

to a much broader readership. Even the Zinke and Hanna chapters could easily be modified without in any way compromising the elegance of the book's writing or logic. Clearly there are still publishers out there unaware of the wide interest in science, evolution, and Scripture. In an age when Phillip Johnson's new book *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* can gain instant best-seller status, a broad market is clearly in place for books that deal with the origin of life. *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary* should be a player in the big leagues and not arbitrarily confined to the Seventh-day Adventist sideline.

Another frustration stems from one of the books strengths: its brevity. Because it is short, there are few opportunities to get bogged down in boring waffle; but while each essay makes a complete point, there are times when all of the arguments for a specific position are not addressed. For example, Randall Younker does an excellent job of demonstrating the coherence of Gen 1 and 2 without paying even passing reference to the argument of William Shea that the two chapters combine to form a chiasmic structure indicating the hand of a single author producing a coherent written product (W. H. Shea, "The Unity of the Creation Account," *Origins* 5, no. 1:9-38). *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary* exposes the reader to an array of fascinating evidence and elegant logic that effectively shows the interrelationship between the Creation, Flood, and atonement; but once readers are hooked, many will want to dig deeper into parts that pique their interest. Maybe this is not a shortcoming, but the book's greatest strength.

Andrews University

TIM STANDISH

Beale, G. K. *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary, ed. I. Howard Marshall and Donald A. Hagner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. lxiv + 1245 pp. Hardcover, \$75.00.

The new Revelation volume in the NIGTC series by G. K. Beale is, along with Aune's three-volume commentary in the Word series, a monument to scholarly detail. Taken together, these two massive commentaries provide an unprecedented collection of detailed resources for the study of Revelation. Not only is each commentary impressive in its own right; each tends to be strong in areas where the other is relatively weak.

Both volumes have impressive introductions. But while Aune's commentary is relatively weak in its handling of allusions to the OT in the book of Revelation (see my detailed analysis in "The Book of Revelation and the Old Testament," *Biblical Research* 43 [1998], 61-69), Beale's introduction offers, in my opinion, the best short discussion of the subject available (76-99). The same could be said of Beale's outstanding discussion on the use of symbolism in the Apocalypse (50-69). These two parts of the introduction are worth the price of the entire book. A third exceptional section of the introduction is Beale's convincing analysis of the role of Rev 1:19 in the structuring of Revelation (152-170). The exhaustive bibliographies of previous research in Aune's work, on the other hand, along with his detailed analyses of the manuscript tradition and of the grammar and vocabulary of the Apocalypse, are of such a quality as to require little repetition

by Beale (see my earlier review of Aune in *AUSS*, 37 (1999): 286-288).

In comparison to earlier commentaries on Revelation, Beale has sought to provide a more holistic approach to the text than the atomistic treatment of a Charles or an Aune. He has tried to detect not just the meaning of the parts, but also the flow of thought from paragraph to paragraph. He has combined this approach with extensive attention to the author's use of the OT in light of the intervening Jewish exegetical tradition. He is, therefore, less concerned with issues of introduction, such as authorship, genre, and source criticism, than he is with the original meaning and intention of the text as we have it.

Beale dates the book of Revelation late in the reign of Domitian. He takes issue, however, with Leonard Thompson's widely accepted thesis that there is little evidence for Domitianic persecution of Christians. While many scholars will be unpersuaded, Beale offers the most cogent challenge to Thompson's thesis that I have seen. With regard to genre, Beale advocates a "mixed" approach, recognizing elements of letter, apocalypse, and prophecy in Revelation. His interpretive perspective is also eclectic, favoring a "modified idealism" but allowing for preterism, futurism, and other approaches as indicated to him by the text.

In contrast to the studied objectivity of Aune's commentary, Beale offers a reading that is overtly from faith. Beale believes in the God of the Apocalypse, and he believes in predictive prophecy. Many passages in the commentary throb with faith-building insights. Those who have tired of the more secular works of an earlier generation will find Beale's spiritual readings refreshing.

