

Book Reviews

REDEEMING TIME: THE WISDOM OF ANCIENT JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN FESTAL CALENDARS

Bruce Chilton

Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002 132pp \$19.95hb

ISBN 1-56563-380-6

Bruce Chilton is an American student of intertestamental literature who rather delights in way-out ideas. The main thesis of this short book is that the three pilgrim feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles are particularly associated with three leading figures of the New Testament—Jesus with Tabernacles, Peter with Pentecost and James the Lord's brother with the Passover. He could, perhaps, have gone on and associated Paul or the writer to the Hebrews with the Day of Atonement, but he does not.

There is a natural link between Peter and Pentecost in Acts 2, but the choice of James the Lord's brother, rather than Jesus himself, to be linked with the Passover seems rather perverse. Chilton does not accept the belief that the Last Supper was the Passover meal but, even so, it is undeniable that Jesus's death and resurrection took place at the Passover season. The reviewer enjoyed the comparison between the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Mishnaic tractate Yoma on pp. 89-93.

ROGER BECKWITH
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DANIEL

Ernest C. Lucas

Leicester: Apollos 2002 359pp £19.99hb ISBN 0-85111-780-5

This is a learned and moderately written (even if somewhat perverse) evangelical commentary on Daniel, the work of the vice-principal of Bristol Baptist College. With the volume on Deuteronomy by Gordon McConville, it launches the Apollos Old Testament Commentary series.

In 1977, Robert Gurney proposed in an article (and afterwards in a book) that evangelicals should accept the interpretation of Daniel's four world-empires, prophesied in chs. 2 and 7, as Babylon, Media, Persia and Greece. He dated the end of Greek and the beginning of Roman dominion somewhat later than

is usually done, and argued that the coming of the Son of man can therefore be placed at the end of Greek rule, and still be identified with Jesus. Ernest Lucas, who proposes the same identification of the four world-empires, cannot accept this reasoning, and instead accepts the common liberal contention that the prophecies of Daniel are prophecies after the event (like the Akkadian prophecies after the event, produced by the 'wise men' whose wisdom Daniel so far excelled), and reach their climax with the overthrow of Antiochus Epiphanes by the Maccabees. He identifies the Messiah of Daniel 9 not with Jesus, but with the high priest Onias III, murdered in 171 B.C.

One of the difficulties with this interpretation is that, in Daniel itself, Media and Persia are always one empire, not two (Dan. 5:28; 6:8, 12,15; 8:20). Alexander and his successors are likewise a single empire in Daniel (Dan. 8:21f). So, since the first world-empire is explicitly identified with Babylon, the fourth must be Rome, as both Jewish and Christian interpreters of the first century recognised. It should not surprise us that, before Rome emerged as the next great world power, this was not realised, nor even that efforts were occasionally made to apply the prophecy to the current world power, Greece, instead. The prophecy had to wait for history to interpret it. But, once that had happened, Jesus proclaimed that 'the time is fulfilled', took to himself the 'Son of man' as his favourite self-designation, and acknowledged as true his followers' recognition of him as the 'Messiah', in accordance with Daniel 7 and Daniel 9. The prophecies of Daniel were central to Jesus's thinking and teaching. The 'kingdom of the heavens' and the 'abomination of desolation' also come from Daniel, of course. So how a Christian commentator can be content with a reading of Daniel which distances it from Jesus is hard to understand.

No doubt, there are still problems of interpretation in detail, but not such as affect the general conception. The policy of intermarriage with subject nations (Dan. 2:43), though begun by Alexander, was continued by the Romans. The little horn, which comes forth out of one of the four horns of Greece (Dan. 8:9-14), may prefigure, without being identical with, the further horn which comes forth after the ten horns of Rome (Dan. 7:24f). The former is certainly the persecutor Antiochus Epiphanes, and the latter would presumably be the Antichrist.

Evangelicals who depend almost entirely on liberal writers usually end up adopting liberal ideas. It is a pity that evangelicals have not devoted more study

to intertestamental literature, or they would recognise the many contrasts between Daniel and the pseudonymous apocalypses with which liberals usually class it. They would also discover the totally different way in which the Jews always treated it. The reviewer has written something on these matters in his book *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (which Ernest Lucas refers to, but gives no sign of having read) and also in his book *Calendar and Chronology, Jewish and Christian*.

