

# THE Geneva Review

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Word Biblical Commentaries (Waco, TX: Word Books).  
Reviewed by James B. Jordan.

Planned for 52 volumes, the *Word Biblical Commentaries* began to appear in 1982, under the general editorship of David Hubbard and Glenn Barker, with Old Testament supervised by John D. W. Watts, and New Testament by Ralph P. Martin.

With Gordon Wenham scheduled to do Genesis, and Raymond Dillard Second Chronicles, the present reviewer is encouraged by the project. I should like in this review to look briefly at five of the volumes issued to date. Each volume is supplied with a comprehensive bibliography, including articles, for each section of the book dealt with. The comments involve indepth analysis of the text, and those who are strangers to the original languages will find some sections heavy going. Thus, the series as a whole is planned as scholarly rather than popular, and as a whole should prove a worthy addition to the serious pastor's library.

Trent C. Butler on *Joshua* (1983; \$19.95) is a disappointment. Butler is too much impressed with the fly-by-night opinions of modern archaeologists and textual critics to take a thoroughly orthodox view of the text. His interpretation of the text is evangelical, but his opinions on how the text came to be written are not of any great use. Also, Butler gives a lot of textual detail, but very little theological analysis. There is not much here for the preacher. Woudstra's 1981 commentary (Eerdmans) is also rather dry, but has quite a bit more theology to offer.

Gerald F. Hawthorne on *Philippians* (1983; \$18.95) takes a carefully conservative line on such matters as authorship. Occasionally Hawthorne wants to fill in some of Paul's elliptical phrases, but never with any heterodox intent. He takes the traditional, non-kenotic approach to Phil. 2, and his resolution of the problems in that passage is commendable, if not actually definitive. Throughout, Hawthorne wrestles with alternatives.

Peter T. O'Brien on *Colossians, Philemon* (1982; \$18.95) is equally competent and orthodox. I was not persuaded by O'Brien's treatment of the "elementary things" of Col. 2:8. As I have developed in my short book, *The Sabbath and the Death Penalty: An Alternate View* (forthcoming, GDS Press), I think that the elementary things in Colossians and Galatians refer to the Old Creation/Old Covenant situation, both pagan and Jewish, and not primarily to angels. Like virtually all modern NT commentators, O'Brien is too ready to posit an often hypothetical first century background for the text, instead of searching the Old Testament for categories. All the same, this is a careful study, and O'Brien faithfully presents other alternatives when arguing for his own.

F. F. Bruce writes on *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (1982; \$18.95). Despite its erudition, Bruce's treatment (like virtually all modern treatments) is marred by the modern misreading of New Testament eschatology. One would like to see more

than a mere reference to Acts 12:20ff. in dealing with the man of sin. For the Acts passage is very helpful in the interpretation of 2 Thess. 2. That the "breath of Christ's mouth" in 2 Thess. 2:8 might refer to the proclamation of the gospel does not even seem to enter the horizon of Bruce's consideration. Until expositors recover a sense of the importance of the events of 70 A. D., confusion will continue to reign regarding passages such as these (see my tapes on Matthew 24, available from Geneva Media, 708 Hamvasy, Tyler, TX 75701; \$35.00).

Richard J. Bauckham, on *Jude, 2 Peter* (1983; \$18.95), admits that there is not much material on these two books, and that he must break some new ground. I should like to have seen some interaction with George L. Lawlor's fine study, *The Epistle of Jude* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972). Bauckham assumes also that Jude depends on 1 Enoch for his information/viewpoint at certain places. This has always struck me as rather unsophisticated, and unwise. Given the fabulous character of 1 Enoch, in contrast to the evangelical character of Jude, it would be better to posit a common tradition which was used by both writers. At any rate, as a result Bauckham interprets the fall of the angels in Jude 6 as a reference to Genesis 6, which is quite impossible (see my tapes on Genesis for a discussion of the fall of the Sethites in Gen. 6; available from Geneva Media).

I was also disappointed with the discussion of verse 9, the "body of Moses." I should like someday to read some modern commentator who at least entertains the notion that what is in view here is the Old Covenant Church, not the corpse of Moses' person. The phrase "body of Moses" could obviously be parallel to the phrase "body of Christ," and refer to the covenant community, just as the house of Moses is parallel to the house of Christ in Hebrews 3. Why insist on reading a Jewish apocryphal background to these texts in Jude, when there is good evidence for a Biblical, evangelical background for them?

On verse 12, Bauckman assumes that the Love Feast and the Eucharist were not distinguished in New Testament times. This will not stand up to 1 Cor. 11:20-34, for Paul makes it clear that if the Agape Feast is abused, it can be set aside, while the Eucharist cannot be. Doubtless I can find other places where I differ with Bauckman, but that is not necessary here. His is again a careful, scholarly, and evangelical work, and I can recommend it highly despite my differences.

Ronald H. Nash, *Social Justice and the Christian Church* (Michigan: Mott Media, 1983). 175 pp. \$12.95 hardback"  
Reviewed by Bradley P. Hayton, Ph.D.

This book sat on my shelf two months before I decided to open and look inside its covers. The title scared me away. I thought that it was just another book about social justice, i.e., a book that would make me feel guilty for being an American, for driving a car, for eating good meals, and for enjoying myself in God's creation. I was wrong, very much wrong.

I was immediately interested in Nash's book when he states on the first page that social action "... requires a careful study of economics and other social sciences" (p. 1). Nash then goes on to investigate social justice and the Christian church in the areas of political theory, social philosophy, economics, and theology.

