

Introduction

Once again I have the opportunity to highlight some recent literature of which serious students of the New Testament, whether college lecturers, students, or preachers, might wish to be aware. As was the case for previous surveys, my criteria for inclusion have been as follows: I have included those titles on the NT, and related subjects, which (a) have been available to me; (b) seem to me to be significant and worthy of note; (c) are primarily exegetical and theological, rather than homiletical; (d) I think could be of benefit to students and/or preachers as well as theological lecturers. Thus, I make no claim to be exhaustive in my survey, but I hope that my comments may still prove useful. A move from Scotland to South Africa, and thus a new and very different context for my own ministry, has also undoubtedly influenced my choices to some extent.

New Testament Greek

Those who still have to begin studies in NT Greek, or those who feel the need of a refresher course, may be interested to know that a classic book, known by countless students who used it (including myself) as 'Wenham', has been thoroughly revised by J. Duff, *The Elements of New Testament Greek* (3rd edition; Cambridge: CUP, 2005). Duff has done an excellent job of maintaining the best qualities of the previous edition while also taking account of the needs of today's students. The presentation is clear and attractive. While I have enjoyed teaching from W. Mounce's *Basics of Biblical Greek*¹ book for most of the last decade, I can see that many teachers will be attracted by this new textbook since it is reasonably priced and contains both lessons and exercises in a single volume. Whether this version of a classic text will eventually become identified simply by its author's surname remains to be seen.

Historical Context

Biblical Studies do not normally make headlines, but

The Brother of Jesus, by Hershel Shanks and Ben Witherington III,² tells the story of the discovery of an 'ossuary' (Jewish bone-box for burial purposes) which appears to be inscribed with the words, 'James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus'. The first part, written by Shanks, tells the story of the box itself, full of drama and intrigue. The second part, by Witherington, is a study of the character of James. While Christian faith does not stand or fall on the authenticity of this artefact, this is an interesting archaeological issue which hit the headlines and this book is a helpful guide for those who are interested in the archaeological issues or who want to be able to discuss the issues if the topic comes up in pastoral discussion.

An interesting blend of historical context, exegesis and contemporary appropriation is K. E. Bailey's book, *The Cross and the Prodigal*.³ Bailey's slim book is a revision of one of his earliest publications, in which he examines the parables of Luke 15 in the light of his extensive knowledge of modern middle-eastern peasant culture. He further interprets the passage through the use of calligraphy and a short play. Bailey has had a huge impact on contemporary biblical studies (although the benefit of reading the biblical text in the light of a *modern* expression of a culture is still debated) and this book provides a gentle, yet stimulating, entrance into his approach. Preachers will find many thought-provoking ideas here, it being very suggestive, although they may wish to reflect carefully on the exegetical foundation of Bailey's suggestions before being carried away by his undoubted gift for communicating his perspective.

In Search of Paul, by J. D. Crossan and J. L. Reed,⁴ is an attempt to allow archaeological discoveries to inform a new portrait of Paul the Apostle. Reed is an expert in archaeology and Crossan is well known within historical Jesus studies as a scholar who has little confidence in the reliability of the canonical gospels, but this book is a generally sympathetic study of the apostle. There is certainly a lot of interesting

archaeological material in the book and plenty of good illustrations and photographs of artefacts, but potential readers should be warned of some very strong language is one chapter discussing attitudes towards sex and violence in the ancient world. This would not be a priority purchase for me.