ROGER BECKWITH

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GIDEON BLOWS THE TRUMPET

Cor Van Rijswijk

Neerlandia, Alberta: Inheritance Publications, 2003 44pp
 Can.\$8.95pb ISBN 1-894666-22-4

Parents who want their children to read 'suitable' books have often been glad of retellings of Bible stories. However, not all have been so glad of the rather loose way in which the facts are re-arranged, added to, or overlooked. The written style of some productions makes the NIV read like Shakespeare, and illustrations are often far from helpful.

None of these criticisms could be applied fairly to the present work, which is of a classic style, though modern in terms of typefaces and layout. It is part of The Word of the King Series of childrens' books. The author has managed to open up the account in Judges, so that the reader—a six or seven-year-old—or the listener—a four or five-year-old—can understand just what is being described. There are illustrations on every page, which assist this. Interspersed in the account are a number of relevant quotations from the Psalms, taken from the Book of Praise, the Anglo-Genevan Psalter. These are used to supply some of the dialogue between God and the people.

Children who are used to the Authorised Version and more traditional books will appreciate this series. Those who are not may find it a little hard to get into. The series is also available in audio form on CD.

EDWARD J MALCOLM

Reading

FROM EVERY PEOPLE AND NATION: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF RACE

J. Daniel Hays

Leicester: Apollos, 2003 240 pp £12.99pb ISBN 0-85111-290-0

White North American Christianity has a strong historical tendency to be ethnocentric, and part of that distortion is to project Caucasian people back into all aspects of the biblical story and to ignore Black African involvement within it. In order to address the North American Black-White divide, Hays argues that God's purpose is inclusive of all races, historically (i.e., in fact) as well as eschatologically (i.e., in intention). He traces this with special reference to Cush, the Hebrew Bible's consistent name for the region of the Nile south of Egypt.

The treatment begins with the significant role played by Cushites, or Black Africans, in the history of Israel. We discover that they were almost certainly among the mixed multitude that left Egypt (Ex. 12:38); that Moses' marriage to a Cushite wife (Num. 12:1) was with divine approval; that God made a covenant with Phinehas the priest, whose name literally means 'the Black'; that David's army included a Cushite soldier; and that Jeremiah's rescuer Ebed-Melech was also from Cush (Jer. 38). On the diplomatic front, both Egypt and Cush were important powers in the first millennium B.C. Cushites were therefore far from absent in the story of Israel. Furthermore, where they respond in faith (as does Ebed-Melech), it is representative of Gentile inclusion within Israel, and a partial fulfilment of the promise that all nations would be blessed in Abraham (Gen. 12:3). Further evidence of the racially inclusive nature of Israel is given by the mixed marriages which make up Jesus' own line (Matt. 1). As the Christian era dawned Black Ethiopians were actively interacting (*sic*) with the Mediterranean Roman world. The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) and Simon Niger (Acts 13) are again symbolic of the inclusion of all races of Gentiles into God's people. The equality and unity of all races is ensured by the gospel of justification by faith. The reverse truth is simply that 'If a church does not defend in practice the equality and unity of all in Christ, it implicitly communicates that justification is not by faith but by race, social status or by some other standard' (G. W. Hansen cited on p. 183). God's people has been multi-ethnic both in practice and by design.

Hays' focus is on Black Africans because he seeks to correct specific errors

abroad in North America, namely the false assumption that the main players in the biblical story are white Caucasians; the exegetically ridiculous (p. 53) but still available teaching that Ham's curse applies to Black races; the translation of Hebrew Kush into English as variously Cush, Nubia and Ethiopia when it refers to a single entity; the assumption that Blacks in the biblical story must be slaves; the assertion (chiefly by Louis Farrakan) that Christianity came to Black Africa only as a result of the slave trade; the contemporary prohibition of mixed-races marriages, and finally the division of churches along racial lines. These are errors and we benefit by their refutation. Also, readers today tend to gloss over the magnitude of Philip's work in crossing the ethnic and cultural barrier between Jew and Samaritan (Acts 8). It was every bit as rigid and hostile as the current boundary between Blacks and Whites in the most racist areas of the United States. Yet by the power of the Spirit, Philip, Peter and John successfully carried the gospel across this barrier. It is hoped that the present generation of Christians will also put right thinking into right practice.

One question remains. Why was the book not called 'a biblical theology of the Black African race'? While Hays ably demonstrates that Black Africans have an equal place within the People of God, his argument does not work in the same way for races not mentioned in the biblical story. Do additional biblical arguments need to be deployed to persuade Indian, Chinese and many other Christians of their full and equal inclusion in the promises of God?