Although Nash's book is only an introductory thesis on the many topics that he surveys, this book will excite you and wet your palate for more. He begins by defining terms: "liberalism," "conservatism," "state" and "statism," and "society." He shows the manner in which liberal policies support

statism and power in the name of humanity, when in fact these policies often do not help society.

He gets into social philosophy by considering both ancient and contemporary theories about the nature of justice. He defines such terms as "universal justice," "particular justice," and then discusses various forms of the latter: "commercial justice," "remedial justice," and "distributive justice" (social justice). He discusses the relationship between justice and equality, as Tocqueville does with liberty and equality, showing that many types of equality conflict with freedom and justice. He surveys the writings of Rawls and Nozick, drawing distinctions between just results and just procedures, economic merit and moral merit. He then shows very briefly how the welfare state actually works against justice, almost no matter who defines the term.

After briefly discussing justice and the Bible, Nash surveys the nature of capitalism, socialism, and the mixed economy. He defines a free market system and then outlines "the four R's of capitalism": rights, rules, risks, and rewards. Socialism is much harder to define, according to Nash, since it has a "chameleon-like nature" ranging from non-market or anarchist socialism to statist socialism. Special attention is given to Marcusean socialism since it has gripped the minds of so many contemporary intellectuals. Nash's main argument against a mixed economy, or interventionism, is that any statist intervention must either return to a free market or proceed to ever-increasing controls until all economic freedom ends.

In the last part of his book Nash examines the two most frequently cited objections against capitalism, its immorality and irrationality. He surveys the anticapitalist arguments very adequately. He then touches on liberation theology, including in his analysis the work of Ronald Sider and Jim Wallis.

Nash's book can only be read as an introduction to the many topics that he discusses. He adequately surveys his topics, but his arguments are very shallow at times. They need to be developed more completely. His book and arguments need expansion at almost every point. His analysis of justice is good but very cursory. His survey of the nature of capitalism, socialism, and the mixed economy is merely adequate, and by no means hardly complete. He surveys the arguments against capitalism, but does it so quickly that their only worth is that of a bare outline. Books could be and have been written about every argument that he presents against capitalism.

Perhaps the most inadequate portion of his book is his examination of the Scriptures in their relation to political philosophy and economics. Although he makes a couple good points, especially about hermeneutics, his discussion is almost worthless. He barely gets into the Biblical text and Biblical history, and makes little application to contemporary society.

Although these criticisms seem harsh, they are not intended to discount the importance of Nash's book. The book must be read for what it is: an introduction. I believe it will whet the appetite of many to do further research into the arguments that he introduces. Perhaps his title will even seduce those who seek "social justice" in the form of distributive justice, and raise questions and doubts that will open their eyes to God's justice and liberty.

**Enrique T. Rueda, *The Homosexual Network: Private Lives and Public Policy* (1982, Devin Adair, P. O. Box A, Old Greenwich, CT 06870). 700 pp., paperback, \$13.95. Reviewed by James B. Jordan.**

Just a brief note about his book. Father Reuda has completely investigated the homosexual conspiracy in America, its plans, programs, infiltration techniques, and all the rest. The book carries recommendations from everybody committed to a decent America, and was financed by the conservative Free Congress Research and Education Foundation. This is the book to have on the status of homosexual activism in America today. I cannot recommend it too highly.

Lynn R. Buzzard and Laurence Eck, *Tell it to the Church: Reconciling Out of Court* (David C. Cook, 1982). 154 pp., paperback, \$5.95. Reviewed by James B. Jordan.

The Bible says that Christians should not take their conflicts before pagans. Historically, in pagan cultures, Christians have formed shadow court systems to deal with conflicts among themselves. We are once again in this situation. This brief book is full of suggestions and ideas, which have grown out of actual Christian arbitration situations. My only reservation is that Buzzard and Eck do not do justice to the Biblically-prescribed court system of the Church: the session of elders. Of course, 1 Cor. 6:4,5 does not mandate that Church elders have to be used in all cases of arbitration, where the matter at dispute is not an ecclesiastical matter. There may be Christian lawyers or businessmen in the Church who can better arbitrate a lawsuit than could the Church elders, for that is not their area of expertise. Ail the same, the final government in the Church is the elders.

Apart from that caveat, however, I strongly recommend this book. We have to begin to build up a Christian law system, which can take over when the present pagan one collapses, as it inevitably will. That is how we took over the Roman Empire, remember?

***Morning and Evening Prayer, with Selected Psalms and Readings for the Church Year*, compiled and edited by Howard Galley (New York: Seabury, 1983). 430 pages, pseudo-leather type cover, \$19.95.**

The preface to this useful book states that "this book was compiled to meet the needs of many different people. There are individuals who, if they are to participate in the Church's prayer at the traditional morning and evening hours, must frequently do so on trains, buses, planes, subway platforms, or in waiting rooms — places where a single, compact volume is desirable. There are also people who recite the office at home who prefer a form that uses selected psalms and Scripture readings. . . . Though prepared for use by Episcopalians, it is hoped that the book will be found helpful by other Christians as well."

Basically, this is a collection of prayers, psalms, and Scripture readings arranged for the Church Year. The translations are contemporary without being contemptible (that is, they read like updates of the old English, not like something wholly new or jazzy.) The book includes a service for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Family Devotions. Galley's preface is quite extensive, informative, and useful. This is the kind of devotional aid that I personally find helpful, though I cannot give it a blanket endorsement because too much attention is given to saints' days, and the Funeral Service contains the kinds of prayers for the dead which also appear in the Book of Common Prayer (p. 183).

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