

forms are compared and contrasted. Following are Grammar and Usage sections. While these are time-consuming for the reader, they contain a wealth of information that warrants close attention. Ideally the Grammar would be used in a graduate class. Those working alone will need to pay close attention to this section of each unit.

The Phraseology section shows how quite innocuous expressions are often fraught with profound, even if obtuse significance so that the sum is greater than the total of the individual parts.

Because the Vocabulary section is incomplete, it is frustrating to attempt the exercises, which assume an almost encyclopedic knowledge of BH vocabulary. Each assignment has twenty exercises, including ten each of vocalized and unvocalized extracts, drawn from sources such as the *Mishnah* (especially *Pirque Aboth*), *Sifra*, *Sifre*, and *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*. The latter set gives an ambitious student the opportunity both to read unvocalized texts and to vocalize them if desired, an excellent way to test one's RH skills.

The volume concludes with a bibliography and four indices: biblical and nonbiblical texts cited, Hebrew and Aramaic forms (these would be more useful if the Hebrew and Aramaic were right-justified), types of verbal roots, and forms of the paradigm verb.

Overall, the book is well done and is a pleasure to use. It is gratifying to find a book written in another language that is translated so well, though this is becoming the hallmark of Elwolde's work. The volume is well printed, with a few Hebrew pointing errors and inaccuracies. For the autodidact, a teachers' help/supplement would be a great boon. I found it helpful to have handy a copy of Jastrow (*A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature*), Alcalay (*The Complete Hebrew-English Dictionary*), Danby (*The Mishnah*), and Neusner (*The Mishnah* [available on computer]). These sources help with word meanings and usage, and provide the opportunity to check one's translation.

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Pfifzner, Victor C. *Hebrews*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. 218 pp. Paperback, \$21.00.

The purpose of the Abingdon New Testament Commentaries is to provide "compact, critical commentaries . . . written with special attention to the needs and interests of theological students . . . as well as for pastors and other church leaders" (11). In this volume on Hebrews, Victor C. Pfifzner, Professor of New Testament and Principal of Luther Seminary in North Adelaide, South Australia, has done just that. In only 218 pages, Pfifzner has provided a masterfully concise and eminently readable commentary on a very challenging biblical book.

The commentary begins with twenty-five pages of introductory material dealing with the literary genre, rhetorical devices, structural, and theological issues associated with Hebrews as well as the typical issues associated with authorship. Pfifzner maintains that Hebrews is best understood as a "call to worship" (43) written no later than 64 C.E. by an unknown author to a group of wavering believers living in Rome.

The commentary itself divides Hebrews into six principal literary units (1:1-2:18; 3:1-4:13; 4:14-7:28; 8:1-10:31; 10:32-12:17; 12:18-13:25). The analysis of each section and subsection begins with a succinct overview of the section and an explanation of the various linking literary elements. Issues of interpretation are singled out and lucidly explained, and references are given to other sources where more detailed explanations can be found. The book concludes with a limited bibliography, as well as a terse but informative annotated bibliography of significant commentaries on Hebrews.

One of the strengths of Pfitzner's commentary is his ability to help the beginning reader recognize and "appreciate the writer's literary skill" (13). Throughout his commentary, Pfitzner consistently identifies significant literary elements, such as chiasms, word plays, parallelisms, inclusions in the form of parallel words or phrases, and *a fortiori* arguments which are often overlooked by older commentaries and unrecognized by a reader unskilled in Greek. The fact that the commentary is organized according to literary units of the text rather than verse by verse also serves to help the reader recognize and appreciate the literary skill inherent in Hebrews.

While Pfitzner's commentary has several strengths, his exposition of the central section of Hebrews (8:1-10:31) is notably the weakest part of the work. In this part of Hebrews, Pfitzner tends to be overly simplistic rather than lucidly concise. An example of this weakness can be seen in the discussion of the author's relationship between the earthly and heavenly tabernacles in 9:6-8. Pfitzner asserts that the "first tent" (*skēnē*) in v. 8 is equivalent to the *skēnē* in vv. 2 and 6, i.e., "not the tabernacle as a whole, but its front compartment" (125). Pfitzner's exposition completely fails to acknowledge either the difficulty of this verse or the differing viewpoint that *skēnē* in v. 8 refers to the whole of the earthly sanctuary (e.g., Ellingworth, 1993; Bruce, 1990). Other examples of the weakness of this section include no mention of the differing views of *ta hagia* and the terseness of the discussion of the various meanings of *diathēkē* in 9:15-22.

Despite such weaknesses, Pfitzner's commentary makes a valuable contribution in helping the reader better understand the spiritual riches of the book of Hebrews. While the reader who is trained in biblical studies will probably find its presentation somewhat limited, it serves as an excellent introduction to the literary and basic theological issues of Hebrews. Both its limited size and annotated bibliography make this book a good starting point to further studies in Hebrews.

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Pöhler, Rolf J. *Continuity and Change in Christian Doctrine: A Study of the Problem of Doctrinal Development*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1999. 156 pages. \$31.95.

Continuity and Change in Christian Doctrine is an adaptation of the first part of Pöhler's 1995 doctoral dissertation, "Change in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Study of the Problem of Doctrinal Development." The purpose of the published volume is first to explore the problem of doctrinal continuity and change in both Roman Catholic and Protestant theological literature in order to