While I consider Beale's introduction to be the strongest part of the commentary, the verse-by-verse comments also contain a wealth of detailed insights. His comments are strongly based on the Greek text, but not rigidly so. Among the interesting conclusions he draws are the following: The sealed scroll of Rev 5 is a covenant scroll of inheritance (he seems unaware of Stefanovic's comprehensive study of the sealed scroll); the rider on the white horse represents a satanic force that oppresses believers; the 144,000 are a figurative number based on OT census lists and are to be understood as the totality of the redeemed (his discussion is outstanding, 416-423); the two witnesses of Rev 11 represent the persecuted church; 666 was never to be taken literally but represents the imperfection and incompleteness of the beast and his followers; and the kings of the east in 16:12 represent a subcategory of evil powers.

One of the great strengths of Beale's commentary is found in excurses that offer a comprehensive elaboration on the use of the OT in various passages of Revelation. There are seven excellent examples of this in one fifty-page stretch (400-450). These include a discussion of the theological significance of the OT allusions in Rev 6:15-17 (402-404), the relation of the Abrahamic promise to Rev 7:9 (429-430), the background and nature of the great-tribulation concept (Rev 7:14, 433-435), the OT background of clothing washed white (Rev 7:14, 436-439), the idea of believers as priests (Rev 7:15, 439-440), the OT background of the temple concept (Rev 7:16-17, 440-441), and the OT background of "silence" (Rev 8:1, 446-448).

In any work of this size there will be areas open to criticism. I will limit myself to one in this brief essay. While Beale's faith perspective offers certain strengths, it involves more than just the acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God. He seems to

strongly identify with specific doctrinal convictions that don't always arise naturally out of the text of Revelation. While the verse-by-verse commentary is generally objective and text-based, there are times when Beale seems to force the text in the direction he needs it to go. I first gained this impression through the use of Aune and Beale in graduate exegesis classes. Most of my students are conservative Christians in faith-orientation. I expected, therefore, that they would appreciate Beale's spiritual approach to the text more than Aune's detailed objectivity. To my surprise, when they had applied their exegetical training to a specific text first, then consulted Aune and Beale, they almost always felt that Aune had come closer to exposing the intention of the text. Beale seemed to them more inclined to manage the result in favor of a particular belief structure.

An example of this can be found in Beale's discussion of Rev 3:5. This text says that the one who continually overcomes (present participle) will not have his name removed from the book of life. The most natural reading of this text implies that those who do not persist in overcoming can lose their position before God. Beale spends five pages (278-282) seeking to show that a doctrine of "once saved always saved" is not endangered by this text. Aune, by way of contrast, has no such difficulty with 3:5 (vol. 1, 223).

Since neither my students nor I am free from subjectivity, the above observation is not meant to detract from the massive contribution of the whole volume; it is expressed only as a caution to the reader. What I would love to see is a commentary on Revelation that would maintain Aune's standards of detailed objectivity while carrying the spiritual and theological punch of Beale. Until someone creates such a work, these two commentaries will complement each other well.

Andrews University

JON PAULIEN

Blouin, Francis X., Jr., ed. *Vatican Archives: An Inventory and Guide to Historical Documents of the Holy See*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. xl + 588 pp. Cloth, \$150.00.

The documents produced by the Roman Catholic Church are of great significance for researching the development of Christianity. For a long time scholars have desired easy access to all materials of the Vatican Secret Archives (Archivio Segreto Vaticano [ASV]). Since the reign of Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922), these archives have been partially opened, but they have not been available in an organized way. Several reference guides have been developed that list holdings of medieval and Renaissance records in the ASV, yet none of these embraces in "a single work the totality of historical documentation that might properly be considered Vatican archives" (xv).

Blouin and his research team of archivists and historians of the Bentley Historical Library of the University of Michigan accepted the challenge of organizing the ASV records so that they can be easily accessible. At the request of Josef Metzler, O.M.I., prefect of the ASV, Blouin's team has used modern computer database technology to present information on surviving documentation generated by the Papacy in a standardized format.

The project has produced an impressive reference guide that contains a