

(Jer 31:3; Deut 7:8, 13; Hos 2:19-20), which play a significant role in the semantic inquiry of grace, are missing from the picture.

Dybdahl rightly chooses an inductive approach to trace and examine the biblical idea of grace. However, this approach alone precludes the exposition of grace according to biblical books and sections. Thus, the importance of grace in the Wisdom Literature is minimized.

Other matters are not totally clear. In the beginning of the book, Dybdahl strongly argues against progressive revelation (14); in the end, he seems to support it (137). One may question the theological analysis of the concept of obedience broken down into three parts (hearing, trust, action [21]). Hebrew thinking suggests, on the contrary, a reverse process, in which the action precedes the cognitive consciousness and elaboration (see Exod 19:8; cf. 24:7; Josh 3).

Certainly biblical grace is bound to stay ever far beyond the reality of what is conveyed in human words. Dybdahl is well aware of the limitations of his enterprise, as he humbly recognizes the value of questions rather than "final answers" (138), thus inviting further research and thinking (145).

Throughout the book valuable insights will surprise and inspire the reader: the role of covenant as "God's gracious gift" (69); the value of worship, "the forgotten jewel of God's people" (107); the sequence of grace before the law (24-26); the message of corporate thinking for the individualistic Christian (135, 151-152); and many others. Undoubtedly *Old Testament Grace* deserves special notice. It will remind thoughtful readers of one of the most important forgotten truths of the Bible. Readers, whether laypersons or pastors, will discover new dimensions of grace, while refreshing and deepening their relationship with the God of the Old Testament.

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Efird, James M. *Revelation for Today: An Apocalyptic Approach*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989. 139 pp. Paperback, \$ 9.95.

James M. Efird has presented in his *Revelation for Today* a small volume "intended for pastors and laypersons in the church to assist them in learning how to interpret apocalyptic literature correctly, specifically the book of Revelation" (12-13). One must applaud this statement of purpose, but does Efird successfully accomplish this task?

His "Commentary" section (45-126) seems to me to be flawed in several ways relative to his objectives: (1) His discussion is tied too tightly to the traditional preterist perspective (for a good critique of certain basic aspects of the traditional view, see Paul S. Minear, *I Saw a New Earth*

[Washington, DC: Corpus Books, 1968], 235-243, 247-259). (2) The book does not contain adequate application for our day to justify the title *Revelation for Today*. (3) Apocalyptic symbols are applied inconsistently, usually in a doggedly literal manner, but occasionally in the very opposite way (such as the spiritualization of the symbols in Rev 20). (4) The derivation, dynamic, and significance of Revelation's symbolic usage is too readily overlooked (e.g., Efirid fails to mention the importance of ancient Babylon's fall to the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C. as being a crucial background for the imagery used in Rev 16:12 in connection with "Armageddon" (v. 16)). (5) There appears to be inadequate appreciation of the fact that Revelation is not simply *an* apocalypse but decidedly a *NT* apocalypse which highlights prominent NT themes rather than merely describing socio-political events. (6) The significance of Revelation's being *epistolary* as well as apocalyptic in nature is given rather short shrift.

Efirid's little commentary is well written and therefore easy to read; but as far as I can see, his major application of Revelation to our day is found in his intermittent comments about this Bible book's portrayal of a courageous loyalty to Christ which we would do well to emulate. This is an excellent point, but is it *all* that is involved in Revelation's message? Unless there is more—unless there is some sort of significant undergirding substance to the message—what would make Revelation's depiction of faithfulness anything more and anything other than an example of the kind of fate achieved by misguided fanatics? But there is more, much more, as the book's very preamble makes clear (1:1-3) and as is highlighted in each of the book's visions. Indeed, every aspect of Revelation's content is permeated with the NT perspective and with significant NT themes relating to Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, etc.

Efirid's treatment possesses some positives too, of course. One such positive—indeed a refreshing one—is his rejection of the "perceived-persecution" thesis (popular in some studies with sociological emphasis) and his recognition that *real* persecution is reflected in Revelation. Another is Efirid's rejection of a modern "futurist" methodology that almost totally neglects attention to Revelation's original setting, except in connection with the prologue and the seven-churches vision.

The volume lacks an index (not really needed), but does contain a brief bibliography (137-139). After first listing ten "commentaries," this bibliography has three shorter sections of other titles: "Books on Apocalyptic and its Interpretation," "Books on Darbyism and the Darbyist System," and "Books from the Darbyist Perspective."