

Bailey, Mark, and Tom Constable. *The New Testament Explorer: Discovering the Essence, Background and Meaning of Every Book in the New Testament*, Swindoll Leadership Library. Waco: Word, 1999. v + 576 pp. Hardcover, \$29.99.

Mark Bailey and Tom Constable are long-time faculty members at Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas. In the present volume Bailey wrote the material on the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, while Constable wrote on the Acts of the Apostles, the Pauline Epistles, general Epistles, and the book of Revelation. The authors provide essential information on each biblical book regarding authorship, date, geography, and the general argument and theme of the book. At the end of the volume there is a useful bibliography on each NT book.

This introduction to the NT is different from others in many ways. Instead of serving as a summary of scholarly theory and critical literature, it surveys the entire early Christian literature in a comprehensive way. The aim is to make this corpus accessible for beginning students, to aid and encourage them to read the NT.

The book generally communicates a strong sense of each author's integrity and faith. In some ways it deviates from the usual format followed by works of this kind, but the authors have largely succeeded in making a text that is not "over the heads" of relatively biblically illiterate first-year undergraduates, but which nevertheless does not depreciate the content.

Scant attention is paid to less conservative theories regarding authorship, date, or composition of individual books. Bailey and Constable consistently provide the most conservative and traditional information, yet seldom present reasons for rejecting other views.

Some anomalies appear. Matthew is said to stress Jesus as "Savior of Israel and the World" (6), even though that title is singular to Luke, while no reference to Matthew's unique emphasis on Jesus as "Son of David" or "Royal Messiah" appears. It is curious to read that Mark emphasizes the resurrection (98) when in fact it does not describe that event in detail.

Constable briefly presents and answers objections to the authenticity, authorship, and date of 2 Thessalonians and 1 Peter. A similar approach with books that are more often questioned is needed (e.g., Ephesians, the pastoral epistles, and 2 Peter).

Particularly interesting is the way Constable develops and explains the book of Revelation. He presents a perceptive explanation of this book's relation to OT prophecy, especially the book of Daniel.

Since this introduction makes the NT more accessible to general readers, it will be of benefit to pastors and laypersons. Because of its orientation, it will be appreciated most by conservative evangelicals.

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OTIS COUTSOUPOS

Baldwin, John Templeton, ed. *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000. 219 pp. Hardcover, \$14.99.

Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary could best be compared to an intellectual appetizer, encouraging hunger for more, not bloating the reader with waffle and