

BOOK REVIEWS

David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, Jr.

Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus

Austin: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, 1984

172 pages

What Language Did Jesus Speak?

This little book turns out to be an enigma and a “diamond in the rough” at the same time. It is an enigma because it delivers something different than one might expect from reading the title. It is a “diamond in the rough” because it is a brief but good introduction to certain resurrected — better, resuscitated — theses that many had thought (wished?) were laid to rest. A student handed me this book in a survey course in which one of my objectives was to heighten the student’s awareness of certain difficulties in the sayings of Jesus by requiring one of the “difficult” or “hard” sayings of Jesus books on the market (e.g., Stein, Neil, Bruce). So then, I was curious as to how I had missed this one that I assumed attempted to do the same thing. Upon reading it, I discovered why. It does not attempt to do the same thing, but something entirely different and that is why its title is so misleading.

It seems to me that the real point of departure for this book is the longstanding debate over what Jesus’ primary tongue was — Hebrew or Aramaic? Better yet, what was the dominant *lingua franca* during Jesus’ time in Palestine? This nexus can be observed in the opening chapter of the book when the authors say: “Why are the words of Jesus that we find in the Synoptic Gospels so difficult to understand? The answer is that the original gospel that formed the basis for the Synoptic Gospels was first communicated, not in Greek but in the Hebrew language. . . . The more Hebraic the saying or teaching of Jesus, the more difficult it is for us to understand.” They conclude that the Bible as originally composed is 90% Hebrew when one makes adjustments for the O.T. quotations and Semitism in the N.T.

The authors lay much blame at the door of liberal scholarship for the assumption of either a Greek or Aramaic origin for the Synoptics. They lament the fact that evangelicals have followed liberals down the primrose path of Marcan priority and Aramaic as Jesus’ spoken language, while placing greater weight on the importance of the Papias tradition. They take up again the well-rehearsed debate over the appropriate translation of *Hebrais* and *Hebraisti* — i.e. “Hebrew” or “Aramaic” as well as the oft debated words in the Gospels that are either Aramaic (e.g., *Talitha cumi*, *Ephphata*, *Rabboni*, *Abba*, *Eloi*, *Eloi*, *lama sabakhani*) or Hebrew (e.g., *levonah*, *mammon*, *Wai*, *Rabbi*, *Beelzebub*, *corban*, *raca*, *Boanerges*, *Amen*). Not only do the authors reject as Aramaic certain words, but they argue that even the presence of unquestionable Aramaic

words (e.g., *Abba*, *Ephphata*) does not prove the existence of an Aramaic original. They attribute some of the words to Hebrew borrowing which is evident in other rabbinic literature as well. However, I might add that with the exception of *Talitha cumi* and *Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabakthani*, there is often disagreement as to whether one can prove conclusively that these words are Aramaic or Hebrew.

After having dismissed the Aramaic and Greek theories, we come to the heart of the author's arguments for an original Hebrew gospel lying behind the Synoptic Gospels. They point to a variety of extra-biblical evidence (e.g., Dead Sea Scrolls, Ante-Nicean Church Fathers, coins and inscriptions, rabbinic literature, Josephus). The basic argument is that the Aramaic theory is a late one since Josephus and the Early Church Fathers give no evidence of meaning "Aramaic" when they use the word "Hebrew." Also, Hebrew, not Aramaic is dominant, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic literature, and coins and inscriptions during this period. Even the Synoptic Gospels give indications of a "Hebraic undertext." Jesus' words are full of Hebrew idioms that make perfect sense when translated back into Hebrew but often no sense at all in our English translations. The authors say "only when we begin to put the Greek of the Gospels back into Hebrew will it be possible to fully understand the words of Jesus (p. 91)."

In the final two chapters, the authors put forth their hypothesis for the transmission of the original *Life of Jesus* written in Hebrew as well as some theological errors resulting from failure to translate Hebraically. The author's theory is that within five years of Jesus' resurrection: (1) A biography was written in Hebrew about 30-35 chapters in length (i.e., *The Life of Jesus*). (2) It was translated into Greek which was about 50-60 chapters in length. (3) It became fragmented into stories and these fragments were rearranged topically. (4) A fluent Greek author used the topical arrangement and attempted to put the fragments together in order to create a gospel with some chronological order. (5) Luke used the two Greek texts (#3 and #4 above) as sources in writing his gospel. Mark followed Luke's work and Matthew used Mark's work. The synoptic Gospels show that they did not have access to the Hebrew original (*Life of Jesus*) or the first Greek translation of that Hebrew original. The authors close the book with an appendix that includes discussions of a dozen passages that are difficult to understand in English, or Greek in some instances, but make perfect sense when interpreted in a Hebrew context.

