

the purpose of the two categories is not as clear within Scripture as it is in the relation between Scripture and later tradition.

I agree with Beegle that an everlasting suspension of judgment is not a satisfactory answer to some apparent problems posed by certain textual anomalies. However, there is something to be said for the clear realization that human conclusions based on human perception of data are intrinsically tentative.

As controversial as it once may have seemed, Beegle's book is an important contribution to the current discussion of inspiration in many circles. Its message will doubtless speak to many students of the Bible who have had difficulty squaring facts as they perceive them with the presupposition of an inerrant biblical record. His presentation of the nature of God's revelation will eventually constrain thoughtful persons to examine not just the inductive biblical evidence regarding inspiration, but ultimately their fundamental presuppositional stances concerning God's nature and his methods of self-disclosure. For us, often, the proper question is less "How *did* God reveal himself?" than "What method of self-revelation will my presuppositions sanction for God's use?"

Beegle rightly contends that while God could have totally preserved his revelation from error at every stage, by choosing fallible human media he in fact accepted the liabilities inherent in those instruments. God's purposes are presumably served by his choices. In this connection, Beegle's stress on the fact that Scripture does not specifically claim inerrancy for itself is significant. He properly disdains a doctrine of inspiration whose premises would permit apparent problems in the Bible to force the Christian back to unavailable autographs for a false religious security.

Berrien Springs, Mich.

LARRY MITCHEL

Berkouwer, Gerrit C. *Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975. 377 pp. \$8.95.

Thirteenth in the widely hailed series of *Studies in Dogmatics* by Amsterdam theologian Gerrit C. Berkouwer, this volume discusses the doctrine of Scripture with the overall scope and penetrating insight into theological issues that readers of earlier volumes have come to expect. It is a Reformed Christian doctrine of Scripture which the author articulates in discussion with a lengthy roster of noted thinkers from times past and present. Behind these theologians and systems stand the creeds and confessions; behind them the Bible itself, looming large as usual in Berkouwer's concern as a vital stream of revealed truth which gives theology its meaning.

As edited as well as translated by Jack B. Rogers, the book addresses itself essentially to non-specialists. The material of the original two-volume work, *De Heilige Schrift*, has been decreased by approximately one third. Berkouwer's central message regarding the nature and authority of Holy Scripture comes out clearly. The first four chapters tend to lay the groundwork for the contemporary interest in the authority and interpretation of the Bible. They

treat successively Scripture and the certainty of faith; the inner witness of the Spirit to the believer's acceptance of the written Word; the rise and meaning of the idea of a normative *canon* of Scripture in the Christian Church; and the interpretation of Scripture in accordance with its divine intent. The remaining nine chapters cope with issues linked to the confession that Scripture is "God-breathed," among others the nature of inspiration, historical relatedness and infallibility, the inscripturation phenomenon, and the perspicuity, sufficiency and reliability of the Bible. "Holy Scripture and Preaching" precedes a final chapter where the Dutch theologian suggests guidelines to a scientific study of the Bible.

What we have here is a classic Reformed theology considered in a manner which is entirely up to date. For myself I found the discussion of the central place which the canonical aspect of Scriptures has been given in the Christian church, and of the manner in which the *human* instrument functioned in the God-breathed Scripture, to be of special interest. Others will no doubt find themselves looking to different chapters for explanation of some of the problems related to the issue of biblical authority.

One could wish, however, that more attention had been given to such developments in current Roman Catholic theology as the transition from a mechanical to a more "organic" understanding of the phenomenon of inspiration, and of its implications for Catholic exegesis. It would have been helpful, too, if Berkouwer had given more extensive treatment to the difficult issue as to whether the perspicuity-clarity element of Scripture is likely to slip essentially away from us as we find ourselves confronted with new questions and new problems. Has the author really answered the question by declaring that it depends essentially on one's definition of perspicuity (p. 297)?

In its eagerness to maintain Scripture's divinity, fundamentalism has usually not realized the significance of the Bible's human aspect. It is Berkouwer's merit to try to come to grips with the problem of whether attention to the human character of the Bible might not be of great importance for its correct understanding. His volume will doubtless stand for years as one of the most complete evangelical defenses of the full authority of the Bible, and help to carry the evangelical discussion on inspiration to a higher level.

Andrews University

RAOUL DEDEREN

Brueggemann, Walter, and Wolff, Hans Walter. *The Vitality of Old Testament Traditions*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1975. 155 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

This book is a collection of seven articles—three by Hans Walter Wolff and four by Walter Brueggemann. It is basically a theological analysis of the Pentateuchal traditions with reference to their present kerygmatic significance.

Brueggemann's introductory chapter reviews the history of Pentateuchal study with particular emphasis given to the work of four individuals: Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), Hermann Gunkel (1862-1932), William Foxwell Albright (1891-1971), and Gerhard von Rad (1901-1971). The chief contribution