Reading the Biblical Text as Scripture

The latest volume in the Scripture and Hermeneutics Project series, *Reading Luke*,⁵ is intended to show how the hermeneutical methods which have been discussed in earlier volumes in this series have a direct impact on the reading of a specific biblical text. Although I have not had an opportunity to deal with this book seriously yet, it looks very promising. The so-called 'Scripture Project' (quite different from the previously mentioned project), initiated by Princeton Theological Seminary, has resulted in a collection of essays under the title, *The Art of Reading Scripture*. This is one of a number of recent initiatives which emphasise the need for theological reading of Scripture.⁶ Although most of the contributors are not confessional evangelicals, the book does argue that the Bible should be read 'confessionally', that is, as a text for the church. Some of the most interesting contributions come from Richard Hays, whose work is always worth reading. It is particularly interesting to see several examples of sermons preached by the editors along with explanations for the approach adopted. I will mention the inaugural volumes of the Brazos Theological Commentary on Scripture and the Two Horizons New Testament Commentary a little later. I should also mention the recent publication of the Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible, edited by K. Vanhoozer and others,⁷ although I have not yet been able to use this resource myself. N. T. Wright, *Scripture and the Authority of God*,⁸ is a readable reflection on Scripture which, as so often with Wright, is full of insight and yet raises numerous questions.

Introductory Issues

It is remarkable how many 'Introductions' to the NT

have been published in recent years. Into this increasingly crowded field comes, firstly, D. A. deSilva's *An Introduction to the New Testament*.⁹ This is a very large volume which has the advantage of being quite comprehensive and the disadvantage of being difficult to read completely in the course of a one-semester class. Despite its size, this volume is clearly written and is well designed. Two distinctive features are deSilva's use of worked examples to introduce 'exegetical skills' (such as the use of 'social-scientific criticism') and his interest in the significance of the various biblical texts for 'ministry formation'. In general, deSilva holds fairly conservative views of authorship, etc., although he is quite prepared to say where he feels evidence is inconclusive and he is perhaps a little more open to the possibility of pseudepigraphy in the case of 2 Peter than some evangelicals would wish.

The second edition of W. Elwell and R. Yarbrough's generally excellent, *Encountering the New Testament*, is somewhat disappointing in that a page-by-page comparison with the first edition shows that the text has not been substantially modified except for occasional minor adjustments. This, no doubt, indicates that the text is serving its intended purpose well but, in my opinion, there were several places in which the text was too thin for undergraduate students (notably the brief remarks on 2 and 3 John) and it would have been good to see some development here. This book remains, however, a super general introduction to the New Testament and the CD-ROM has been developed so as to be a more useful resource.

Ben Witherington has written *The New Testament Story*.¹⁰ which is an attempt to provide an account of the origins of the New Testament documents together with an introduction to the basic message of these documents for a general audience. Witherington always writes clearly and helpfully and this would be a good book for someone who is planning to do New Testament studies shortly or for a preacher who wants

a short overview of the subject. Witherington often refers to his many other books, which is fine if you have access to them but is frustrating and eventually a little irritating if not.

D. A. Carson and D. J. Moo completed their long-awaited second edition of *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Readers who, like me, were hoping for greater engagement with the content of the biblical text than in the first edition, will, I think, be pleased with the result. It is still a work of 'special introduction' and so there is considerable emphasis on issues such as date and authorship and provenance, but there is certainly more emphasis on the content and message of the text. As I completed this article, the death of Leon Morris was announced. Although he was unable to participate in the revision of this volume, he will always be associated with the project to provide a conservative but academically credible account of the New Testament documents, not only in this volume but in many other of his writings.

Reinventing Jesus, by J. E. Komoszweski, M. J. Sawyer and D. B. Wallace,¹⁴ is a difficult book to categorise. In some respects it seems most like a piece of Christian apologetics written in the context of controversies such as the release of *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown, first as a book and then recently as a film. And as such it is both useful and well done. It is clearly written and addresses important issues, including the divinity of Jesus, thoroughly for a general readership. Yet, because of the issues raised in the recent controversies, this book also serves as a careful study of the text of the New Testament and the formation of the canon. Thus there are very helpful discussions of the manuscript evidence and the various means used to judge between variant readings. Thus, someone looking for a clear discussion of textual criticism and related issues will certainly find this book worth consulting.