There are a number of concerns — too many to discuss here — that I have with the authors' book as well as a number of fronts on which I think they will have to do battle. I list only a few:

1) *A methodological problem*: The authors are attempting to do battle on three major fronts (the Synoptic problem; the *lingua franca* of Jesus and first century Palestine; and the appropriate strategy for unravelling the difficult sayings of Jesus) in a book barely large

enough to do justice to the complexities of one of these issues.

2) *The Synoptic Problem*: In fact these authors are proposing a Lucan priority hypothesis as the solution to the Synoptic problem. One would have to go back to the Aztecs to find support for such a thesis, (Okay, Evanston in the 18th century!). In relying upon the Papias tradition regarding Matthew, the authors fail to see what kind of bog that puts them in because Papias also talks about Mark. In this regard they seem not to be aware of or at least acknowledge the concerns about interpretation of the Papias tradition raised by other scholars. The authors' hypothesis rests heavily on this reconstruction and they must tread deep waters to gain any support.

3) *The lingua franca of Jesus*: Proving this theory is not as easy as the authors want the reader to believe. In times past, this was one issue that had two parts (the *lingua franca* of the first century Palestine — i.e., Judea; and the *lingua franca* of Jesus) but is now two distinct issues. Although the *lingua franca* of first century Palestine is still a rather complex matter (e.g., the influence of the three languages — Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew — upon one another in terms of borrowing and collateral development — i.e., linear or non-linear), it would appear that the evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, Mishnaic Hebrew, and the Bar Kosiba correspondence tip the scales in favor of the premise that Hebrew was a live vernacular in first century Palestine. However, should one accept the above conclusion, it merely demonstrates that Jesus might have spoken Hebrew not that he did. And if one grants that it is highly probable based on the evidence that he did speak some Hebrew, it can still be argued that he spoke more Aramaic — i.e., it was his *lingua franca* — because it was more dominant in first century Palestine than Hebrew. It should be self-evident then that a decisive victory for the former (i.e., *lingua franca* of first century Palestine) is not decisive for the latter (i.e., *lingua franca* of Jesus). In this regard, the authors fail to deal with the influence that Jesus' childhood rearing and frequent travels in Galilee, an area where Aramaic was the vernacular, would have on his *lingua franca*.

4. *Translation of Hebraisti*: While rejecting that *Hebraisti* should be translated "Aramaic" instead of "Hebrew" the authors fail to deal with the Bar Kokhba — better, Bar Kosiba — correspondence (A.D. 132-135) found at *Murabba'at* and the *Nahal Hever*, especially the letters to Jonathan and Masabala which are written in Aramaic. Furthermore, they do not deal adequately with the thesis that for Greek speaking people, it was sufficient to say *Hebraisti* in order to distinguish the language as non-Greek (i.e., "the language of the Jewish people"). This is not merely a matter of liberal scholarship.

5) *Reconstruction Theory*: The difficulty for the authors at this juncture is that we did in fact receive the Gospels in Greek. It will

be most difficult to demonstrate that in order to understand the Greek we must first translate it back into Hebrew because there may have been a hypothetical original from which it was translated. In fact, the Gospels stand on their own just as we have received them and are highly significant in the received form. Furthermore, if reconstruction will prove what language lies behind the Greek Gospels and thus better explains the text wouldn't it be necessary to translate it into both Hebrew and Aramaic for a fair comparison?

6) *Inspiration*: I am not sure the authors, who appear to have conservative, evangelical preferences, are aware of the bind that their reconstruction theory puts them in regarding a doctrine of Scripture. What is inspired, the Greek autographs as most conservative evangelical scholars choose to argue, or the Hebrew original *Life of Jesus*?

7) *Scholarly dialogue*: While the authors cite an array of scholars that add support to their position, they do not interact with a similar array of scholars who have looked at the same evidence but have come to the opposite or more cautious conclusions. The literature is replete with such scholars.

From this critique one might get the impression that I do not like the book. That is not true. If nothing else, we should thank the authors for keeping alive some issues and reminding us that all matters regarding the N.T. are not examples of a *fait accompli*. In addition, there are some useful insights and nuances in the way some of the difficult sayings of Jesus are handled. Clearly the emphasis on the importance of the Semitic material, whether Aramaic or Hebrew, in the N.T. is noteworthy. I especially feel an affinity for the way the authors emphasize the value of the Synoptics since I come from a tradition with a long history of such an emphasis. Hopefully, these authors will give us more in the future that is a bit more focused and documented.

Dr. William Myers

D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, editors
Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon
Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986
468 pages

Checkmate, Stalemate or Advance — Ment?