ED MOLL
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THE DORT STUDY BIBLE VOL. 1 GENESIS-EXODUS
Theodore Haak (trans.)
Neerlandia, Alberta: Inheritance Publications, 2003 350pp hb
ISBN 1-894666-51-8

The Synod of Dort accomplished many things, among the probably less well-known of which was an edition of the Bible with annotations. Not only was this an annotated edition, but it was also a new translation into Dutch from the original languages. The 'Plain and True Narrative' that serves as a preface informs us that the cost of production, which included the hiring of pastors

from their pastorates and full provision for their families, amounted to 'Twenty-five thousand pounds Sterling and upwards.' It was translated into English for the benefit of the English and Scottish churches in 1637, and, according to the Certificate of Attestation, was desired by those churches.

The work is of interest both from its translation and from the notes themselves, which give the reader a good insight into the theology of the Dutch Reformers. The notes themselves are similar in style and effect to those found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and as such may not all be as convincing as might be hoped. The fact that they are interspersed with the text itself, which is set in bold type, means that this is not a Bible version that anyone will read for its own sake. As a translation it is highly literal, and it would be interesting to know what use was made of it by the translators of the King James Version, who managed to avoid some of the obscurities found here.

It is perhaps hard to know who might benefit from the re-issuing of such a work, apart from students of the period. While the notes do serve as a brief commentary they are by no means exhaustive, nor were ever meant to be. This is a Bible for private study, but the present layout makes such a use today very difficult. That only two Bible books are bound in this one volume means that it will entail many purchases to obtain the whole work. There are more straightforward means of gaining an insight into seventeenth century reformed theology than this, though this does have the great advantage of authenticity, and would act as a source in itself.

EDWARD J MALCOLM
Reading

SAMUEL RUTHERFORD A new biography of the man and his ministry
Kingsley G. Rendell
Fearn: Christian Focus 2003 192pp £7.99pb ISBN: 1-85792-262-X

This book is a short introduction to the life and times of Samuel Rutherford, one of the giants of Scottish Presbyterianism in the early seventeenth century and a leading divine at the Westminster Assembly. Those unfamiliar with the complexities of this period could not do better than to begin with the late Professor Rendell's account, which gives a lucid exposition of the many

different religious and political currents which were at work in Rutherford's lifetime and against which he was often forced to struggle.

Rutherford was an uncompromising Presbyterian in church affairs, though he was able to see good in many of those who differed from him on this point. As Professor Rendell reminds us, many of the divisions in the seventeenth century church were more political than spiritual, and Rutherford, for all his involvement in politics, was a spiritual man at heart. This comes out most clearly in his letters, which have deservedly become a classic of spiritual writing and remain the best way to get the measure of the man. Professor Rendell mentions Rutherford's sermons and books, but does not go into them in depth. Nevertheless, he gives the beginner a taste for what the field has to offer, and students in particular will find him a reliable guide to a somewhat forbidding period in church history.

GERALD BRAY
Cambridge

THE LEGACY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS. American religion and the Evangelical tradition

D. G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, Stephen J. Nichols, editors

Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003 \$21.99 255pp ISBN: 0-8010-2622-9

2003 saw the tercentenary of the birth of Jonathan Edwards, a landmark in American ecclesiastical history which was celebrated by the publication of George Marsden's massive biography, along with a number of lesser works which deal with one aspect or another of Edwards' thought. Among these is this interesting collection of papers, originally delivered at a conference held in October, 2001. Subdivided into three main sections, the book covers Edwards' 'vision', his theology, his legacy, with a fourth section devoted to contemporary historiography.

It is unusual to find a book which deals specifically with its subject's 'vision', but this is a welcome and significant touch in the case of Jonathan Edwards. Edwards clearly came from the Reformed theological stable, but he lived at a time of ferment within the erstwhile Puritan camp, and he cannot be pinned down as easily as some might wish. He was solidly orthodox in his own

understanding of the Reformed tradition, and did battle against the deists of his time, but he was also open to revivalist influences which subtly changed his perspective. Towards the end of his life, it seems that he was preparing to write a comprehensive history of redemption—of God’s saving acts in the universe—which would take him beyond what was then generally understood as ‘theology’ and ‘history’, and lead to a higher synthesis of both. The work never materialised, but the fact that Edwards thought in cosmic terms is important for our understanding, especially as we live in an academic atmosphere which seems to be hopelessly reductionist by Edwardsian standards.

