

Christianity. Also breaking down the image of a monolithic subculture is Albert J. Raboteau's discussion of diversity within the black church.

That this sense of the pluralistic nature of both American culture and Christianity can lead to greater self-understanding appears in Gordon Tucker's study of Jewish-Christian relations. He argues that Christian theologians increasingly are recognizing "that the Church must understand itself in its Jewish context, that Christology cannot ignore the Jewishness of Jesus" (p. 152). From a different context, Kasuke Koyama points out that third-world Christians are increasingly asking how the Christian church in America is related to an American nation that they often find oppressive.

The relation of culture and religion also appears in the essays on the disciplines. Glenn T. Miller's examination of seminary education is particularly insightful. He argues that after William Adams Brown and Mark A. May published *The Education of American Ministers* in 1934, seminaries increasingly came to see themselves as professional schools similar to those of law and medicine. The ministry, correspondingly, developed into a "helping profession," alongside psychology and social work. The end result, Miller concludes, was that seminaries lost their position of intellectual leadership and fell behind society in addressing social issues.

Although all of the essays address history, not all are historically organized. William Bean Kennedy's examination of religious education, Wayne Proudfoot's discussion of religion and science, and Barbara Brown Zikmund's study of women and the churches are organized around themes or issues. This approach sometimes gives these essays an abstract quality that is not as well grounded in unique and particular facts moving through time as are those subjects examined in more conventional historical fashion.

Anyone concerned with contemporary American Christianity will find this book valuable. Because of the diversity of subjects addressed, *Altered Landscapes* should appeal to scholars in many disciplines and to church professionals who wish to better understand their occupations and the institutions within which they work.

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GARY LAND

McArthur, Harvey K., and Johnston, Robert M. *They Also Taught in Parables: Rabbinic Parables from the First Centuries of the Christian Era*. Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, Zondervan Publishing House, 1990. 221 pp. Paperback, \$10.95.

A collection of 125 rabbinic parables which can reasonably be dated before 220 c.e. forms the core of this book. Where available, the translations offered are drawn, with some revisions, from standard English editions of rabbinic texts; where these were not available, the authors have made their

own translations. The second part of the book consists of a series of critical essays in which the authors undertake a detailed form-critical analysis of the rabbinic parables offered in part 1. The three final chapters are devoted to a comparison of rabbinic parables with those in the Gospels and to suggestions as to how the rabbinic materials may be valuable for contemporary Christian teaching and preaching. An amply annotated list of significant works in English, German, French, and Hebrew on rabbinic parables completes the book.

In comparing the rabbinic parables with those in the Gospels, and Johnston correctly point out that "while the rabbinic parables seek to reinforce conventional values, those of Jesus tend to undermine or invert them. . . . It is this upsetting quality of the typical gospel parable that provides the clearest contrast with that of the rabbinic literature. Jesus the parabler was a subversive" (p. 114).

A second main issue with which the authors are concerned is the view first made popular by Adolf Jülicher (*Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*, 2 vols. [Tübingen, 1888, 1899]), on the basis of comparison with the classical Greek *parabolē*, that a biblical parable should be interpreted as making only one point. This understanding was also adopted by C. H. Dodd (*The Parables of the Kingdom* [London, 1935]) and by Joachim Jeremias (*Die Gleichnisse Jesu* [Göttingen, 1947]; English: *The Parables of Jesus* [New York, 1963]), perhaps the two most influential writers on the parables in this century. McArthur and Johnston repeatedly point out that the rabbinic parables characteristically are accompanied by interpretations that have multiple points of comparison, and that therefore the Jülicher-Dodd-Jeremias approach to the Gospel parables is untenable.

This evidence adduced from the rabbinic parables by McArthur and Johnston is significant in that it offers further confirmation of a wide consensus reached by scholars over the past forty years since Jeremias' work appeared, to the effect that Gospel parables cannot be interpreted with only one point. The one-point approach has also been rejected through comparison with the rabbinic materials by David Flusser and David Stern, and on the basis of Middle Eastern thought patterns and cultural practices by Kenneth E. Bailey. Also, from a somewhat different perspective, on the basis of literary analysis, a one-point interpretation has been seen as inadequate, and the Gospel parables have been perceived as polyvalent, evoking different meanings for different persons (e.g., Dan O. Via, John Dominic Crossan, and Paul Ricoeur).

McArthur and Johnston's work opens the door to further investigation. Not only does their material deserve to be related to the research cited above, but also to another question with which in recent years NT scholars have been concerned: how does the genre of parable evoke personal involvement in the reader/hearer? As we have noted, McArthur and Johnston make the important point that the Gospel parables turn conventional mores and

ethical attitudes around; how then do these affect the reader and effect a change in his or her own view of the world? From a literary-critical point of view, is there a dynamic in such story telling, and if so, where does it lie? Much attention has been given to this problem as it bears on the Gospel parables; in addition to the writers mentioned above as representing a literary approach, others such as Robert W. Funk (*Language, Hermeneutic and Word of God* [New York, 1966]) and Amos N. Wilder (*Jesus' Parables and the War of Myths* [Philadelphia, 1982]) are examples of scholars who have dealt in depth with this concern. Such research, then, poses questions for further comparative study of Gospel and rabbinic parables. How do the rabbinic parables "work" on the reader? Does their alignment with conventional wisdom mean that they are less effective? Or is the analysis of Gospel parables made by Christian literary critics based on a prior faith commitment, which is the real source of the dynamic, rather than on any inherent element or technique in the parable itself? David Stern, in particular, has addressed these questions in several studies (see, for instance, his remarkable essay, "Jesus' Parables from the Perspective of Rabbinic Literature," in *Parable and Story in Judaism and Christianity*, ed. Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschogrod [Mahwah, NJ, 1989], 42-80).

The book is attractively printed and remarkably free of typographical errors. One notes, however, several instances where the opinions of other scholars are cited, or quotations are given, without bibliographical references (e.g., pp. 96, 100, 111, 112, 157, 198, 199).

This is a valuable book. It fills a serious lacuna in the growing body of materials available in English for a better assessment of the thought world of the first centuries of the Common Era, and it is written without confessional bias. No other work gives as direct access to rabbinic parables. The book deserves a place in the library of every scholar, rabbi, or pastor who is concerned with ancient Palestinian Judaism—the spiritual world in which historic Judaism had its birth, in which Jesus taught, and from which the Gospels sprang.

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Neyrey, Jerome H. *Paul, In Other Words: A Cultural Reading of His Letters*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1990. 262 pp. \$19.95.

Neyrey takes as his basic premise that Paul was socialized "as a Pharisee's Pharisee" and that "in his most basic understanding of the cosmos Paul never ceased viewing the world as a Pharisee" (p. 223). As a consequence, his symbolic universe is one structured in terms of "purity," the Pharisaic code word for "order." To establish the boundaries within which