Under the rubric of heremeneutical inquiry, with the exception of women's role in the believing community (e.g., church, home, etc.), it is doubtful that any issue rivals that of biblical authority. This can be observed not only in the formidable array of publications in numerous languages, but in the time expended on the subject in the academy and across the airwaves. This author is presently involved in a continuing

consultation of this nature with other scholars. It engenders and fosters friendships and alliances as well as ill-will, recriminations and polarization. The exchange is often filled with invective as well as praise, while the style can be both irenic and inimical.

Into this fracas comes a significant work from a variety of evangelical scholars. The editors, D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, have pulled together a collection of essays that, although given the title *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon*, are basically held together by similar positions on the authority of Scripture. In fact, this is a second work, a companion volume to an initial work (*Scripture and Truth*) that can be appropriately viewed in a similar manner.

D.A. Carson, one of the editors, sets the stage for the discussions to follow with an essay assessing the "Recent Developments in the Doctrine of Scripture." In his usual trenchant style, he argues cogently against: an array of revisionist historiographies (e.g., any recasting of the Princetonians view of infallibility, the faith and practice restriction); inappropriate restrictions and misunderstandings of terms and constructs (e.g. inerrancy, proposition, accommodation, inspiration); inappropriate methodological conclusions (e.g., that phenomena of Scripture must be set in antithesis to truth claims). Although Carson is obviously in favor of using critical techniques and being sensitive to literary genre, he advises being cautious in the use of same. One can be just as uncritical rejecting harmonization as an appropriate technique in many instances. Perhaps the strongest part of Carson's essay is where he demonstrates the epistemological confusion that exists in scholarly circles over meaning and truth. Until such time as any discussion addresses the question of truth, one will merely spin wheels over discussion about meaning.

Many of the essays can be seen as a kind of further, more detailed elaboration of Carson's rather programmatic essay. Vanhoozer's "The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture's Diverse Literary Forms" might be seen in this light. He wants to inquire as to the relationship of the Scripture's diverse literary forms and its truth concept as well as to make a distinction between "propositional" in its ordinary sense and its philosophical sense. Vanhoozer seeks to advance the discussion by drawing upon "speech act theory" that can be seen in the works of scholars like J.L. Austin, John Serle, P.T. Geach and Paul Ricoeur. In this regard, the Bible is to be seen as "divine discourse act" which Vanhoozer feels gets one beyond some of the traditional concerns with mere propositional revelation. While he wishes to preserve propositional revelation in the sense of Carl F.H. Henry (i.e., verbal, cognitive communication with authority resting in the text), he feels that viewing it as divine discourse act puts the imaginative, powerful aspect back into the presentation in a way that propositional revelation cannot do alone.

Moises Silva's essay, "The Place of Historical Reconstruction in New Testament Criticism" and John D. Woodbridge's article, "Some Misconceptions of the Impact of Enlightenment on the Doctrine of Scrip-

ture” are very well worked out illustrations which highlight revisionist historiography that Carson mentions in his opening essay. Silva’s essay is perhaps the most balanced in the entire book. He demonstrates how conservatives and liberals alike have either jumped too quickly to incomplete data (e.g., Jesus’s birth and death; evaluation of the reign of Herod Agrippa I). It is good to finally see well-balanced treatments of the Pharisees in the New Testament by conservative evangelical scholars (something, by the way, that Jewish scholars have been demanding for years). He illustrates what we can learn even when biblical information is incomplete (e.g., Herod Agrippa I) if we are cautious and open to extra-biblical data. Furthermore, we can learn also from those who put forth rather disturbing hypotheses (e.g., Baur). Woodbridge argues against a host of well-known scholars (e.g., Ramm, Marsden, Vawter, Rogers and McKim) over the assessment of the Enlightenment’s impact on the doctrine of scripture and whether the conservative’s view is novel. He contends that none of the views suggesting biblical errancy began either in the 16th, 17th or 18th centuries are supported by the evidence. He lists an impressive number of works and scholars, including Augustine, to demonstrate that conservative scholars during the decades of the Enlightenment merely emphasized what the church had long held. He further challenges the ability of scholars to agree on the definition of the term “Enlightenment.” The vitality of the Christian faith was just as evident as reason in the 18th century as can be seen by the fact that Wesley and Whitefield lived their lives just as vigorously as Voltaire and Rousseau. One can see in the earlier, Roman Catholic as well as Protestant scholars before this period that a belief in the conservative doctrine of scripture had always been the position. He completely rejects Ramm’s assertion that evangelicals need to embrace the German Neologians and come to grips with the Enlightenment in order to avoid being obscuranists. Such an approach is to his mind a call away from the sound doctrine regarding the authority of Scripture.

Two additional articles that build on Carson’s foundation are Craig L. Blomberg’s “The Legitimacy and Limits of Harmonization” and David G. Dunbar’s, “The Biblical Canon.” Blomberg’s article is highly significant because he demonstrates with ample support how harmonization is a legitimate technique no different than textual criticism or any other critical approach for solving difficult passages. One cannot reject harmonization as out-of-hand because it has been used illegitimately. In fact, so has every other technique. And, to dismiss harmonization as a technique would be most uncritical indeed.