The theological section dissects Edwards’ understanding of the Reformed tradition, and shows us clearly how Edwards applied it to the circumstances of his own time. Samuel Storms examines the key issue of predestination, and shows how Edwards would have countered the so-called ‘open theism’ of our own time as being ultimately a denial of God’s power to save. There is also a most interesting paper by Gerald McDermott, examining the concept of a national covenant and the way in which Edwards understood this. Like many others before and since his time, he believed that the new Englanders had been specially blessed by God, in what amounted to a national covenant with them, but this did not make him complacent about the nation’s failings. On the contrary, if New England was in some sense a new Israel, it had also inherited all of ancient Israel’s failings, and was liable to suffer the same consequences in the end. McDermott thus rescues Edwards from the charge of national chauvinism in a way which carries an implicit rebuke to those of his spiritual descendants who persist in thinking that America is a chosen nation, but fail to see what this means in terms of national apostasy. The section on Edwards’ legacy shows how it is possible for many different kinds of American Evangelicals to claim Edwards as part of their patrimony, since he held together different strands which have since separated—at least to some degree. D. G. Hart asks us whether Edwards, if he were alive today, would be teaching at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids or at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois, since there is something in him of all three—the doctrinally orthodox, the culturally sensitive, and the pietistically spiritual. Dr. Hart has probably caricatured these modern institutions, but if an answer has to be given to such a question, it may well be that Edwards would now be teaching at Princeton (where he died) or at Yale (where his memory is preserved). He would certainly be on the

conservative end of the spectrum in both those places, but probably he would appreciate the intellectual freedom and breadth of perspective which they offer, in a way that more explicitly evangelical seminaries fail to achieve. The book ends with an assessment of the recent literature on Edwards, which is of great help, particularly to students and scholars in other fields who simply cannot keep abreast of the latest developments. All in all, this is a stimulating contribution to what promises to be a lively, ongoing discussion of a man who is perhaps only now coming to be appreciated for the seminal thinker and creative theologian that he was.

GERALD BRAY
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1 CORINTHIANS (New International Biblical Commentary)

Marion L. Soards

Carlisle: Paternoster, 1999 xv + 390 pp £8-99 pb ISBN 0-85364-661-9

Marion Soards is Professor of New Testament Studies at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He is also the author of several other books on Luke and Paul. This commentary treats 1 Corinthians in five sections according to theme: the gospel and wisdom (1–4); matters in the everyday life of the Corinthian church (5–10); the need for orderly worship (11–14); the truth of the resurrection (15) and a concluding paranesis (16). The introduction deals with the normal background matters (with the omission of a consideration of gnosticism in the section on the background to Paul's thought) before the text is examined in 54 smaller sections. As is usual in this series, an exposition of each section is followed by additional notes. The notes here are particularly good at dealing with the text-critical questions which arise from a study of the text, and give some helpful bibliographical details.

Soards raises many questions in the body of the commentary which he does not always answer. This is good in that it stimulates the reader to think the issues through themselves, but may be frustrating for some who are looking for answers rather than more questions. On the difficult 14:34–36 (the prohibition on women speaking in the assembly) several options are outlined without a final decision being made on either the text-critical or interpretative issues. His

conclusion that ‘the arguments in verses 33b, 34-35, and verse 36 are—whatever they mean—based purely on custom and the law, not on revelation or a word of the Lord’ may be frustrating for some, but Soards finds it ‘astounding’ that one reading of ‘these difficult enigmatic verses, coupled with one reading of 1 Timothy 2, became the church’s norm’ (pp. 307-308). Sadly, his interpretation of *kephale* as ‘source’ in chapter 11 does not interact with Wayne Grudem’s detailed work on this issue.

1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5 is seen as crucial for the understanding both of the letter itself and of Paul’s theology generally. There are also some good observations on the Jerusalem Collection in chapter 16. Chapter 13 is seen as something of an excursus, and the integration of this chapter with the rest of the letter could have been brought out more clearly. One slight annoyance was the ‘Armenians’ (p. 207) should really be called Arminians! Overall, however, this is an interesting commentary on 1 Corinthians which interacts with much of the best scholarship on the letter without being unnecessarily constrained by it. This interaction would be its strongest point in a battle with Paul Barnett’s similarly-sized commentary for a place on the shelf next to Fee or another more weighty offering.