Biblical Theology

O. P. Robertson's book, *The Christ of the Prophets*, is a long-awaited sequel to his widely used, *Christ of the Covenants*.¹² In some respects this is a standard study of the Old Testament prophets and prophetic literature, but I think it deserves to be classed as 'Biblical Theology' because of the constant reference to the way in which prophetic figures or texts are used in the New Testament and the way in which themes which are present in the prophetic literature find their fulfilment in the New Testament. It would make an excellent textbook on the prophets. P. G. Bolt has written, *The Cross from a Distance*.¹³ Part of the 'New Studies in Biblical Theology' series, this book is a study of one aspect of the theology of Mark's Gospel; specifically, his theology of atonement. In the same series, Craig Blomberg combines careful exegetical work with challenging application in his study of common meals, *Contagious Holiness*.¹⁴ *The Story of Israel*,¹⁵ by Pate, Duvall, Hays, Richards, Tucker and Vang is both a helpful and a puzzling book. It is helpful as a theologically sensitive survey of the whole Bible. On the other hand, it presents itself as a basic text for undergraduate students yet the only supplementary reading which is suggested comes from a single (very useful, certainly) source: IVP's *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, even although other literature is mentioned in the footnotes. It is probably best to read this as a basic introduction to biblical theology rather than a textbook on the subject.

I had anticipated the publication of G. S. Dawson's, *Jesus Ascended*,¹⁶ in which a Reformed minister addresses this neglected issue. In fact, I was a bit disappointed with the very brief discussion of the biblical material, but this book is not designed to be a work of exegesis. Taken on its own terms, however, it is a richly theological study of this important doctrine with an eye to its importance in the church. Well worth reading.

There have been some important recent attempts to describe the theology of the New Testament in one-volume. I. H. Marshall has completed an eagerly anticipated volume entitled, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*.¹⁷ Written with great clarity, this book deals effectively both with the theological contributions of collections of documents (such as the Synoptic Gospels or the Pauline letters) and the distinctive messages of the individual documents. A helpful introductory chapter considers the task of New Testament Theology and the various challenges and objections that face those who wish to practice it. It also introduces some of the most important recent books on the subject. Most of the volume is quite accessible to a wide range of readers and although Marshall engages with scholarship he does so in an understated manner which does not allow the theological message of the biblical texts to be overpowered. This volume is highly recommended. F. Thielman has contributed a similar volume, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*.¹⁸ Sadly, the two volumes seem to have been produced in parallel and so there was not enough time between their publication dates to allow any interaction. Both authors take a high view of Scripture and are sensitive to the distinctive voices of the various authors and documents. Both volumes will prove very useful to preachers. On balance, if I had to choose one of these books, I would probably go for Marshall's.

Gospel Studies

Two volumes in the 'McMaster New Testament Studies' series have appeared in the last couple of years. The first is entitled, *Reading the Gospels Today*.¹⁹ This series has included some very helpful volumes which serve as useful introductions to various topics for students, but the essays in this volume, while useful enough, are rather diverse and so this book will not really serve as an adequate introduction to contemporary study of the Gospels as the title might

suggest. The second is entitled, *Contours of Christology in the New Testament*.²⁰ This is a much more coherent volume and includes serious but readable essays from notable authors such as Ben Witherington, Howard Marshall, Richard Bauckham, Douglas Moo and many others. Together, the authors sketch the background to New Testament Christology and then consider the Christological emphases of the various New Testament documents. This is an excellent volume which would make a great textbook

