

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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LAEL CAESAR

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

Edward McComiskey, who until his death in 1996 was presiding fellow of the American College of Biblical Theologians. McComiskey wrote the commentary on the book of Zechariah, J. Alec Motyer on Zephaniah and Haggai, and Douglas Stuart on Malachi.

The authors approach the biblical books from an evangelical perspective. In their general introductions to each biblical book they examine such issues as its date, genre, theology, and other background, and briefly outline and analyze the book's themes and contents. The commentary and exposition follow and flesh out the specific points raised in the introductory outline.

Each textual unit created by the outline begins with two translations of the passage under study: a literal one of the Hebrew by the commentator and the other from the NRSV. Each commentary page employs a two-part and user-friendly format. The detailed exegesis and linguistic data of the passage appear in the upper portion of the page, while the author's exposition, which builds upon the exegesis, occupies the bottom half. The authors keep the two approaches separate, but proximity of the two approaches allows the reader to quickly integrate them, if desired. Each author set his goals to be utilizing the highest standards of scholarly exegesis and interacting with the current literature). At the same time, the reader can concentrate on the message of the text without getting sidetracked by philological details. Each of the four biblical-book sections has a separate bibliography, and the volume as a whole contains a Scripture index.

The commentators provide a thorough discussion of the message of the minor prophets. They are most interested in what the texts say, not how they came to be. The authors reveal a good grasp of ancient Near Eastern and biblical backgrounds, while carefully and faithfully seeking to reconstruct the situations in which the prophetic messages might have first appeared. The commentators sought to allow the minor prophets speak to today's world by exploring the larger significance of each biblical passage. (For examples, see the commentary on Mal 2:16 and Mal 3:8-10.)

This volume is a solid resource for both student and pastor. It provides a demonstration of what evangelical scholarship can do as it honestly wrestles with the text.

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GERALD WHEELER

Merling, David, ed. *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*. Berrien Springs, MI: Institute of Archaeology, 1997. xxx + 330 pp. \$15.00.

This Festschrift opens with a biographical introduction of Dr. Shea's career, followed by a bibliography of his publications. The articles are arranged in five sections. The first section, on Hebrew Scriptures, is also the longest, followed by a section almost as long devoted to the book of Daniel. Following are three shorter sections of two or three articles each on Greek Scriptures, ancient history, and theology. Helpful subject and Scripture indexes conclude the volume.

As with other Festschriften, this one contains a wide variety of essays. Although the editor has arranged the contents by general category, clearly the