LEE GATISS
Barton Seagrave

RICHARD HOOKER AND REFORMED THEOLOGY

A study of reason, will and grace

Nigel Voak

Oxford: University Press, 2003 348pp. hb £50 ISBN: 0-19-926039-7

Among the lesser figures of the Reformation, few have been the subject of such on-going investigation as Richard Hooker (d. 1600). Although he was an obscure and difficult theologian, he is widely hailed as the true founder of Anglicanism, because he supposedly created a viable *via media* between Rome and Geneva. In the nineteenth century he was claimed by the Anglo-Catholics as their great forbear, and this remained the public perception of his achievement until quite recently. On the other hand, there has also been a counter tendency, which has held Hooker up as a standard Reformed theologian, who differed from the Puritans on forms and tactics, but seldom (if ever) on basic beliefs. Widely held in the seventeenth century, this view has

enjoyed a revival in recent years, thanks mainly to the work of Torrance Kirby and Nigel Atkinson.

Nigel Voak's thesis is that it is time for the balance to be redressed once more, away from the Reformed position to something closer to a *via media*, even if we cannot accept that Hooker was an Arminian in the Laudian sense or the ancestor of Anglo-Catholicism. Dr. Voak relies very heavily on what he calls the 'later works' of Hooker, which are basically a series of three tracts now known as the Dublin Fragments, because they are extant in Trinity College, Dublin, along with a series of jottings which he made in preparation for a detailed answer to the charge formally laid against him, that in his Laws he had contradicted some of the Thirty-nine Articles.

Proving a thesis of this kind is a challenging proposition, and Dr. Voak tells us quite candidly that there is a great deal which he has had to omit or at least simplify. For example, there is no extended discussion of either justification or predestination, and Hooker's sources are reduced (for practical purposes) to Calvin and Aquinas, with only occasional references to others. Dr. Voak is aware, of course, that the true picture is much more complicated than that, but insists that Calvin and Aquinas are sufficiently representative of their respective traditions to serve as general sources for Hooker's own ideas. It is difficult not to sympathize with Dr. Voak, who was faced with mountains of intractable material which he had to reduce to some kind of order, but it must also be said that, thanks to his selection process, his conclusions are too schematic and tend to be loaded in the direction in which he wants to take his argument. To say, as Dr. Voak does, that Hooker differed from Calvin on the question of the relationship between Scripture, the Holy Spirit and reason, on the ground that Hooker had a higher opinion of the last of these than Calvin did, is to ignore the fact that Calvin died in 1564 and did not have to face the kind of irrational puritanism which was rearing its head in England in the 1580s. Quite possibly, if he had lived to see it, Calvin too would have spoken up in favour of 'reason', if by this is meant the logical outworking of the Scriptural principle in the light of experience and common sense.

What is particularly lacking in Dr. Voak's argument is the sense that there was a lively theological debate among Reformed theologians, including Arminius (who was alive and well, and teaching during Hooker's lifetime), about the

precise meaning of grace and everything that went with it. That Hooker is often obscure on this subject need not surprise us; he was trying to pick his way through a potential minefield and arrive at a balanced sense of the truth. To suppose, as Dr. Voak does, that he used puritanism as a foil to attack Reformed theology in general, is taking things too far. As Dr. Voak himself points out, there are many fundamental doctrines on which Hooker is plainly and uncompromisingly Reformed—so much so, in fact, that he cannot readily be classified in any other theological camp. That he leaned in the direction of medieval scholasticism need not surprise us, since that was a fairly common tendency at the time, especially on the Continent. The difficult political situation created by puritanism may well have driven him further in a Catholic direction than he might otherwise have gone, but this should be understood as a swing of the pendulum characteristic of reactionary writers in general, and not as some kind of secret plot against Calvinism. Here, more comparisons with Hooker's contemporaries, especially those outside England (and so untouched by puritanism), would have been extremely helpful.

No doubt Dr. Voak's study will provoke rebuttals of various kinds from the other side and keep the Hooker industry going for some time to come. This book will be an important link in the chain of Hooker studies, but the reader comes away from it with the feeling that a definitive synthesis of Hooker's thought is still some way off, and that if one ever appears, it will swing back in the direction of Kirby and Atkinson, even if it does not go all the way with them either.

GERALD BRAY
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