

of Third World Theologians," "Ecumenical Dialogue," "Ecumenical Learning," "Ecumenical Mission," "Ecumenical Patriarchate," "Ecumenical Symbols," "Ecumenical Theology," and "Ecumenism, Ecumenical Movement." The last article alone covers almost sixteen double-column pages.

At the other end of the weighting spectrum, the discussion of the electronic church gets less than one page. That page, however, presents a very helpful and insightful analysis of the characteristics and theology of the media church as well as an excellent bibliography.

The treatments of such subjects as ecumenism and the electronic church are helpful and balanced. The same may be said for most of the topics. Thus, if a person is interested in such areas as economic ethics, general ethics, or immortality, the *Encyclopedia* offers a good place to begin study. The same might be said for an overview of topics within a national subgroup such as Christianity in Italy. On the other hand, the weakest articles are those introducing the biblical books. Generally, much more satisfactory treatments may be found in Bible dictionaries or encyclopedias, introductions to the NT and OT, and the preliminary sections of commentaries, works that will nearly always be found in libraries housing the *Encyclopedia*. Perhaps the short shrift given to such introductions is part of the price that has to be paid by a reference work that seeks to be too inclusive. Unfortunately, it is a fact of life that no reference work can be best at everything.

That disclaimer aside, however, *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* is an excellent reference work for most of the multitude of topics that it covers. As such, it is a most valuable addition to the rapidly expanding realm of theological reference works.

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Fox, Michael. *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, AB, vol. 18A. New York: Doubleday, 2000. xix + 474 pp. Hardcover, \$42.50.

Michael Fox's "Acknowledgments" beguile. As in *Qobeleit and His Contradictions* (Almond, 1989), he apologizes for familiarity in the present text. In this case, the familiarity consists of nine articles by Fox, reworked as part of his ongoing research on the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs. Although Fox is modest, his scholarship is a major contribution to the study of Proverbs.

Apart from preliminary material such as transliteration and pronunciation, principal sections of the commentary are as follows. The introduction surveys Egyptian and Mesopotamian Wisdom Literature before Proverbs, and Egyptian and Hellenistic Judean Wisdom Literature after Proverbs. It also includes expositions on words for "wisdom" and "folly." The second section, which contains the main body of text, presents the translation of and commentary on the first nine chapters of Proverbs. A third subheading appears as "Essays and Textual Notes on Proverbs 1-9," which considers the formation of Prov 1-9 and the origins and voices of personified Wisdom. This is followed by a fourth section entitled "Textual Notes on Proverbs 1-9," which deals with items of special consideration in section 3. The final section features a bibliography of Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and traditional Jewish exegetical and modern sources.

Regarding the history of the formation of the book of Proverbs, Fox doubts that "many—if any—of the proverbs were written by Solomon" (56). The sayings disclose a variety of social settings, including the royal court, but should not be thought of as an artificial schooltext for court scribes/teachers. He distinguishes between six divisions in the book's current form, varying in length from almost thirteen chapters (section 2: "Proverbs of Solomon," 10:1-22:16) to twelve verses (section 4: "These too are of the wise," 24:23-34).

Fox assesses the first nine chapters of Proverbs as the climax of the book's development (6), since the function of these chapters is introductory to the work as a whole. He dates the book's final redaction to Persian or Hellenistic times, but he evidently speaks of chapters 10-29 (*terminus ad quem* 587 B.C.E., [6]) when he refers to sixth- or fifth-century wisdom material as being written "after" Proverbs. The first nine chapters were attached to chapters 10-29 in an original "base" text of the prologue and ten lectures (1:1-7:27), except for three interludes consisting of forty-one verses. The three, along with two others (chaps. 8, 9), are subsequent additions by a variety of authors. The text also reflects still later, minor modifications, including peculiarly Septuagint material. Its use of "terminology of importance" is seen as evidence for the prologue's later composition. Its unawareness of the personification or even the reification of wisdom shows that it antedates the interludes.

Fox's meticulous scholarship properly acknowledges the risks of source-critical analysis as a means for establishing original readings and explanation of redactional activity. He criticizes Whybray's procrustean procedure for reducing to uniformity ten theoretically and originally independent bits of text called "instructions," arguing that the repetitiveness and diversity that Whybray pares away in the process need not be proofs of multiple authorship (322). Fox may be self-contradictory, however, when he argues that it "would be unlike" the author of the carefully schematized lectures to disperse the interludes among them (327).

