

Another example that illustrates the problem with muddled history is on the next page (108), where the authors present Morris's argument about the ancient Babylonian king Nimrod as a possible early proponent of ideas related to evolution. Giberson and Yerxa state: "However, like Darwin some three millennia later, Nimrod was just a link in the great chain" (108). It may be that the authors embrace an extremely short-age view of history, but most authorities, including Morris, would put Nimrod at least four millennia before Darwin.

Errors and confusion in the first five chapters of *Species of Origins* sap one's motivation to read on. This is compounded by the distinct impression one gets that the authors didn't do their homework on creationism. It appears that they read one three-volume work, *The Modern Creation Trilogy*, by Morris, concentrating primarily on his concerns about the impact of evolution on society, and left it at that. In addition, the tone is grating, with numerous unqualified statements such as "all the data considered solid by the scientific community—astronomical measurements on stars, geological measurements of rock strata, radioactive dating of rocks, and evolutionary reconstructions of the history of life on the planet—converge on this calculation [that the earth is about five billion years old]" (emphasis original). Most informed people realize that no idea in science accounts for all the solid data; there are always outlying points that must be accounted for in some way or ignored.

Readers who give up on *Species of Origins* in the first few chapters will miss out on the significantly better last five chapters. These chapters explore attempts to reconcile views held by the "Council of Despair" (as Giberson and Yerxa call those who employ evolution to advocate a meaningless outlook on life) with those who believe meaning arises from man's status as creations in the image of God. Their somewhat dismal view is that reconciliation should be possible, but it is unlikely. A vague attempt is made to put a positive spin on this by suggesting that diversity in outlook may somehow be good, but no reason is given for why this should be so. Those who agree with them about the inability to reconcile these views are left wondering why these views should be reconcilable.

*Species of Origins* may be of interest to those exploring different views on the origin of life, particularly human life. Unfortunately, possibly due to the authors' efforts to make an uncritical presentation of the various views, numerous errors of fact are scattered throughout the text, especially in the early chapters. This, combined with an apparent lack of serious research into creationist thinking and vague pop presentation of Darwinism, make this book difficult to recommend.

Geoscience Research Institute  
Loma Linda, California

TIMOTHY G. STANDISH

Hoehner, Harold W. *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. xxx + 930 pp. Hardcover. \$54.99.

Harold Hoehner, veteran New Testament professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, has labored long and hard to produce a magisterial commentary on

the Epistle to the Ephesians which joins vigorous defense of traditional views of the letter with detailed scholarship on the text. It will serve as a compendium of scholarship on Ephesians for years to come.

While its size is daunting, the commentary is written clearly and the page layout is pleasing. Hoehner follows his own detailed outline in presenting the text, and these headings stand out crisply in bold-faced type. The commentary treats the text in segments of one to three verses and, within these sections, discusses phrases of the Greek text which are also given as bold-faced headings. Hoehner regularly provides succinct summaries. All of this combines to provide a satisfying experience for the reader and means that, though the volume is massive, it is relatively easy to use in handbook fashion.

While the commentary does not include a comprehensive bibliography (which, Hoehner notes, would have added another 100 pages to the already expansive volume), it does include up-to-date bibliographies on the issue of the authorship of Ephesians (114-130) and one listing commentaries on the epistle (xxi-xxix). Moreover, some footnotes become virtual bibliographies in their own right (e.g., a note providing "key sources" concerning the form of Paul's letters [69-71] and another treating slavery in Greek and Roman times [800-801]). Thorough footnotes and an excellent author index help to make up for the absence of a comprehensive bibliography.

In the 130 pages given over to introducing the epistle, Hoehner takes up the issues of authorship, structure and genre, city and historical setting, purpose, and theology. He argues the case that Ephesians was composed by Paul. Using Brown's assertion that "*about 80 percent of critical scholarship holds that Paul did not write Ephesians*" as the whipping boy, he builds on W. Hall Harris III's work in calculating support for Pauline authorship. According to his reckoning, around 50 percent of scholars have supported Pauline authorship and around 40 percent have opposed it, with some taking the median position of uncertainty or a shifting point of view. Some may question whether the pages of detailed charts given to all of this are well used, especially in a volume that, despite its 960 pages, complains about "lack of space." However, Hoehner surely makes his point that scholars should avoid facile assumptions that the weight of scholarly opinion tells against Paul as the author of Ephesians.

In general, Hoehner parleys well the various reasons offered for denying the authorship of the letter to Paul. Occasionally, though, his bid to defend the traditional position raises dissonance. He argues, for example, that Ephesians is authentic on grounds that an imitator would have included greetings to make it look like one of Paul's letters. Then he notes that Paul does not give greetings in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philippians, so, in not exhibiting greetings Ephesians looks like other authentic letters. Can both be true?

