

author has consistently quoted the NRSV, except for references to the NIV, and attempts to quote the KJV from memory. McLay observes:

The fact that there was no standardized text [of the Hebrew Bible] prior to the second century [A.D.] helps us to understand better the nature of the Old Greek translation of a particular book in the Hebrew Bible. Since there was no standardized text, the Old Greek translation of a particular book provides a snapshot of a particular text form of the Hebrew book that existed at that time" (121).

Finally, in chapter 5, "The Impact of the Septuagint on the New Testament," we come to what many will have expected the whole book to have been about. The problem is that translation technique has never had such a thoroughgoing, consistent approach before, and it takes time and space to do so. Again, this chapter addresses the deeper issue of the canon. At the time the NT was written, what the writers considered authoritative will, for some, seem a surprisingly wide range of sources outside of the (later, traditional) Jewish canon. Thus McLay, in his own way, is close to the point of Martin Hengel (see my review of Hengel, *The Septuagint As Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon*, AUSS 41 [2003]: 315–317) in arguing for—and demonstrating the lack of—any clear canon for any corpus into the Christian era. However, the two differ in that Hengel accepts that the Hebrew canon was settled by a Jewish Council at Jamnia/Jabneh. McLay—in contradistinction to Hengel, and in agreement with the consensus position for the current generation of scholars—correctly understands that this putative Jewish Council in fact never took place, but was a construct of Christian authors to provide a point parallel to the later Christian councils that determined the extent of the NT canon.

There is no question that Judaism centered in the Jewish Scriptures, and that the NT church, under divine inspiration, reinterpreted the Hebrew Bible in the light of the work and ministry of Jesus Christ. McLay's book opens to the reader the nature and complexity of that process. Since so much in the book will be new to many readers, the issue is not whether McLay is correct, but whether he is headed in the right direction; the answer is in the affirmative. McLay has made a significant contribution. He and others will refine the process, but the way ahead is now clear.

Loma Linda, California

BERNARD TAYLOR

Osborne, Grant R. *Revelation*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. xx + 869 pp. Hardcover, \$49.99.

Grant R. Osborne is Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, and editor and one of the authors of the Life Application Bible Commentary and the InterVarsity Press New Testament Commentary Series.

The present volume is a section-by-section commentary on the book of Revelation, which is based on an exegesis of the text. It is written from the evangelical perspective in accordance with the objectives of the whole commentary

series, which are to blend “scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensibility to the whole, attention to critical problems with theological awareness” (ix). Osborne stresses that the Apocalypse is not a result of John’s fertile imagination; its origin is in God himself. He views the book as symbolic, but depicting literal events. The images in the book are exclusively drawn from the OT, of which the interpretive key is typology. Bible-believing readers will certainly appreciate the faith-based Osborne approach.

Osborne follows a standard commentary format. A lengthy introduction discusses the authorship, date, social setting and purpose of the writing, and the genre of the book. It explores topics such as the interpretation of symbols, methods of interpretation, text, canonicity, the language/grammar of the book, use of the OT, and the structure of the book. The introduction concludes with an extensive theological section. Apart from the prologue (1:1-8) and the epilogue (22:6-21), Osborne divides the book into four parts: “Churches Addressed,” “God in Majesty and Judgment,” “Final Judgment and the Arrival of the Eschaton,” and “New Heaven and New Earth.” However, he considers this outline to be only one level of a very complex literary structure of the Apocalypse. Each literary unit that is treated begins with introductory comments and a structural outline, followed by the author’s translation of the text and an exegetical discussion of the biblical passages. The section concludes with “Summary and Contextualization,” which provides both a brief summary of the section and practical application to the modern reader’s setting. “Additional Notes” at the end of each exegetical unit provide a discussion of the textual problems. Also included at the end of the book are a bibliography and helpful indices.

The book is remarkable for blending scholarship with exposition. It is user-friendly and easy to read. Its more-than-800 pages render excellent reference material. It is obviously written with general readers in mind: the Greek original alphabet is emended with transliteration into the Latin alphabet and translation into English. At times, however, the comments lack clarity, thereby creating ambiguity. For instance, although he argues that Rev 4–5 portrays the enthronement of Christ in heaven (214, 218), he later dismisses the notion that the vision of Rev 5 portrays the enthronement ceremony. The reader will also wonder if Osborne sees the altar in 6:9 and 8:3a as the altar of burnt offering or as the altar which combines the aspects of both the altar of burnt offering and the altar of incense of the Israelite temple (343-346). In addition, the commentary obviously lacks the scholarly originality and fresh insights that characterize, for instance, G. K. Beale’s and D. Aune’s commentaries. A serious interaction with the text within its context is substantiated by references to the views of other commentators. By this remark, I am not trying to diminish the commentary’s contribution. Osborne has an astonishing control of both periodical literature and commentaries on Revelation.

