

theological undergirding of SDA church polity and the grass-roots promotion of it were predominantly the work of White.

White drew his principles of church government from scripture, especially the NT. Against opponents who held that "every detail of church order" must have an exact NT precedent, he countered that "all means, which according to sound judgment, will advance the cause of truth, and are not forbidden by plain scripture declarations, should be employed" (pp. 188, 268).

Consequently, SDA church polity developed on two basic principles: a clear sense of mission was wedded to pragmatic methodology. The benefits of structural and doctrinal unity coupled with "numerous conversions to the faith" were to White sufficient evidence that the organization he had promoted was a "perfect success" (pp. 173, 171).

Approximately two-thirds of Mustard's work deals with historical developments. The final one-third examines theological and philosophical factors that influenced the emerging SDA ecclesiology. Among other topics, SDA polity is compared with that of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists.

Mustard's research is readable, well documented, sprinkled with quotables from James White, and appears to be exhaustive for the period under study. In addition to his main topics, Mustard also deals significantly with related issues, such as the "shut door," the evolution of the doctrine of ministry and church officers, and the comparison of the effective centralization of authority in 1863 with the exercise of "kingly power" which developed in the denomination's General Conference during the 1890s.

Another recent dissertation, soon to be published, extends the work of Mustard by considering the years 1888-1903. Barry Oliver ("Principles for Reorganization of the Seventh-day Adventist Administrative Structure, 1888-1903: Implications for an International Church," Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1989) agrees with Mustard that SDA church polity has historically been structured on the twin bases of mission and pragmatism, but argues the need for a more thoroughly theological basis for church administrative structure.

Both studies represent careful historical analysis and will be useful to pastors, church administrators, and others interested in SDA church history.

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Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987. liii + 353 pp. \$24.95.

This volume may be classified as a middle-of-the-road conservative commentary on Genesis, well informed by up-to-date studies in literary

criticism, rhetorical criticism, and comparative Ancient Near Eastern literature. As such, it is one of the best works currently available on Genesis. The division at chapter 15 is somewhat curious, in that most multi-volume works on Genesis divide the book before the beginning of the Abraham cycle in chapter 12 or after its ending at chapter 26. The text follows the usual Word Commentary format. The introductory sections cover especially the old and new literary criticism, theology, and comparative Ancient Near Eastern materials. The bibliographies are comprehensive, compact, and current.

In his review of the older literary criticism, Wenham compares and contrasts the documentary, supplementary, and fragmentary hypotheses for the development of Genesis and the Pentateuch. The documentary hypothesis, advocated especially by Wellhausen in the last century, deals with a series of fairly extensive documents or sources (JEDP), which were successively combined and edited together. The supplementary hypothesis presents one major source to which various accretions were added. The fragmentary hypothesis holds that Genesis originally came from a large number of smaller fragments of tradition (as opposed to the larger JEDP sources) that were successively edited together. While the documentary view prevailed for a long time, literary critics have been moving (especially since 1970) in the direction of the supplementary and especially the fragmentary views. Under the influence of this shift, the role of J in Genesis has expanded, and the roles of E and P have shrunk.

The new literary criticism has been more interested in viewing the stories of Genesis as literature in their own right, rather than dissecting out their sources. This approach treats the patriarchal stories more as holistic narratives with particular literary techniques, and it traces the development of themes through the Pentateuch. Studies undertaken from this point of view have concentrated upon the text in its final form and are thus synchronic, while the older literary criticism may be classified as more diachronic. While the study of Genesis from the standpoint of the older literary criticism continues, greater emphasis is currently being placed upon approaching it from the standpoint of these newer techniques. Tension between these two approaches and ferment within each of these schools of thought have led to the situation which Wenham has characterized by paraphrasing Judges: "There is no king in OT scholarship. Everyone is doing what is right in his own eyes!" (p. xxxv).

Given this current state of affairs, Wenham urges caution in trying to dissect out the sources of Genesis. His own view tends in the direction of the supplementary hypothesis. He discards E completely, but still allows for P along with J. However, he dates P much earlier than it previously has been dated. This applies especially to Gen 1-11, for which there are ancient Near Eastern parallels, but it can also be seen to a lesser extent in the patriarchal stories.

On specific passages, Wenham sees the first creation account as concluding at 2:3, not 2:4a, as is commonly assumed; and he notes the chiasmic inclusio which is created in this way. He also notes that the account of the fourth day is constructed chiasmically. Gen 1 is not poetry, but it is not normal narrative prose either; rather, it is a particularly exalted style of prose that approaches poetry. As such, it makes a fitting introduction to Genesis, the Pentateuch, and the Bible as a whole. Wenham examines the four main ways in which Gen 1:1 has been translated and interpreted and concludes that it serves as a main clause describing the first act of creation. *Ruah ʾelohim* is translated as “Wind of God” in v. 2, and this is seen as a “concrete and vivid image of the Spirit of God” (p. 17).

Wenham emphasizes a number of points about the dating formula used repeatedly in Gen 1 which indicate that it refers to 24-hour periods. He also cites five areas that G. F. Hasel has noted in Gen 1 that appear to attack rival cosmologies of the ancient world. The commentary avoids getting involved in the Bible-versus-science debate and wisely, for commentary purposes, sticks to exegesis and theology.

Wenham has been one of the leading proponents of the pallistrophe or chiasmic interpretation of the literary structure of the Flood story in Gen 6-9 (*VT* 28 [1978]: 336-348). He presents that position again here. The position advocated in this commentary has already come in for some criticism (Emerton in *VT* 38 [1988]: 6-15), but it appears that Wenham has the better of the argument. This literary structure has, of course, strong implications for literary criticism. If accurate, then separate strands of J and P cannot be dissected out from such an integrated narrative. The Atrahasis Epic is quoted extensively as a parallel to the biblical flood story. Wenham takes a position between what he describes as the minimalist and the maximalist positions in terms of what the biblical writer knew of the Babylonian account. Contrasts between the two stories are spelled out in detail.

An interesting chiasmic structure has been identified in the Tower of Babel story, with the statement “the Lord came down” located at the center of the story. As for the variant figures for the ages of the post-diluvians in Gen 11, Wenham favors the MT over the LXX and SamPent as providing the most original data.

Wenham concurs with the majority of scholars in seeing the migration of Abraham in Gen 12 as a test of faith. Chapter 12 is one of the most important in Genesis because it looks back to the primeval history, it introduces the story of Abraham, and it also looks forward to the later patriarchal history and the history of Israel down into the Davidic monarchy. Wenham’s location for Sodom and Gomorrah along the southeastern shore of the Dead Sea is up to date archaeologically. The archaic nature and historicity of the account of the warfare in Gen 14 are defended. On Abraham’s faith being counted to him for righteousness in 15:6,

Wenham observes: "Here, however, faith counts for righteousness: it is the response of believing obedience to the word of God, not righteous deeds, that counted for righteousness. To be sure, such faith, when genuine, issues in righteous deeds, but that is not what the text says: faith counts for (instead of) righteousness" (p. 335).

Wenham's commentary is a well-done study of the first portion of Genesis. While one would not necessarily endorse all of the opinions reviewed above, it can safely be said that they are carefully thought out in a conservative context and judiciously presented, as are the rest of the materials in this volume. It is also a book that can bring both pastors and scholars up to date on current discussions about the text of Genesis. It is recommended as very useful for both groups.

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