Pauline Studies

S. Westerholm has revised two important books which were previously published some years ago. The first is entitled *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*.²¹ This is a substantially revised and expanded version of his book, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith*, which first appeared in 1988. In its earlier form, Westerholm's book was quickly recognised as a very significant contribution to the developing discussion of the 'New Perspective on Paul'. In its new form, it is indispensable. Although it is a very substantial book, it is written with verve and some humour. The analysis of the current debate is still as helpful as before, although now Westerholm takes account of some of the vast amount of literature which appeared since his first edition was published. In addition, he has included introductory chapters on the thought of Augustine, Luther, Calvin and Wesley which provide some helpful historical perspective. In the final part he offers his own proposals, which are close to a traditional 'Lutheran' reading of justification by faith, etc. This would be my first choice for a book on this important and rather contentious topic. On a very different scale, Westerholm's little book, *Understanding Paul: The Early Christian Worldview of the Letter to the Romans*²² is a reading of Paul's thought on the basis of Romans. It is not really for those who have some background in Paul's thought. Rather it is for those who are entering that world for the first time. There is no attempt to engage with scholarship; there is simply careful attention to the biblical text in the

light of the Old Testament. *Justification and the New Perspective on Paul*,²³ by G. P. Waters is a study by a Reformed scholar of a scholarly phenomenon which has generated a great deal of controversy. Waters is well placed to make an important contribution, having done doctoral studies at Duke University where he studied with E. P. Sanders and R. B. Hays. His aim is to present fairly the views of representatives of this academic position (broad collection of positions is probably more accurate) and then to submit them to scrutiny on the basis of his own exegesis. While there are some valid criticisms and helpful insights in this volume which certainly deserve attention, I was disappointed that there was not a more sympathetic tone for the discussion and more recognition of differences between the various authors (cf. p.151: 'the revisionist exegesis of E. P. Sanders, J. D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright fails to render satisfactory readings of Paul' as if they were all saying the same things).

A major new study by Francis Watson entitled, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*,²⁴ considers how Paul reads biblical texts from the Old Testament, particularly the Torah and the Minor Prophets, in relation to readings in other contemporary Jewish literature. Watson provides a stimulating study which follows the pattern of his previous studies in challenging significant mainstream academic views (in this case, the idea that Paul's reading of Scripture is inconsistent). Paul, for Watson, is a careful reader who appreciates themes which run through the Torah. Yet many evangelicals, while appreciating this emphasis, will have to wrestle with his view that some tensions in Paul's thought arise from incompatible statements which he, as a careful reader, finds in the Torah. This is a technical study which will be rather difficult for many readers, but it certainly is significant and deserves attention by those able to do justice to it.

Also on Paul's use of the Old Testament, but with a rather different focus, is C. D. Stanley's book, *Arguing with Scripture*.²⁵ which argues that Paul incorporated

the Old Testament into his letters in ways which were appropriate for the varying competences of his readers. A further book on Paul which I have been unable to see for myself yet, but which is too significant to go without comment is the latest offering on Paul from N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Fresh Perspective*.²⁶ The play on the phrase 'the New Perspective' is unmistakable and suggests (as Wright has stated more than once plainly) that Wright does not wish to be regarded simply as an exponent of a monolithic 'New Perspective' on Paul. The reviews I have seen of this book suggest that it will be as stimulating, provocative and controversial as his others. We still await with anticipation his major study of Paul.

Commentaries

Numerous commentaries in numerous series have been published in the last few years. Here are just a few. J. Nolland has completed his volume on Matthew,²⁷ one of two recent additions to the excellent NIGTC series. Nolland makes no real effort to connect the Gospel with the apostle, but this book is full of careful exegesis on the text as it stands and is an important resource for students and preachers with facility in Greek.

On John's Gospel, it is worth mentioning C. Keener's mammoth two-volume commentary,²⁸ the Baker Exegetical Commentary by A. J. Köstenberger and the revised Tyndale commentary by C. Kruse.²⁹ Each of these authors take a high view of the Gospel as both a theological and a historical document, although Keener is probably generally slightly less conservative. Keener's book is a piece of painstaking research and most of the first volume is taken up by his extensive introduction. There is also a huge bibliography in volume 2. While these qualities will be welcomed by scholars, they may prove overwhelming to students or busy preachers. The other two commentaries are, in my opinion, more generally useable. Köstenberger builds on earlier studies to provide a richly theological reading of the text, which neither neglects nor gets

obsessed by historical issues. Kruse's commentary has all the benefits and disadvantages of the Tyndale series: clear exegetical discussions of the text from a conservative perspective, but limited space for extensive discussion (although this volume is longer than most in this series).

