

Another difference is in the use of *peshar* interpretation. This type of interpretation is limited exclusively to Jesus and his immediate disciples. These saw in Jesus Christ the great goal to which the OT pointed and thus sought to show the correlations between him and the OT. This type of exegesis began with Jesus himself, and the disciples simply developed it further. But this approach is not characteristic of the material attributed to those outside of this group. Paul, for example, has closer affinity to the rabbinical modes of interpretation.

The question that inevitably arises in exegetical and hermeneutical questions is, How does this relate to us? Are we obliged to follow the pattern of exegesis used in the NT? Longenecker goes into this question at the end of his book. His answer unfortunately is too brief. He answers "No" and "Yes." "Where that exegesis is based upon a revelatory stance, where it evidences itself to be merely cultural, or where it shows itself to be circumstantial or *ad hominem* in nature, 'No.' Where, however, it treats the Old Testament in more literal fashion, following the course of what we speak of today as historico-grammatical exegesis, 'Yes.' Our commitment as Christians is to the reproduction of the apostolic faith and doctrine, and not necessarily to the specific apostolic exegetical practices" (p. 219).

He also leaves too many questions unanswered. Does the matter of relevant exegetical practice for us include the exegetical practice of Jesus Christ, since the apostles based their practice on his? Is there any validity to the *peshar* approach in Scripture, or is it the same as the Qumranic use? Without a fuller elaboration of exactly what the author means, it would have been better if this topic had not been treated at all.

This does not, of course, invalidate the basic structure of the work, even though one does not agree with every point made.

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McHugh, John. *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974. xlvii + 510 pp. \$12.50.

Modern Roman Catholic Christology has been increasingly concerned with the human life of Jesus. Since the close of Vatican II, Catholic writers have not hesitated to tackle primary and central problems such as the miracles of Jesus or his claim to be the Messiah and the Son of God. Using the tools of modern biblical scholarship to lay bare the roots of the Marian tradition, John McHugh has contributed to this reexamination a detailed study of *The Mother of Jesus in the New Testament*.

The prominence of Marian doctrine in Catholic theology and the widespread uneasiness felt over attacks on the historical value of the Infancy Narratives must have recommended this topic. Besides, a book about Mary in the NT does have real interest for those who wonder how a Catholic can accept the modern methods of biblical criticism and still retain full confidence in the teaching of his church concerning the Virgin Mary.

The book is divided into three main parts: "Mother of the Saviour" (pp. 3-153) analyzes the sources, the literary form and the theology of the first

two chapters of the Gospel of Luke. "Virgin and Mother" (pp. 157-347), by far the longest examines more particularly the NT witness to the virginity of Mary, its origins, development, and religious significance. This section concludes that Christians have "every reason for accepting . . . the historicity of the virginal conception" (p. 329). Finally, "Mother of the Word Incarnate" (pp. 351-432) studies Mary's role in Johannine theology, where she is essentially "the prototype and exemplar of faith" (p. 403).

McHugh addresses himself to the nonspecialist who wants to know where the consensus of Catholic scholarship on Marian doctrine lies. He also addresses the scholars for whom most of the footnotes and 13 Detached Notes (pp. 433-471) are intended. The pace set is leisurely. The chapters are short, independent units rarely more than 15 pages long, allowing one to select and focus on those topics he finds most attractive. I personally found the discussion on the birth of Jesus, the literary form of Lk 1:2, and the brothers of Jesus to be of special interest.

As a whole, the book reveals moderate attitudes of mind. McHugh can show that the Lucan infancy is "midrash" (pp. 11ff, 22), but more specifically "a Christian meditation on the birth of Jesus, in which the author expounds in quasi-midrashic form the message for which all Israel had waited so long. . ." (p. 36). In other words, fact and event are never far below the surface of the narrative. Thus, while the author regards the annunciation narrative as "a theological composition written long afterwards," and although he considers the mystical experience it depicts and the figure of the angel Gabriel a mere "literary convention" (pp. 192, 128-130), it does not follow that this episode should be dismissed as "unhistorical." The same is true of the story of the virginal conception of Jesus to whose historicity McHugh devotes five chapters (pp. 278-329). The author considers that the pure legend of these narratives can be largely discounted because, for one thing, the basic factual content came originally from Mary herself (p. 149).

But it is precisely the invariable way in which McHugh's exegesis never fails to come firmly down on the side of later Catholic doctrine that gives rise to the question as to whether he has the relationship between his exegetical task and the discipline of doctrinal history quite right. It is somewhat disconcerting when the typical argument appears to run as follows: Since the gospel narrative can be shown to be a Christian midrash, "The interpreter is therefore justified in looking for a deeper message beneath the apparently simple narrative" (p. 20). On this basis, the exegete finds himself able to show that the finished construction, as currently understood, is already somehow there in his material. But then what are we to make of the immaculate conception and the bodily assumption of Mary? These doctrines can hardly be explained along these lines, and, not surprisingly, McHugh has little to say about them. It seems as though all too frequently the texts are being solicited to come up with useful doctrinal information which, on the basis of a strictly exegetical or historical inquiry, they would or could not impart.

So this book has its limitations. All the same, it deserves to be widely read. It will stand as a landmark in English-speaking circles, especially as it establishes a basis for discussion of the theological developments that followed the NT period in an area where the Catholic and Orthodox tradi-

tion is probably more widely divided from the Reformed than in any other in the whole field of Christian doctrine and devotion.

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Oosterwal, Gottfried. *Modern Messianic Movements As a Theological and Missionary Challenge*. Elkhart, Ind.: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1973. 55 pp. Paperback, \$1.00.

The Institute of Mennonite studies has begun publication of a series of missionary studies of which this book by Oosterwal is the second. The author, who by academic training and field study of "cargo cults" in Southeast Asia is well equipped for the task to which he has set himself, adds another work to the increasing number of books and articles on religious cultic movements that have appeared since Bishop Sundkler's classic *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (1948). The sympathetic attitude that Oosterwal takes toward the "messianic movements" says something about the distance covered by missiology since Sundkler's caution: "The syncretistic sect becomes the bridge over which Africans are brought back to heathendom" (one suspects that Sundkler himself would have reflected differently today). The attitude now is less cautious, more open, and, the reviewer thinks, probably more honest toward these movements, displaying a greater willingness to listen to what they are trying to say to the Christian churches.

The essay before us is divided into four parts, the first of which asks a great number of far-reaching questions about the eschatological motif in these movements, the ground of their "revelation" and the role of their "prophets," the extent to which so-called "parallels" to Christianity are in fact parallels and not distortions of or reactions against the Christian hope.

From where do they get their vitality, and what can Christianity learn from them? The questions are such that one could not possibly expect the next 35 pages to answer them. Nor do they entirely do so. But then, that is not necessary in order to legitimize the raising of the questions. The dynamics of the "messianic movements" are so intense, and the change from one such movement to another so considerable, that it would be difficult to find answers with any degree of universality. It is the *questions* that must be kept sharply in focus, and Oosterwal does keep them so in an admirable way in this study.

Oosterwal finds the eschatology (what he calls the "creative center") of these movements particularly intriguing. Both their widely held belief that the end will come suddenly and that it will come in our days, and, therefore, that evil habits of life that defile the body (smoking, drinking, and eating of some foods, e.g., pork) are to be abandoned, must have had a familiar ring to the author's ear. In being served this cross-section of a "common" eschatology, the reader cannot but ask questions about commonness in revelation and norms for verifying that commonness. While the author is not forthright on this point, he manages, nevertheless, to leave his reader under the impression that there is a distinct continuity in revelation between the