Again Dunbar builds on Carson’s concern about the inclusion or exclusion of canonical documents. Dunbar reviews the history of the formation of the O.T. and N.T. canon. He addresses the reputed role that controversy (e.g., Gnosticism, Marcionism, Montanism) as well as key figures (e.g., Marcion, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus) played in the formation of the canon. He further assesses the approaches to canon history

of four contemporary scholars (e.g., Barr, Childs, Appel, Ridderbos). Dunbar presses for a distinction between canon, Scripture and apostolic authority as a way out of an all-or-nothing bind. Apostolicity is not necessarily to be equated with authorship because it is content and chronology that are key. While Scripture has been around from the very moment a book was planned, canon emerged later. Yet, in principle, the canon is closed on the basis of the salvation-historical context of the N.T. canon. Any new text could not re-open the canon because “the canon. . . is limited to those documents that the church experienced as foundational to its own existence.”

Unfortunately, space does not afford me the privilege to address the useful article by Douglas J. Moo, “The Problem of Sensus Plenior”, in which he reviews the history of the problem and emerges with three possibilities of viewing the concept, all inherent in the Holy Writ; John M. Frame’s, “The Spirit and the Scriptures”, on the initial role and continuing roles of the Holy Spirit in the inspiration process; nor Geoffrey W. Bromiley’s, “The Authority of Scripture in Karl Barth”, in which the merits of Barth’s approach turn out to be the antithesis of the problem it creates. For all intents and purposes one could draw the conclusion from Bromiley’s assessment that Barth was a curious admixture of the ultimate systematic theologian when it comes to theological debate over biblical authority, and a devout fideist as a practical theologian.

This book, like its companion, is a valuable addition to the ongoing debate over biblical authority. It is good to see works from evangelical scholars that are as painstakingly researched and documented, and as cogent as the essays that appear in this collection. Too frequently evangelical scholars’ works been summarily dismissed as basically “meta-faith” works. The thorough and persuasive essays, for example, by Carson, Woodbridge, Blomberg, Vanhoozer, Silva must be met at that level — *ad hoc*, *ad hominem*, *ad absurdum* rebuttals will not do.

All will not agree with all aspects of their arguments or conclusions. For example, questions might be raised about the following:

- 1) The implications of Carson’s relationship of method, truth and faith especially as it works itself out in the debate over contextualization (e.g., pp. 41-42. A similar concern exists with Packer’s essay in the first book).

- 2) The implications of Dunbar’s approach to canon in inter-believing community dialogue over the form and function of the variety of canons. It seems to me that Dunbar misses an ample opportunity here for advancing the discussion when he relegates James A. Sanders’ canonical criticism approach to a footnote. Surely there is a much greater difference between Childs’ and Sanders’ approach than can be captured in a footnote (pp. 424-25).

- 3) Whether Vanhoozer’s new title — “the divine discourse act” — eliminates the flaws inherent in the propositional revelation concept or not is an open question. But, surely Vanhoozer is in the

boat of which he puts Geisler (p. 74), Preus (p. 74) and the shapers of the Chicago statement (p. 68) when he starts with the obvious presuppositional construct that "what Scripture says God says (p. 93)." Isn't that, in fact, where the debate rages? Even if, for example, he was building on Grudem's essay in the first book there is still the problem of Achtemaier's approach (*The Inspiration of Scripture*) which wrestles with the same questions but with vastly different conclusions.

It is sufficient to say that the vested interests, the point of departure and the theological launching pad for these scholars are clear. Woodbridge speaks not only for historians when he says "the theological presuppositions of historians (including the present writer) sometimes get in the way of their honest effort to write scrupulously fair history" (P. 241), and I would add, as well as hold to a biblical authority that is wide enough to include all christians, narrow enough to avoid epistemological absurdity, wise enough to know the differences and humble enough to acknowledge when you didn't.

Obviously some will see this book as "checkmate" while others will see it as "stalemate" — i.e., another addition to the log jam that helps to cut off the flow of spirit. It would be nice if there is something in this book that helps break through the log jam so that the water might advance.

Dr. William Myers

B.W. Anderson, *Out of the Depths — The Psalms Speak for Us Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), \$11.95

L.C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, Word Biblical Commentary Series, Vol. 27, rev. and expanded (Waco: Word Books, 1983), \$22.95

P.C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, Word Biblical Commentary Series, Vol. 19, (Waco: Word Books, 1983), \$22.95

Few books in the canon receive as much attention as the Psalms. Perhaps this is because, as Athanasius reportedly said, the Psalms speak for us, not to us, in the language of the heart. Precisely because the Psalms are so general they are also universal. It is thus with real satisfaction that this reviewer is able to commend three studies on the Psalms that illuminate the content and context of these poems, prayers, and hymns.