Journeying through Acts by F. Scott Spencer is a repackaged version of Spencer's 'Readings' commentary, first published in 1997 by Sheffield Academic Press. It is a lively, literary study and has real value for a preacher who wants to appreciate the flow of Luke's narrative but there is a frustrating disregard for historical foundations that left me feeling somewhat short-changed.

The first volume of the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible is also on Acts and comes from the pen of the distinguished historian Jaroslav Pelikan, recently deceased shortly after the publication of this volume.³⁰ This volume contains very brief comments on selected verses from each chapter, interspersed with significant theological essays which are linked to a particularly relevant passage in the biblical text. Thus, the essay on 13:48 is headed 'Foreknowledge/Election/Predestination', while the essay linked to 23:1 is entitled 'The Testimony of a "Good Conscience"'. These essays involve close attention to the whole canon, often drawing on the Septuagint version of the OT, and draw on a wide range of writers from all ages of the Christian Church. I found this an interesting volume in its own right, but rather awkward to use as a commentary. It would have to function as a supplement to more conventional commentaries.

In a similar vein, the first two volumes of the Two Horizons commentary have been published: S. Fowl writes on Philippians and M. M. Thompson writes on Colossians and Philemon.³¹ The first part of these volumes follows a fairly traditional format for a commentary, working through the text with useful

exegetical comments being made, while there is no attempt to be exhaustive. The second part, however, is taken up with theological essays which reflect on one or more themes from the documents in question. This format seems to be helpful and the first two volumes suggest that this will be a series which will be helpful for students and preachers.

A further addition to the BECNT series is the commentary by D. E. Garland on 1 Corinthians.³² Though perhaps not quite so exhaustive as Thiselton's NIGTC volume and also a little less distinctly theological in its approach, Garland provides a careful and dependable analysis of the Greek text of this letter along with helpful discussion of significant scholarship. This is a useful volume.

M. J. Harris has written the commentary on *2 Corinthians* in the NIGTC series. This is, in fact, the second significant commentary on the letter by Harris (the first formed part of the Expositors Bible Commentary in 1976). It is a detailed analysis of the Greek text. Harris emphasises careful analysis of the textual witnesses to, and then the resulting grammar of, the Greek text. This challenging Pauline letter is now well served by several substantial recent treatments (including other recent studies such as those by Barnett and Garland) which take its coherence seriously.

Moises Silva's important commentary in the BECNT series has been slightly revised, but those who possess the earlier version will probably not need to purchase the second edition.

A recent addition to the EP Study Commentary series is a volume on *Ephesians* by H. Uprichard.³³ This is a simple and helpful exposition, by an experienced pastor as well as an able scholar. As usual in this series, there is a strong emphasis on application. The author does make some reference in endnotes to the views of commentators such as Calvin and, among recent authors, O'Brien, but generally there is very little

engagement with scholarship. I have not seen the most recent volume on 1 and 2 Timothy by William Barclay, but it sounds very promising.

The letters of Peter and Jude are given serious treatments in the New American Commentary volume by T. R. Schreiner³⁴ and in the BECNT commentary on 1 Peter by K. Jobes.³⁵ Schreiner's skill as an interpreter of Paul has been shown in numerous recent publications, and his work on Peter and Jude also displays similar qualities. Schreiner argues for Petrine authorship of both letters attributed to Peter (quite rare these days with respect to 2 Peter) and provides a clear explanation of the biblical text with a good measure of engagement of scholarly discussions. Jobes argues for Petrine authorship of 1 Peter and aims to make a distinctive contribution, as those who know her work might suspect, by focussing on the use of the Septuagint and by paying careful attention to linguistic issues.