Although Osborne sees his commentary as both preterist and futurist in orientation—similar to Ladd, Beasley-Murray, Michaels, and Mounce—he

makes it clear that his primary approach to the Apocalypse is futurist. The idealist approach has, in his view, both strengths and weaknesses, while historicism has no value at all (21-22). Here I see the main and most serious problem with Osborne's commentary. A scholarly work on the Apocalypse should not let a particular method of interpretation govern the way in which the text is to be interpreted; the text itself should govern the method of interpretation. Osborne himself admits that the method of interpretation an author chooses normally governs the way he or she reads and interprets the text (18). This usually results in forcing the interpretation into the framework of the predetermined idea, regardless of whether or not it fits the context. An example of how Osborne's exegesis is controlled by the futurist presuppositions is the section on Rev 4-5. He first argues that Christ's statement in 3:21—"just as I overcame and sat with my Father on his throne"—is further elaborated on in chapters 4 and 5, which describe "Christ's own conquest and subsequent enthronement with his Father in heaven" (214, 218). However, he argues later that Christ's enthronement in Rev 5 is an event that takes place at the eschatological denouement (245). Such a view is untenable in light of the fact that the NT is replete with texts stating that Christ's sitting on the throne at the right hand of the Father took place after his ascension (cf. Acts 2:32-36; 13:33-34; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20-22; Heb 1:3; 10:12; 12:2; 3:21-22). His interpretation of the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowl plagues is also given from the futurist perspective.

While the introduction provides a lengthy discussion on the use of the OT in the Apocalypse, no mention is made of the Jewish apocalyptic and pagan sources that color its language. This comes as a surprise since Aune's commentary—characterized by the treatment of the Greco-Roman motifs in the Apocalypse—is a primary source for his citations. Thus, for instance, the parallels that Aune draws between the description of the glorified Christ in Rev 1:13-18 and Hekate (a Hellenistic goddess popular in Asia Minor, who was thought to possess the keys to the gates of heaven and hades and was referred to as the beginning and the end) are ignored by Osborne.

At times, it appears that the commentary lacks interaction with the text in its literary context. For instance, in his discussion of the aforementioned text of 3:21, Osborne correctly observes that the first part of the text, which states that the overcomers *will* sit with Christ on his throne, refers to the future event to be fulfilled at the eschatological denouement (213-215). However, he fails to note that the second part ("just as I overcame and sat with my Father on his throne") is expressed in the aorist tense referring to the event that took place in the past from John's perspective (rather than in the future as Osborne holds).

Furthermore, in his translation of Rev 6:11, Osborne inserts the phrase "the number of," which does not appear in the Greek text (274); but he does not indicate that the phrase is his interpretive addition in order to explain what is to

be "completed." As a result, his exegetical analysis and exposition of the text are made to fit a "taken-for-granted" reading, without exploring all the exegetical possibilities of the text as it reads.

Despite the weaknesses pointed out above, Osborne's work is an excellent resource of recent scholarship on the Apocalypse. It will no doubt find its place on the shelves of serious students of the Apocalypse, on one hand; on the other, it is also suitable for use as a textbook in both college and seminary courses.

Andrews University

RANKO STEFANOVIĆ

Ramírez-Johnson, Johnny, and Edwin I. Hernández. *AVANCE: A Vision for a New Mañana*. Loma Linda, CA: Loma Linda University Press, 2003. 296 pp. Paper, \$24.95.

AVANCE is a project of the Hispanic Education Advisory Committee and the Education and Multilingual Ministries Departments of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. The primary purpose of the project was to gather information to strengthen the Hispanic ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

A team composed of eight members, called the AVANCE research team, was responsible for the research. Two of the team members, Johnny Ramírez-Johnson and Edwin I. Hernández, undertook the task of reporting the study. Hernández is the Director of the Center for the Study of Latino Religion and the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Ramírez is Professor of Theology, Psychology, and Culture at Loma Linda University, California.

A total of 3,306 church members from a sampling of seventy-seven churches participated in the research. The study concentrated on three major areas: the family, the school, and the church. The result is the most comprehensive study of the Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United States, the fifth-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world.

The research unveiled excellent information about how Spanish-speaking Seventh-day Adventists view religion, salvation, education, acculturation, and other sociological issues. This wealth of information offers valuable cognitive and practical insights to pastors, administrators, and educators who work with Latinos in this part of the world.

The report is complemented with relevant information from various sources and with practical suggestions to promote the richness and growth of Hispanics in North America. It is written in terse prose, well organized under appropriate headings and subheadings, and offers revealing tables and sidebars that clarify information and make the book easier to read.

The title is, in my opinion, the only weakness of the book. It is not clear and does not do justice to the caliber of the content. When the authors of a book must explain the meaning of its title, it is an indication that they also had doubts about the title's clarity. The title was chosen by the research team that