including journals, monograph series, and collected essays. Next come titles on the "History" and current "State of the Discipline," and, fourth, its principal issues, including task, method, and the relation of biblical theology to other disciplines such as dogmatic theology (Gabler, #116), the history of religion, philosophy, or hermeneutics. Martens' fifth section reviews a variety of perspectives from which OT theology has been contemplated. The heading encompasses such variety as "the 'problematic' of a panbiblical theology" (61), Jewish interpretation of the OT, a pair of entries on the importance of liberation and feminist readings, and a section dedicated to Christian preaching—not, in fact, a mine of memorable sermons on the OT, but of compositions which reveal "awareness of the importance of the biblical-theological component in preaching the OT." Four more main headings attend to OT theologies, theologies of major sections (Former, Latter Prophets, etc.), theologies of each book, and monographs on selected biblical themes.

A pleasant surprise welcomes the reader to this book when, in the first main heading, "Reference Works," one encounters the commendable discrimination between "Indexing and Abstracting Sources" (1.1), and "Encyclopedias & Dictionaries" (1.2). The first of these subcategories includes one electronically available bibliography, hinting at how the future may already be with us, with its variation from Martens' present work. Unfortunately, the source may be incorrectly cited. Failing to make any contact with the printed e-mail address, I guessed at a number of variations and attempted to write to each one, all without success.

Heading 1.2, "Encyclopedias & Dictionaries," may appear, to some, a misleading title, since it does not really highlight either of these, actually dealt with under 1.3. What appears is a listing of ten entries introducing sixteen articles about the discipline, most of them between two and eight pages long. The term "Summaries" would, for the most part, have better fitted the subsection's actual contents, which provide brief or longer orientation to the discipline and the formulations of some of its principal thinkers.

Section four on "Issues in the Discipline" often proves difficult to distinguish in focus from matters addressed in the preceding grouping on the history and current state of OT theology. For, as Martens aptly points out in his introduction to this fourth section, "The attempt to categorize . . . sources is admittedly arbitrary since

discussions on history and method, for example, may also include observations about task," itself "an issue muddled by differences of opinion on how the discipline relates to other biblical disciplines" (37). This much is axiomatic: that as long as consensus escapes us on the proper relationship between the history of the religion of Israel and the study of OT theology (Albertz, etc., #128; Rendtorff, #91), as long as opinion so clearly divides on the appropriateness of scientific criticism to the formation of OT theology (Collins #109; Eissfeldt, #117; Eichrodt; #118), so long will matters of the discipline's history remain indistinguishable from the question of current issues. Clinical distinction within these fields would require more surgical skill than is available to current bibliography. What is clinical in its precision is Martens' evaluative sense. He is aware that both scholars and lay people will use his work. He is also aware that at times the value of a given work need not be discounted because of the weakness of its analysis. Obligated by the variety of criteria required to serve the range of purposes which a good bibliography dictates, and to meet the spectrum of interest which the IBR series contemplates, he guides by succinct summary: "valuable for collation of material . . . , but hardly outstanding" (#302); "substantive, enduring, though somewhat dated . . ." (#20); and, by contrast, "highly valuable and up-to-date" (#32). Material for English-only readers accompanies highly technical tomes. Works in dialogue with each other are cross-referenced: Entry #89 helps #95; #66 is complemented by #72; #118 opposes #117.

Augustine commented that the greatest need of the Christian catechist in his time was that of a classified encyclopedia. Today we may opine that one of the greatest needs of the researcher in OT theology is a bibliography like Martens'. By his breadth and balance, by the sensitivity of his selections, by the conciseness and clarity of his annotations, Martens comes closer than does volume three of this series, for example (*Poetry & Wisdom*), to fulfilling a stated aim of the series' sponsors, that of serving the needs of "minister, rabbi, student, or interested layperson" (7). Surprisingly, he does not need the 784 entries employed in that companion volume, in order to achieve this. Hewing close to the boundary of "approximately five hundred titles" marked out by his editors (7), he accomplishes his commendable task with 512 entries. It would be faint charity to chide that a single entry often enough embraces several titles. It would be simple honesty to admit that OT theological study is improved by, and will be better because of the availability of, Martens' work. Indeed, the more sources I explored in preparation for this review, the more conviction strengthened that, as bibliographies go, Martens has now set the standard in the field of OT theology. Minor flaws apart, for conciseness, comprehensiveness, and comprehensibility of comment, for cohesiveness and logical continuity of categories from beginning to end, his effort will be surpassed only with considerable difficulty.

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McComiskey, Thomas Edward, ed. *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical & Expository Commentary*. Vol. 3: *Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. xii + 897-1412. \$34.99.

This exegetical and expository commentary is the final volume in a series on the minor prophets prepared under the general editorship of the late Thomas