Bernhard Anderson's *Out of the Depths* remains the best general introduction to the psalms, especially if one is interested in studying the different types or genre of material in the Psalms. This readable study guide was first published in 1970 by the United Methodist Church. In its more recent incarnation it has been expanded by 50 pages to include

new content, updated footnotes, new illustrations and appendices.

From Anderson the reader learns that the Psalter is more like an ancient hymnal than a prayerbook or collection of poetry, although clearly there are some prayers and much poetry. Anderson does not lose the reader in the vagaries of various compilation theories but makes clear that the psalms were composed, collected, and edited from the time of the early monarchy (1000 B.C.) to the post-Exilic period (possibly as late as 300 B.C.). He states that many if not most of the psalms in their present form are liturgical masterpieces to be sung, chanted, or recited in worship. In general, they are not private prayers or poems, as the various musical directions make clear.

Anderson's greatest contribution, however, is in distinguishing the various types of psalms - individual and community laments; hymns; songs of trust, of Zion, of pilgrimage; wisdom, torah, and royal psalms. He also helps us to understand the psalms in their original historical context and he shows how Israel used non-Israelite religious material, demythologizing it in order to praise Yahweh. If this book has a defect it is the same one we will find in Allen and Craigie's works, namely, the question of how the Christian may use the psalms, or how the psalms may be interpreted in a larger canonical context is not adequately addressed.

The commentaries of Allen and Craigie come to us in what may be called the post-Dahoodian era. M. Dahood's ground breaking work in comparing the language and concepts of the Psalms to Ugaric has been fully processed. Allen and especially Craigie reflect a more critical stance toward Dahood's work than was the case or was possible in the 70's. Craigie is helpful because of his expertise in Ugaric and the scholar will find his volume a useful counterpoint to Dahood's first volume in the Anchor Bible Psalms. It is tragic that Craigie, who was recently killed in a car accident, will no longer be able to help us in these complex matters.

Both commentaries reflect a full grasp of the issues and literature that must be covered to deal with the psalms. Their technical notes on the Hebrew text of each Psalm will prove helpful to the scholar and lay person alike. Allen's notes are generally more exhaustive than Craigie's; both handle the material well.

For the general reader, the portion of Craigie's commentary that will be most helpful is the section entitled "Comment and Explanation." Unfortunately, Allen's commentary has no "Comment" section and so exegesis, theology, and implications are all lumped into one category. This can make for too brief an explanation of the text for the modern reader. In particular, Christian readers will find little help on such issues as: 1) whether or not the royal Psalms may be treated Christologically; 2) how the psalms are used in the NT; 3) whether or not Christians can follow, in the light of historical critical exegesis, the Christological use of the Psalms in the NT. (Craigie, in his Introduction, does address this

but on a Psalm by Psalm basis major questions are left unanswered); 4) how the Psalms may be used in modern worship (prayed, or sung, or recited, or all three).

In the end, the strength of both commentaries is in three areas: 1) translation and dealing with textual variants; 2) assessment of possible Ugaritic parallels or interpretive clues; 3) exegesis of the material in its original historical context. All of this is necessary but, as Brevard Childs has indicated, it is not sufficient for a modern audience wanting to know how it may use the Psalms. This is especially a problem for the Christian audience that intends to use this material in worship and is likely to use it in light of the NT and in particular with a Christocentric focus. It may be hoped that someone will now write a guide for the Christian use of the Psalms based on the work of Allen, Craigie, and Anderson. Then, hopefully, the journey from text to NT use to current application will be more fully made. Then the Psalms will become more accessible for the Church, to those with general historical interest, to those of the Jewish faith.

These are three worthwhile books which should advance both scholarly and lay understanding of the Psalms. For this reason, they should be included in the library of any Biblical scholar or educated layperson.

Dr. Ben Witherington

James D.G. Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus* (Philadelphia: Westminster 1986), xiv 113 pp, \$8.95 pb.

This is a response to a notorious British television series of 1984, *Jesus — the Evidence*, which many Christians found extremely disturbing because it seemed to show that New Testament scholarship has effectively destroyed what we thought we knew about Jesus and Christian origins, and has put in its place a Jesus who could hardly serve as the basis of Christian faith.

