

*Constantine's Sword* is greatly weakened by the author's lack of primary sources; the work is based on secondary sources alone. The writing style is easy to read, and Carroll is a good storyteller. His work yields almost seventy pages of endnotes, supplemented by six pages of chronology and an extensive bibliography and index. His handling of historical documents, however, is fickle. He suspects the authenticity of the four Gospels and Acts because they were written decades after the fact, and likely not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Yet, he takes the Jewish chronicles of the eleventh century, also written decades after the fact, without reserve. Much could be said about his use of the term "totalitarian" for the medieval church, rather than the more accurate "authoritarian" or "dictatorial." Finally, a knowledgeable reader may question the complete omission of the fate of the Jews in the seventh-century Visigothic Kingdom, an episode in the history of the Jewish people as dark as that of the year 1096.

Andrews University

JOHN JOVAN MARKOVIC

Crenshaw, James L. *The Psalms: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. x + 187 pp. \$15.00.

Professor James Crenshaw has written an introduction to the book of Psalms that is evidently the product of years of studying and teaching. A lifetime of research and contemplation on psalmic wisdom and related OT concerns are brought to bear on this recent volume. *Evidence* of Crenshaw's lifelong work is *evident* in his publications, including *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (1981, 1998), *Ecclesiastes* (1987), *Story and Faith* (1992), *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions* (1995), and *Education in Ancient Israel* (1998).

Crenshaw's work has two principal aims: to engender a deeper appreciation of the "literary artistry and theological sensitivity" of the psalms and to encourage readers to study the book with a fresh perspective (169). To accomplish this, he divides his book into three parts—origins, approaches to the Psalms, and some readings.

In Part I, Crenshaw examines several issues of introduction. He explores the question of composition and collections in the Psalter and discusses their individual authorship and settings. He also compares them to other related materials inside and outside the Bible. In Part II, he discusses three approaches to the Psalter. The first highlights the Psalms as prayers and resources for devotional life. The second examines them as a resource for historical data. A final approach examines the literary classification of and social setting for the individual Psalms. In this section, Crenshaw also provides an evaluation of some recent literary and theological approaches and an excellent excursus on the wisdom psalms. In Part III, he offers detailed exposition of four specific Psalms (24, 71, 73, and 115).

Crenshaw succeeds admirably in accomplishing his stated aims. This is a needed volume and in spite of its brevity, it contains all the hallmarks of an introduction. His careful methodology makes the book a useful resource for any student. It will also be beneficial to those who teach entry-level exegesis of the Psalms. The rich bibliographical data are especially helpful for those seeking to conduct further research.

In my estimation, the outstanding contribution of this book is the exposition

in Part III that will prove valuable not only to students and teachers, but also to those who use the Psalter for preaching. Especially noteworthy is the exposition of Ps 73, which offers an abundance of literary, theological, and homiletical insights. Each of the four expositions displays remarkable theological and homiletical insight and evidences the work of a skilled exegete. Crenshaw has selected his four Psalms well, as each one reflects a specific concern. He demonstrates how they tackle, respectively, the perennial questions of theodicy, the true essence of worship, the problem of aging, and encounter with the holy.

If there is any major weakness in this book, perhaps it concerns its length. As good as the book is, exposition of a few more Psalms would enhance its value. I can only hope that an accompanying volume will be forthcoming.

I cannot help but notice Crenshaw's evident reticence to grant authorship to the Psalms as stated in their superscriptions. He appears to hold the commonly accepted position that reinterprets the superscriptions as designations of collections rather than authorship. Such labels could carry several connotations, but that they indicate authorship cannot be simply written off. While Crenshaw does not entirely dismiss this idea, neither does he adequately explain his approach. Another issue I have with the book is the sudden and unexplained attribution of feminine authorship to Ps 24. I find this somewhat puzzling since nowhere does Crenshaw shed any light on this choice. Is it simply a question of political correctness, or does he possess some deeper but unexplained knowledge that would be of great interest to his readers?

In spite of my reservations regarding a few relatively minor issues, I find this book to be an excellent introduction to the Psalter and would strongly recommend its use for teaching and pastoral professionals.

Mission College  
Muak Lek, Saraburi, Thailand

WANN M. FANWAR

Dembski, William A. *No Free Lunch: Why Specified Complexity Cannot Be Purchased without Intelligence*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. xxv + 404 pp. Hardcover, \$35.00.

A mathematician and a philosopher, William A. Dembski is a leading proponent of intelligent design. In his earlier work, *The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance through Small Probabilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Dembski argued that specified complexity reveals intelligence. However, his critics have claimed that evolutionary algorithms can convey specified complexity apart from intelligence. In answering this criticism, *No Free Lunch* proves the inadequacy of any naturalistic apparatus, in particular the Darwinian mechanism, to generate specified complexity.

According to Dembski, science unjustifiably eliminated design as an acceptable mode of explanation and gave exclusive rights to chance and necessity. He shows that design is empirically detectable if two features are present: complexity and specification. Thus the concept of specified complexity is used as a criterion for detecting design empirically. Against his critics, Dembski defends specified complexity as a well-defined, detectable, and testable concept.