Tom Wright continues to produce volumes in his '... for everyone' series. The latest 'Paul for everyone' book is on Romans and provides a very readable avenue into this letter from Wright's distinctive perspective.

General NT Studies

*The Glory of the Atonement*³⁶ is a substantial contribution to discussion of the atonement. Some twenty essays by excellent scholars address this central concept in Christian theology at a time when it has received renewed attention due to various controversial views being expressed on the subject. Thus the discussion of 'divine child abuse' sounds very contemporary, even though the phrase was earlier used in 1992 by a feminist theologian. This collection is also a *Festschrift* for the veteran Swiss theologian, Roger Nicole, and has the unusual merit of including an essay by the one it was designed to honour. This collection includes detailed exegesis, historical studies and essays of practical application and is highly recommended.

A similar collection of essays, *Justification: What's at*

Stake in the Current Debates,³⁷ addresses the issue of justification, particularly in light of debate about imputation. These essays were originally prepared for a conference held at Wheaton College and are perhaps not quite so accessible

Mission Studies

As I prepared to move from Scotland to missionary service in South Africa, I thought it would be useful to pay particular attention to treatment of the NT in some recent studies of mission. There have been commendable treatments of the relevant biblical material in past years. Studies by Bosch, Larkin and Williams, Köstenberger and O'Brien, among others have provided some important studies. In the last couple of years, one of the most generally useful studies is by A. Glasser, *Announcing the Kingdom*.³⁸ This book by a distinguished missiologist is essentially a biblical theology of mission. It is a generally competent, if necessarily quite cursory, treatment of the biblical texts and will be helpful to preachers, but it does not take account of recent publications. Gallagher and Hertig have edited a volume of essays entitled, *Mission in Acts*.³⁹ Pride of place must go to E. Schnabel's two volume study, *Early Christian Mission*.⁴⁰ This mammoth piece of scholarship is certainly demanding, but it is extremely important, not simply because it is a careful study of the evidence for early Christian mission, but because the author has missionary experience and intends to write with a view to serving the missionary activity of the modern church. When it comes to broader studies of mission, I will mention only three significant books. *Introducing World Missions*, by Moreau *et al*,⁴¹ contains several chapters on the biblical texts which are foundational to mission studies. The authors do an admirable job of surveying the material briefly. A brief study entitled, *Mission: An Essential Guide*, by C. F. Cardoza-Orlandi,⁴² has a chapter on 'the Bible and Mission', which is a useful methodological discussion of how the Bible may be used in mission, but I was rather disappointed with

how little the Bible contributed to the book itself. Finally, we should note the important book by S. B. Bevans and R. P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*.⁴³ This book is really a study in missionary history and theology and the authors do not claim that it is a work of biblical studies, but I was still disappointed that the opening chapter which purports to provide the biblical foundations, felt rather dated and reflected critical positions that certainly cannot be said to be unquestioned in the modern scholarly world.

On a related theme, G. Lemarquand's study, *An Issue of Relevance*,⁴⁴ is a comparison of exegetical approaches to the account of the Bleeding Woman (Mark 5:25-34 and parallels) in North Atlantic and African contexts. This is an important study which forms part of an important series, *Bible and Theology in Africa*. Unfortunately, the high price of these volumes makes it unlikely that it will be widely read outside academic libraries, and in Africa it is unlikely even to appear in libraries. It is encouraging, however, to see that perspectives from Africa and elsewhere in the world are being more explicitly given a voice in the international task of biblical interpretation. *The Global Bible Commentary* is another part of that trend.⁴⁵ Although it is a valiant attempt, I was left unsure of how helpful it would be in practice given that each contributor reads the text explicitly from their own cultural perspective and the contexts are highly diverse. I wonder how relevant a self-consciously Japanese reading of a text will be to a South African or a Brazilian. Another problem with this book is that often the commentary is only on a portion of a biblical text so that it functions more as an illustration of doing contextual exegesis than as a resource for a student of preacher who wants help in reading a particular text. A much more promising effort in the same vein is the recently-published *Africa Bible Commentary*, which focusses on one broad non-Western context (diverse as the continent of Africa is) and functions more like a

traditional one-volume commentary, although I have not yet been able to see a copy myself.

