

man as master, the concept of inevitable progress, the success mentality without any limits, and that we learn to live with failure, to walk in the darkness and to die with Jesus on the cross. "A faith that knows failure, and even begins in failure, can touch the lives of many today who otherwise do not have the courage to have failed" (p. 229).

While this book is pregnant with insights and presents a theology that is appropriate to the times and the place, nevertheless it seems a bit too one-sided. To make its point it has overemphasized the cross without giving appropriate reference to the resurrection. Künneth's *Theology of the Resurrection* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1965) gives a better balanced view without the triumphalistic overtones that Hall decries. The resurrection is victory but it is a hidden victory. It remains hidden until the coming of Christ. Without this other aspect, it is difficult to see where hope comes from and how the Christian can be much of a helpful presence in a world full of despair, hopelessness, and meaninglessness.

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Jaroš, Karl; Leimlehner, Marianne; and Swedik, Grete. *Aegypten und Vorderasien: Eine kleine Chronographie bis zum Auftreten Alexander des Grossen*. Linz: Veritas Verlag, 1976. 206 pp. 24 maps. 26 illustrations.

This little book, according to a description on the back cover, was produced as a guide to students of religion and interested lay people who want to be introduced to the history of Egypt and the ancient Orient. The author, Karl Jaroš, a college professor, has taught OT in Graz and Linz in Austria and produced this book to meet a widely felt need for such a guide. Two of his students helped him in this work.

There can be no question but that there has always been a dearth of books dealing with ancient history written with the general public in mind. Every high-school or college instructor who teaches history will agree with this statement. James H. Breasted, the first famous American Egyptologist and founder of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, over sixty years ago tried to fill this void with his *Ancient Times: a History of the Early World* (Boston, 1916; rev. 1935). This was a superbly written general ancient history; but it contains 742 pages, and therefore is still a rather formidable tome, although it has been successfully used as a textbook in many college courses dealing with ancient Near Eastern history.

When I received Jaroš's little book I wondered how he could cover several thousand years of Near Eastern history on 127 small-sized pages, because the remaining 79 pages of his book are used up by the title page, table of contents, list of abbreviations, etc. (10 pages); by chronological lists of kings and dynasties (23 pages); and by maps, plans, and drawings of archaeological objects (46 pages). The result is a condensation of material that cannot nearly do justice to the political events from prehistorical times down to Alexander the Great, not to mention the cultural accomplishments and religions involved during these millennia. Jaroš devotes 33 pages to ancient Egypt, 39 pages to the ancient Orient, and 55 pages to Syria-Palestine (mainly the history of Israel). But even within these areas there are great

differences of coverage. The Neo-Babylonian empire is treated in but one page, while the kingdom of Urartu, which played a much less important role than Babylonia, gets five pages of treatment. The author also rides some hobby horses, for which he really had no space. For example, he devotes five pages of illustrations (pp. 178-182) and one page of text (pp. 51-52) to a description of the belief of the ancient Pharaohs that they had had a divine origin; and he describes the Arabic *hily*-system, a covenant-union entered by various tribes, to explain the bond existing between the tribes of ancient Israel (pp. 84-85).

Enough has been said to point out that this book tries to accomplish the impossible. A condensation of the ancient history of a dozen or so nations spanning about three thousand years into 127 pages is an almost meaningless endeavor. The reader who knows ancient history cannot learn anything from a book such as this one, and the uninitiated reader becomes confused and bewildered since there are too many facts thrown at him without being explained.

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Lohse, Eduard. *A Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*. Trans. W. R. Poehlmann and R. J. Karris; ed. Helmut Koester. *Hermeneia*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971. xviii + 231 pp. \$12.00.

The appearance in English of Lohse's commentary marked a happy event for English-speaking students of the Bible. They have now available to them the best commentary on Colossians and Philemon, a translation of the 14th edition of the German Meyer series. It launches also the new commentary series, *Hermeneia*, which will include original works as well as translations of the best commentaries available.

Lohse has achieved an admirable balance between the scholarly tapping of all possible sources of meaning for words and phrases, and clarity as to the meaning of the whole paragraph. Nothing is said just to display erudition. With a sure hand he moves in a search for meaning, and the results honor the title of the English series. He brings forth a lucid interpretation. Unlike most commentaries which are intended primarily as reference works, this one is meant to be read, and it reads well. In reading it, one does not find himself in the middle of a long, disjointed series of comments on words.

For each passage, Lohse always considers the possible backgrounds: Qumran, Hellenistic Judaism, Gnosticism, Apocalypticism, or an early Christian adaptation of apocalypticism with a soteriological rather than a cosmological thrust. In this connection this reviewer is only surprised that Lohse has not made references to the apocalyptic use of the *cheirotographon* in Col 2:14.

Lohse identifies the "philosophy" being taught at Colossae as a form of syncretism having roots in Judaism. Therefore many of the terms used by the propagandists of the "philosophy" are best understood by reference to Hebrew terms. But a radical shift away from both Judaism and Christianity has occurred since the "philosophy" has established specific cultic practices of the mystery-cult type. Here his interpretation clearly affects his translation. Thus, the short phrase *ha heoraken embateuōn* is translated, "as he has