Fox's deprecation of some *mšlym* as being pseudo, or of a more trivial order, is acceptable if modern scholars define the criteria for ancient labeling. The sayings, within the variety of their societal sources (i.e., royal, diplomatic, agricultural, financial), are all reflections of sound and popular wisdom, so that, as conceded by R.B.Y. Scott (*Proverbs, Ecclesiastes*, AB, 1985), whether they are two-line couplets or longer discourses and poems, they can be called *mšlym* although they may not be labeled as "proverbs."

Fox emphasizes the book's secularity (7), in contrast to the ethical-religious moralizing so prominent among medieval commentators. Because God is never addressed in Proverbs, a secular/religious dichotomy is somewhat academic. Israel's Wisdom Literature shows its uniqueness within the ANE context, as well as its continuity with general Israelite thought by portraying the fear of God as the transcendent motivation for human behavior (71). Yet, Fox never concedes that the authors of the book of Proverbs, who appeal to this supreme motivation, may well be speaking on God's behalf, even when he understands that the father speaks, not in suggestion, but in *mišwot* (349). Absence of divine address is explained by the book's didactic tone. The ostensible audience, addressed as much for God's sake as for its own (2:1-5ff.; 3:1-12), is urged to reject evil enticement (1:10) in the knowledge that wickedness brings ultimate destruction (2:21, 22).

Besides, rabbinic religion manifests itself both in the reduced emphasis on Proverbs (7) and in its spiritualized interpretations in medieval Jewish scholarship.

Fox respects the integrity of the book of Proverbs as a male-oriented text (16). He also considers the fact that the voices of both parents are to be heard in the book's instructions (83). He reminds that *tokahat* (reproof) is always critical and negative; it may take the form of corporal punishment, but is usually verbal. By way of example, he cites Job's reproof of his friends, whose deceitful speaking will arouse God's anger (Job 13:6-13). However, Fox believes that the *tokahat* "does not always presume a past failing" (99).

The thoroughness of Fox's analysis (see, e.g., essays on words for "wisdom" and "folly," though we miss an entry on *yir'at YHWH*), the felicitousness of his critiques (as when Toy "has neatly stated the opposite of the truth" [103]), his competent handling of the sources (particularly the Egyptian sources), his elaboration on the two major tropes of "paths through life" (128) and "life as a banquet" (305), and his subdued logic all assure that this signal work will be treasured by the world of ANE wisdom scholarship for a long time to come.

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Gager, John G. *Reinventing Paul*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. x + 198 pp. Hardcover, \$25.00.

John G. Gager is William H. Danforth professor of Religion at Princeton University, where he has taught since 1968. His major works are: *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 1983); *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Prentice-Hall, 1975); and *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Abingdon, 1972). He also edited *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press, 1992). It is evident from these titles that Gager has focused his research on the religious and sociological aspects of the NT and its environs.

The twofold thesis Gager tries to develop in *Reinventing Paul* is (a) that the traditional view of Paul—with its perceived center being the notion that God rejected Jews and replaced them with Gentiles as a new people of God—is "wrong from top to bottom" (50), and (b) that in all of his writings, Paul never made an "argument against the Jewish law in relation to Israel and the Jews" (57).

In his introduction, Gager introduces the traditional view and observes a problem that it raises for its proponents—namely, that Paul apparently makes contradictory statements about Israel and the role of the law (4-7). Gager then outlines four approaches that scholars have used to solve this problem and stresses that the last approach has been the major one. It involves subordinating "one set of passages—always the pro-Israel set—to the other [anti-Israel set]" (9).

Disagreeing with the traditional view, Gager lays bare a three-pronged methodology for a more accurate picture of Paul (16). Paul must be understood within the first-century contexts of (a) the Jesus tradition and (b) Greco-Roman Judaism and according to (c) the Greco-Roman conventions of rhetoric. Six presuppositions undergird his methodology (10-13): (a) One can never expect to get to Paul's actual intentions behind the text; (b) the meaning of a text depends