

Morris, Leon. *Apocalyptic*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974. 105 pp. Paperback, \$1.95.

It is always a welcome occasion when a useful tool is updated and reprinted. This new edition of Morris's handy little work on ancient apocalyptic literature is no exception. The considerable strength (and some weakness) mentioned in my review of the original edition of 1972 still remains (see *AUSS* 12 [1974]: 150).

Actually, few changes have been made in the original text other than some reorganization of the material, plus the addition of a new chapter: "Apocalyptic and the Old Testament" (pp. 75-84). This chapter fills a lacuna, and aptly treats Daniel, Isa 24-27, Ezek 38-39, Joel, and Zech 9-14. Morris takes account of differing opinions as to whether or not the aforementioned materials are truly apocalyptic, and he opts for a position which seems to place them as being somewhat intermediary between full-fledged Jewish apocalyptic and the earlier OT prophetic and wisdom literature. One might suspect that had Paul D. Hanson's recent extensive study *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia, 1975) been available to Morris, he would have found it useful for further development of his thesis; but it does seem strange that in this new chapter he has failed to mention Hanson's earlier studies that were available to him—especially the one in *Int* 25 (1971):454-479, from which he has quoted in another context (on p. 66 in both editions). Perhaps even more puzzling is the fact that Morris uses Hanson in that other context for the purpose of characterizing the historical perspective of apocalyptic as illustrated in *Daniel* (!), whereas in this new chapter Morris seems confident that Daniel's "essence" is other than apocalyptic (see pp. 80-81)!

Like its forerunner, this enlarged edition of *Apocalyptic* is indeed a useful compendium. The addition of a bibliography (pp. 102-105), lacking in the first edition, enhances further the value of the present publication. And happily, the new book comes at no increase in price!

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KENNETH A. STRAND

Perrin, Norman. *Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom: Symbol and Metaphor in New Testament Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976. 225 pp. \$10.95.

The author focuses on two major interrelated aspects of the teaching of Jesus—the kingdom of God and the parables. The whole message of Jesus is directed to the kingdom, and the major theme of the parables is the kingdom. In this work the author is not interested in the historical study of these *per se* but concentrates rather on the hermeneutical understanding of kingdom and parable. For this the method he employs is chiefly literary criticism.

Understanding myth as a complex of stories which men regard as "demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life" (p. 22) and symbol as "a relatively stable and repeatable element of perceptual experience, standing for some larger meaning or set of meanings which cannot be given, or not fully given, in perceptual experience itself" (p. 29),

Perrin interprets the kingdom of God as a symbol which evokes the myth of a God who is creator, sustainer, and redeemer. A symbol can have a one-to-one relationship to what it represents (a steno-symbol), or it can have a set of meanings which singly or together cannot exhaust its meaning (tensive symbol). Previous interpretations of the kingdom understood it as a conception or steno-symbol representing only one meaning, but a study of Jesus' statement on the kingdom shows that it should be understood as a tensive symbol, according to Perrin. As such, no one apprehension of the reality it represents exhausts its meaning. In Jesus' teachings of the kingdom, Perrin sees a "pattern which has as its center the claim to mediate an experience of God as king, an experience of such an order that it brings [the] world to an end" (p. 54).

The second half of the book presents a history of parable interpretation dealing mainly with Jeremias, the representatives of the new hermeneutics, and the Americans Funk, Crossan, and Via, who represent the new emphasis on literary criticism. Perrin puts most of his emphasis on the last group. The inspiration in looking at the NT on the basis of literary criticism comes from Amos Wilder, who is at home both in the Bible and the world of literature. From the standpoint of hermeneutics, Perrin thinks that Robert Funk has made an important breakthrough in seeing a parable as a metaphor rather than a simile. The difference between *like* and *is* Funk sees as more than a grammatical distinction—one of essential function. "In a simile 'the less known is clarified by the better known,' but in a metaphor 'two discrete and not entirely comparable elements' are juxtaposed, and this juxtaposition 'produces an impact upon the imagination and induces a vision of that which cannot be conveyed by prosaic or discursive speech'" (p. 135). The parables as metaphors are creative of meaning; they induce imagination with its potential for new meaning depending on how the hearer hears. The hearer then becomes an important element in the understanding of the parable. Although the original meaning is important, "the interpreter of the parables must always be aware of the potentiality for new meaning; reduction of the meaning of the parable to a single idea, moral, eschatological, or Christological is therefore wrong" (p. 137).

Funk saw the parable as metaphor; Via's contribution was to discuss the parable from the point of view of an extended metaphor or narrative and to analyze it as a story with plot, protagonist, and recognition scene. However, his conclusions from the standpoint of meaning do not advance much beyond Jülicher. Crossan sees the parables as poetic metaphors which if seen as such can make an impact upon us by opening up a new world and unforeseen possibilities (*advent*), by reversing our entire past (*reversal*), and by leading to *action* in living this new way.

The SBL Parables Seminar attempted to use structuralism as a new way of understanding parables, but this approach did not prove fruitful.

The reviewer can agree that the kingdom is a tensive symbol, but feels that Perrin has left the meaning too vague and subjective. The kingdom as present and future can be considered as a tensive symbol. It can be allowed that the kingdom can have other meanings, but surely the traditional understanding need not be given up.

It is implied that a plurality of meanings is possible. I doubt whether we can allow uncontrolled imagination to run wild with new meanings. While

new applications of the meaning of a parable are possible, new meanings, e.g. of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, are difficult to come by except through new approaches and methods which may not be acceptable.

It seems to me that in understanding the parable as metaphor there is great gain, but something is lost in the meaning of words when it is stated that even if it is described in a form of a simile it is a metaphor (p. 196). It is claimed that the function rather than the form is determinative. If this is true, then it cannot be limited to the parable itself. Many other forms of literature open up new potentialities of meaning.

This detailed historical survey of modern investigations of the kingdom and the parables is to be applauded, especially since the one who directs us in the survey is one who has been intimately connected with their discussion. It is a delight to read Perrin because of his expertise and incisiveness in laying bare the issues. He is very frank in indicating where he differs from the writer under discussion and even where he feels that he himself was in error previously. The book shows some evidence of having been written in haste and suffers in some places from lack of careful organization.

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SAKAE KUBO

Roetzel, Calvin J. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1975. viii + 114 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

The aim of the book is to provide the beginning student with information relative to the background and setting of Paul's epistles, with particular emphasis given to the conversational character and tone of the letters. The discussion, insofar as it has to do with specific letters, is confined to those epistles "whose authenticity is not seriously questioned" (p. 82), namely, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, the Corinthian correspondence, Galatians, Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. Unfortunately, the author does not review the arguments traditionally advanced against the Pauline authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles. A brief summary of the evidence would have been helpful to the beginner (see, for example, William G. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973], pp. 69-70).

In his introduction, Roetzel relates in capsule form and in a somewhat amusing way "contrary impressions" individuals have had of Paul. The main part of the book is divided into six chapters which treat respectively the social and cultural background of Paul and of his readers (pp. 6-16), the literary form and structure of the epistles (pp. 17-28), the traditions behind the letters (pp. 29-37), the conversational nature of Paul's writings (pp. 38-68), Paul's use of mythological language (pp. 69-80), and basic issues which governed the course of Pauline studies from the second century of the Christian era to the present (pp. 81-102).

The central questions treated in an introduction are in the main dealt with in a concise and a nontechnical way. There are a few instances, however, where the author has hedged in discussing issues of a more complex nature, and consequently has left the reader somewhat bewildered. Specifically I have in mind chap. 5, "Paul and His Myths." Roetzel makes a distinction between