The series is already largely forgotten, but Dunn's book retains its value. It aims firstly to show where the programs gave a false impression of the balance of scholarly views (and they were *very* lopsided, to put it mildly!), and secondly to educate the Christian layperson in understanding the positive contribution New Testament scholarship has to offer. Dunn makes it clear that traditional Christian ideas about Jesus, particularly about the nature of the evidence which the gospels offer us about him, are often based on misunderstandings which it is the task of historical scholarship to dispel. In this it is a friend, not an enemy. When it has done its work, in the hands of responsible experts, our grasp of the real Jesus will be the firmer, and will in no way threaten a living Christian faith.

He isolates four central areas of discussion: the historical character of the Synoptic Gospels; Jesus as Son of God (with special reference

to the Gospel of John); the Resurrection in New Testament belief; and the diversity and unity of first-century Christianity. Each is discussed in largely non-technical terms, but with full reference to current scholarship. It is all very familiar to anyone who has taken even a first degree in biblical studies, but to the ordinary church-goer some of it may be quite surprising.

Chapter 1 aims to alert the reader to what the Synoptic Gospels are actually like. This is graphically done by printing several representative sections of a gospel synopsis, and commenting on the nature of the relationship. Such a visual presentation is worth volumes of solid print. It is just the sort of exercise I get my undergraduates to do when they first get into gospel studies, and it is amazing how many Christians have been totally unaware of the character of the gospels they have read for so long. It can be an unsettling experience, but with Dunn's sensitive guidance, the reader will come to see that there is no cause for fear, and will be able to use the gospels more responsibly.

The introduction to John in chapter 2 is potentially more disturbing, as the reader is left in no doubt as to the extent of the difference in character from the other gospels, and the questions this raises about the use of John as a historical source for what Jesus actually said and did. Here Dunn is closer to the central ground in critical scholarship than to the new confidence suggested by John Robinson's important *Priority of John*. In his estimate John emerges as an important painting rather than a 'straight' portrait of Jesus.

The chapter on the resurrection is more reassuring to a conservative reader — indeed an outstandingly helpful, and quite thorough, treatment of a crucial topic in today's debate. The final chapter sets out in brief the position Dunn worked out in his *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*.

The lay reader, for whom the book is designed, may well feel at first that he has lost the innocence of traditional conservative instincts. But some of that needed to be questioned, and Dunn is no wrecker, dismantling the cherished beliefs of the faithful for the sheer fun of it. He wants his reader to achieve a more realistic and therefore ultimately more solid grasp of the nature of the evidence for Jesus. The subject is too important for illusions to be left unchallenged, whether of the right or the left. You may not agree with all Dunn's views (especially on John?), but can any church afford to leave his questions unasked?

Dr. R.T. France
London Bible College

F.F. Bruce, *Jesus: Lord & Savior*.
InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 228 pp.

The question "Who is Jesus?" was asked by many people during the few years of His public ministry early in the first century AD. That

Since this is true, F.F. Bruce considers the implications of referring to Jesus as the Son of God, the Son of Man, the incarnate Word, Saviour, the Coming One, and Lord. The author's conclusion is that a proper understanding of Jesus will lead us to find in Him our eternal contemporary, as available to us as He was to the people of His day two thousand years ago.

Even though this is a book on Christology, it is by no means an exhaustive study of the subject. Rather, the design of the book seems to be one of getting the reader to understand the uniqueness of the historical Jesus. While getting acquainted through some helpful details of Jesus' life and ministry, one begins to comprehend that this was no ordinary man. Only then is Bruce ready to talk about Jesus in Christian experience.

This is not a book for the serious student of Christology who is looking for a carefully reasoned statement answering the question "Who is Jesus?" It should not be compared to Oscar Cullman's *The Christology of the New Testament* or Bernard Ramm's *An Evangelical Christology*. It is designed for a different audience. It is the kind of book which would be helpful to the college sophomore or young business executive who is seeking to become better acquainted with the Jesus he was recently introduced to who has provided him with forgiveness and given him a new purpose in life.

Well might we ask "Why another book on Christology?" F.F. Bruce's reason for writing the book is clearly stated in the following paragraph taken from page 20:

If the Christian claim is well founded, that God revealed himself pre-eminently in the life and death of Jesus, then it is of the highest importance to know as completely and accurately as possible what kind of life and death it was in which God thus revealed himself. Christians of all people should be the last to play down the necessity of examining all the evidence that is available for the life and death of the historical Jesus. Happily, such evidence is readily accessible, inviting intelligent evaluation; and there is no reason for pessimism about the outcome of such evaluation.

Jesus: Lord & Savior is a succinctly stated declaration that when a woman or man becomes acquainted with Jesus of Nazareth they come face to face with not only the Jesus of history but also the Christ of faith. The book is an important addition to the Jesus Library Series published by InterVarsity Press.

Dr. Gordon G. Zimmerman

Myron Rush.

Burnout: Practical help for lives out of balance.

(Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1987)

Is there life after burnout? Yes, but the road to recovery is a long one and must be accompanied by a trusted confidant. Rush, a self-confessed workaholic who experienced burnout has written a very helpful text as he identifies the causes and symptoms of burnout as well as recovery procedures and tips on avoiding it altogether.

This text is critical reading for over-achieving, perfectionists, who are working harder and longer but are being less productive. Relatives of these personalities should also devour the text.

Dr. M.E. Drushal

Terry A. Armstrong, Douglas L. Busby, Cyril F. Carr, ed.

A Reader's Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament

Grand Rapids: Zondervan

Vol. I-II (in one): Genesis - II Kings, 1982, 230 pp., \$16.95

Vol. III: Isaiah - Malachi, 1986, 220 pp., \$14.95

John R. Kohlenberger III, ed.

The NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament

Grand Rapids: Zondervan

4 volume set, 1979-1985, \$95.80 set, \$24.95 volume

Zondervan is to be commended for its realization of a need for quality reference material, and for seeking to meet it. Any tool which assists the student and pastor in their biblical exegesis, especially of the original languages, is to be welcomed. This is the goal of these two sets, with each making its own distinct contribution.

Kohlenberger starts the first volume with instructions on the series' use, it being for those who have at least some Hebrew competency. It aids in determining the Hebrew words corresponding to the English translation, and also shows the Hebrew syntax, but it does not, nor is it intended to be a tool for word studies. It is also not a translation, but an intermediate step and a tool for translation. Kohlenberger introduces the Hebrew alphabet and vowels, and briefly discusses the Hebrew and English texts and introduces the translation technique for his inter-linear text, which is based on the NIV, but allows the editor's own contribution. He provides a brief bibliography of ten items on translation, Hebrew grammar and lexicons. The introductory section closes with the regular NIV preface. Other volumes briefly look at e.g. Hebrew vs. Greek canonical order (Greek is followed in this series) and the Aramaic of Ezra, Daniel and Jeremiah.

The body of the text itself consists of a continuous NIV text along the outside margin accompanying the Masoretic Leningradensis B19a text of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Below the Hebrew is the English translation of each Hebrew word except the direct object in-

indicator. The form is right to left, following Hebrew word order, but the English translations of each word are given in ordinary English order, joined by hyphens. For example, *vena'berah* (I Sam. 14:1) is translated "and-let-us-go-over" showing the copula, cohortative and semantic content of the root.

This series will be of use for those who find that one course in Hebrew is not enough for exegesis. They can locate the corresponding Hebrew word and then proceed with their exegetical study of it. Those who have gone beyond the elementary stage, however, will probably not find the series sufficiently useful to merit purchase. This is not due to any fault in the work, but due to their increased competency having made it unnecessary.

The Armstrong-Busby-Carr series has a wider range of applications. It is intended to facilitate rapid Hebrew reading in that it lists verse-by-verse in English canonical order those words occurring fifty or fewer times in the Old Testament. Those occurring over fifty times should be memorized and are listed in an appendix. Adjectives and nouns occur in their absolute form and words occur as the 3ms perfect of the stem in the text, unless that particular form does not occur in the Old Testament, when it is presented as an unpointed root. Following the Hebrew is an indicator of word frequencies in parentheses. For verbs, this includes frequency of the stem in the book being read, the occurrences of the stem in the Old Testament, and the occurrences in the book and Old Testament as a whole. A final number indicates the page in F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* on which the word is discussed. There is also a definition of the Hebrew word taken from BDB.

The above description should indicate that the series is intended for those who have had at least intermediate Hebrew, since a fair amount of competence is necessary in order to determine the listed forms. It shows the importance of vocabulary building, even to the extent that sufficient work in this area would make the work unnecessary. The series will find a useful place in the library of the student and pastor's library who is in the middle stages of their mastery of Hebrew.

Dr. David W. Baker

Nahum M. Sarna

Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel

Schocken, 1986

\$17.95 hard/\$8.95 paper

Sarna, Emeritus Professor of Biblical Studies at Brandeis University is a pleasure to read not only for his great insight into the biblical text and its cultural, social and religious environment but also for his lucidi-

ty, which is too often lacking in scholarly writing. He tackles the critical problems and issues in Exodus with a thoroughness which has become familiar through his earlier work on *Understanding Genesis*. The book is accessible to the student and pastor and will provide great assistance in preparation for class or pulpit. Coming from a Jewish perspective, he reminds us that the Old Testament has a message in its own right as well as its own integrity, which he clearly and interestingly expounds.

Dr. David W. Baker

Robert E. Coleman

Evangelism on the Cutting Edge

Old Tappan: Power Books, Fleming Revell, 1986

156 pages. \$5.95 (pb)

Barry Wood

Questions Non Christians Ask Today

Old Tappan: Power Books, Fleming Revell, 1986

192 pages. \$5.95 (pb)

If one is collecting books on evangelism here are two more. My question in looking at them is, "Is there enough new in them to say that we need them?" Let us look at the content of each and see if they are worth their low paper back price.