With regard to genre, Hoehner views Ephesians as an actual letter since it has the characteristics of Hellenistic letters and is similar to other Pauline epistles. The phrase ἐν Ἐφέσῳ should be retained in the text though the letter may have been addressed to many house churches in the area rather than to a

central congregation. A helpful discussion of the city of Ephesus is provided, along with a sketch of the chronology of Paul's engagement with the city. With some hesitancy, Hoehner concludes that Ephesians was composed toward the end of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, "some time in late 61 or early 62" (96). In his discussion of the theology of Ephesians, Hoehner reviews the themes of Trinity, fatherhood of God, Christology, pneumatology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and reconciliation.

The least satisfying part of the introduction is the treatment of purpose. After an able review of the various options, Hoehner makes an idiosyncratic choice, deciding that "the purpose of Ephesians is to promote a love for one another that has the love of God and Christ as its basis" (106). This seems too diffuse to provide help in understanding the purpose or function of the letter.

In treating the text, the volume lives up to its title as an "exegetical commentary." Hoehner does not often dally with how the preacher or teacher might appropriate the text in modern settings. His focus is clearly on understanding the meaning of the ancient text. Much of the commentary portion of the volume is given over to detailed word studies. Hoehner is discontent to simply reflect earlier lexical studies and extends the research to additional sources. On occasion, these word studies seem to become ends in themselves rather than clarifications of the text of Ephesians. A surfeit of data and statistics sometimes detracts from such understanding.

There is much to be praised in Hoehner's treatment of the text of Ephesians. In fact, he does such a consistent and able job elucidating the text that it seems carping to detract from it. However, two segments of the commentary that disappoint are the treatments of Eph 1:3-14 and 6:10-20. In treating Eph 1:3-14, Hoehner offers a lengthy excursus, "Election," objecting to Markus Barth's own excursus, "Election in Christ vs. Determinism." Hoehner seems to import a great deal into the discussion from the later history of Christian theology, and I became increasingly convinced that Barth was, indeed, closer to capturing the spirit and essence of Eph 1:3-14. Hoehner's conclusion that "in the end, no one seeks God and yet in his sovereign grace he chooses some for everlasting life in his presence" (192) may owe as much to Calvin as it does to Ephesians. To take a restrictive view of a passage that expansively proclaims God's purpose to sum up "all things" in Christ (v. 10) and swings the door wide for the two great divisions of humankind, Jews and Gentiles (vv. 13, 14), risks truncating the purposes of God and the intentions of the author. This announcement of God's "predestination" was surely good news to those who had been under the thrall of astral religion. They would have known with certainty that their lives had been destined by the astral powers. That their lives were destined was not the innovation offered by Paul in Ephesians, but by whom and for what purpose.

Hoehner denies the view that Eph 6:10-20 serves as a ringing conclusion to the entire document, seeing few connections between the passage and earlier segments of the letter. He believes Eph 6:10-20 portrays a defensive (rather than an offensive) stance on the part of believers. In taking this view, he misses

much of the point of Paul's military metaphor, which advocates energetic engagement against the foe. Hoehner also assumes a largely individualistic reading of the passage and fails to take full account of the trend in recent scholarship to view the passage as offering a corporate perspective.

In comparison to its contributions, the flaws of Hoehner's commentary are few, and it deserves full attention on the part of students of Ephesians. While pastors and teachers may find themselves frequently reaching for shorter treatments, anyone seeking a detailed understanding of Ephesians will learn to take advantage of Hoehner's thorough work and will be blessed in doing so.

Andrews University

JOHN MCVAY

Kistemaker, Simon. *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*, New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. x + 635 pp. Hardcover, \$44.99.

Simon Kistemaker is emeritus professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. He is also editor of, and a major contributor to, the New Testament Commentary series, which he took over after the death of William Hendriksen in 1982. He comes to the book of Revelation as more of a generalist than a specialist, having written books on the Gospels, Acts, the Corinthian and Thessalonian letters, Pastorals, and Hebrews before taking on the last book of the NT. This observation may be the ground of some of the shortcomings noted below.

The reader is not in doubt from the first page that this commentary will be from the perspective of faith. Kistemaker sees Revelation as different from the Jewish apocalypses. It is not simply a human attempt to reach out to God. God himself, not John, is the primary author of this book. For Kistemaker, this means that its contents should be examined reverently as God's holy Word. I appreciated the faith-based, devotional tone of the commentary.

While in Kistemaker's view the Apocalypse does seem to anticipate a final judgment and an end to history, the primary approach of his commentary seems firmly located in the idealist camp. Kistemaker does not see Revelation as a history of past events or a detailed prophecy of the future. The book does not specify particular events, but rather principles that apply to the issues of any age and place. While the images in the book are drawn from the Mediterranean world of the first Christian century, the message of the book is universal and abiding. Through the book of Revelation, believers received comfort and assurance to endure spiritual conflicts to the end.

The aim of the book is not to forge new directions in scholarship, but to be a detailed guide for pastors and serious Bible students from an evangelical perspective. The book is clear and easy to read, provides a fresh translation, and is filled with practical applications that often are not easy to come by in a book like Revelation.

I believe, however, that the book has serious shortcomings from a scholarly perspective. While Kistemaker has noted the existence of most