The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins is a *Festschrift* for J. D. G. Dunn.⁴⁶ Dunn has been a controversial figure throughout his academic career, holding quite conservative views on some issues but then making rather controversial statements about other aspects of Christian theology, notably the pre-existence of the Son and justification, but his contribution to the academic study of the New Testament is beyond question. This collection of essays by a host of international scholars reflects both the regard with which Dunn is held world-wide and the particular historical and theological interests which have been his foci of attention in his publications. This is a collection of technical essays and many will place heavy demands on a student or preacher, but there is some rich exegetical and theological material to be found here by those who will persevere. Contributors reflect a variety of attitudes to the text of Scripture, but there is a generally constructive approach and there are numerous evangelical authors such as Richard Bauckham, Gordon Fee, Howard Marshall and Max Turner.

Other literature

Sometimes biblical studies can seem very detached from the realities of everyday life, but A. Köstenberger has collaborated with a colleague in the field of ethics to write *God, Marriage and the Family: Rebuilding the Foundation*,⁴⁷ which employs careful biblical and theological analysis in the service of a book which will be of great benefit to pastors, counsellors and Christians who wish to develop a biblical view of the family and related ethical issues.

Those who take an interest in the way that popular culture deals with Christian issues may want to read *Jesus and Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ*, edited by K. E. Corley and R. L. Webb.⁴⁸ This is a scholarly book, with contributions from scholars such

as John Dominic Crossan, Mark Goodacre, Scot McKnight and Craig Evans, yet Gibson's controversial film sets the agenda items to be discussed. There is no unanimity of perspective on the film, with some contributors being very dismissive and others much more appreciative. It is a useful tool for serious readers in thinking through the significance of this film.

*Baptism in the Early Church*⁴⁹ is not strictly an example of NT studies. Rather, it is a resource of quotations (with some brief comment) from early Christian writings which relate to the issue of baptism. The book is published by a Baptist press, but it is a resource that Christians who take a paedobaptist view should also consult.

The final book I want to mention is quite distinctive. It is a daily devotional book by Adolf Schlatter, entitled *Do We Know Jesus?*⁵⁰ This is a further contribution from A. Köstenberger and R. Yarbrough to make Schlatter's work more widely accessible to English speakers. These readings, first published in 1937, were Schlatter's last literary product at the age of eighty-five. They were written during the developing political crisis in Germany and Schlatter calls his German

readers to reflect on the character of Jesus and his mission as they face the claims of Hitler. This book, therefore, has both historical and spiritual value. Each day's portion includes a verse or several verses of Scripture followed by some reflective comment. The readings are quite short and manageable, although as with much of Schlatter's writing, they require some careful thought.

Conclusion

I leave my readers to consider how they should spend their time and their money in the face of an overwhelming array of literature. May the Lord grant that the books we read, whether in (reflective) agreement or (fair and loving) disagreement, press us to re-examine the authoritative texts of Scripture and may his Spirit lead us to viewpoints which may truly be described as biblical.

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References

Recommendations:

For the teacher/student:

Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*;

K. Jobes, *1 Peter*; Hill and James, *The Glory of the Atonement*;

Longenecker, *Contours of Christology in the New Testament*.

For the preacher/ pastor:

Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*; Köstenberger, *God, Marriage and the Family: Rebuilding the Foundation*; Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*.

For the interested general reader:

Komoszweski, Sawyer and Wallace, *Reinventing Jesus*; Schlatter, *Do We Know Jesus?*

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