Coleman is well known for a number of good books including *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Notice that he only edits this book. It has authors as diverse as Kenneth Kantzer (an Ashland College graduate!) who is well known to many of us, David Hesslegrave, Timothy Warner, and William Taylor (field missionaries turned seminary professors), and popular psychologist Gary Collins. Trinity Divinity School has tried a number of ways to pull together their faculty writings in such a collection.

This is not Coleman's USA evangelism, this is a missions book. It deals with world wide witnessing. Yet, much of what is said of contextualization and demon confrontation, etc. is not just the stuff of the missionary. These things are here in Cleveland, San Francisco, and in Ashland and Conshohocken. The book deals with what is hindering the work of reaching the world and attempts to renew the urgency for service and proclamation. I will put the page numbers in brackets after my comments should you want to confirm — or question them. The names of the contributors are impressive (6) but the adjectives used for them are somewhat over done (8,9).

Kantzer presents a summary of the liberal views that all religions lead to God, points out liberal trends, and helps to sharpen the evangelical missionary's awareness of the world mission context. He concludes with

a restatement of the old question, “Are the heathen really lost?”

Johnson has an eleven-page essay on church unity and mission but actually reverts to fighting old battles on the Battle for the Bible issues (from his earlier book!) and fails to point out the thousands of evangelical churches, pastors, missionaries and lay-workers committed to the lost’s salvation.

Detzler follows with an overdrawn case for the Bible as the basis for revival. It is as if the formula is: believe the Bible and ask for more prayer, commitment, and the providence of God. His chapter ending does broaden the concept and adds relationship, repentance, and restoration.

The missionary writers rise to their subjects and Taylor, Hesselgrave, and Warner, give us good chapters. Hesselgrave, as usual (see his other books), is a capable craftsman and handles contextualization well. People fear that contextualization is, or brings, a distortion of the Gospel. He says, “Biblical contextualization *preserves a pure Gospel* while communicating it in a culturally meaningful way” (82). In more good writing, Warner presents the demonic. While his cases are overseas examples, this is an area where pastors could profit. A small town youth social worker asked me questions about a delinquent school girl that baffled him. She was obviously involved, with her parents, in the occult. Warner would have helped him.

It is exciting to see psychologist Gary Collins (our ATS speaker at last year’s ministry conference) take on Schuller (106)! Perry gives a good course in homiletics in nine pages! Preachers and evangelists will love the good material here. One could wonder how the two chapters fit in — they do somewhat, and that is the problem of trying, on the one hand, to have all the faculty contribute, and attempting, on the other, to have them write in their fields on the subject! Coleman does a good job on life-style evangelism and Kaiser, an Old Testament scholar, does well in bringing the challenge to theological schools and to the readers to function on the cutting edge of world evangelism.

In his book, Barry Wood *does* stay with what the title suggests, and goes beyond the questions to the answers. With our neighbors being so multi-cultural and of diverse religions the book has a place of value. Wood covers not just the cults but the intellectuals and their arguments, the scientific view (11ff), questions of the Bible’s truthfulness, and even psychology, before getting on to the various non-Christian faiths. He presents each religion by setting out its tenants and then gives methods of presenting the Gospel. Beyond Moon, Muslims, and Jews, he handles pain, predestination, gurus, and homosexuals. “The book is designed to help the Christian witness share his faith with others” (7). It would make a good study book for an evangelism class.

This is not a heavy book. The author’s style varies from, “that you must make up your mind and decide if you want God’s banana split for your life — or do you want to settle for Satan’s spinach?” (175)

to, “All religion is fundamentally man’s philosophy about God and the universe” (143). I always like to see a good index and Wood has included one.

To answer my opening question, “Are they worth adding to the row of books on evangelism?” — if you put the first one alongside a world evangelism book that is where it belongs, but there are better books if you need a basic look at world concerns. You do need the answers that Wood gives if you do not have anything on sharing the Gospel with those of other faiths.

Dr. Fred Holland

PAX PARADOX

It is not reasonable -
What He has done
To send to the cross
His only born Son.

It makes no sense
If he loved his child
That he consigned him to die
For the wicked and wild.

It was completely unfair
The carpenter was nailed
He did not deserve it
It was us who failed.

God must be crazy
Or so some may say,
To make such a plan
And execute it that way.

Yet the cruelty of God
Was his kindness to me
And by his foolishness
He set us free.

There is love in death
More than in life
There is wisdom in wrath
That ends human strife.

God's ways are not human
Our eyes cannot see
The logic of love,
Nailed to a tree.

9/4/87
BW

