

Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge plus its two-volume update entitled *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. The amazing fact is that this *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* is as comprehensive as it is.

The 3^d edition has been carefully prepared and edited, but it seems inevitable that a random error would creep in here or there. For instance, in the article on "Luther, Martin" (1007-1010), we read in the main text that Luther died on "18 Feb. 1543" (1009), whereas the date should be 1546, as given correctly at the beginning of the article (1007). Another slight negative, in my opinion, is the elimination of *some* of the bibliographical entries of the 2^d edition (perhaps to make room for the desirable and needful updates in the bibliographies?). For instance, in the bibliography to the article "Millenary Petition," why was the useful reference to Gee and Hardy, a standard source collection, dropped (cf. 2^d ed., 916, and 3^d ed., 1087)? Furthermore, in this reviewer's opinion, it would be desirable to have the articles signed by the respective contributors, a practice not used in this edition, nor in its predecessors.

In conclusion, the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3^d ed., is a most valuable resource. It is expensive, but is worth every bit of its cost.

Andrews University

KENNETH A. STRAND

Mathews, Kenneth A. *Genesis 1-11:26*. New American Commentary. Broadman & Holman, 1996. 528 pp. \$36.99.

Mathews has constructed his commentary on Genesis according to a standard format. After a general introduction to the book (21-112), the commentary follows, dividing the first eleven chapters of Genesis into six sections. Within each section the texts are examined for their meaning in the original context of ancient Israel as well as for their appropriation in the NT and their meaning for Christians. Five excurses are inserted into these sections, dealing with the translation of 1:1-2, the "image of God", the human soul, ancient Near Eastern origin myths, and the revelation of the Divine Name. There are three indices.

This commentary is written from a conservative perspective, explicitly holding to a Mosaic authorship and accepting the veracity of all information contained in the book of Genesis. Mathews also confidently uses other texts of the canon in interpreting the text of Genesis. Because of this stance on the part of the author some have classified this commentary as "devotional," dismissing it as non-scholarly, as if no conservative commentary could be scholarly. However, this commentary requires over 500 pages to cover only eleven chapters in Genesis, it grapples with a variety of scholarly commentaries and articles on Genesis, and requires some knowledge of Hebrew and Greek on the part of the reader. Among other issues tackled in the Introduction is a detailed analysis of textual criticism, hardly to be expected in a devotional commentary. Mathews's book is a scholarly commentary and should be judged as such by the scholarly community.

Mathews is not shy about taking a strong stand on many issues of Genesis. He is firm in assuming that Moses wrote the book of Genesis though nothing in the text itself specifies that its author is Moses. He devotes five pages to the creation/evolution controversy, not enough to cover the topic but enough to

make clear his absolute rejection of evolution. He has taken up the themes of sanctuary imagery which have been ignored in most other commentaries. The excursus on the human soul is steadfastly against the idea of a disembodied existence, and comments on the creation of women strongly espouse a naturally subordinate role of women.

Though Mathews may find Scripture to be an infallible unity in theory, in practice he is selective concerning which texts are allowed to interpret Genesis. On occasion even high-profile texts are passed over. For instance, commenting on 1:29-30 (175) Mathews is lukewarm on understanding this text as describing a vegetarian paradise, and is quick to point out that in Genesis 9:3 meat is explicitly included in the human diet. Significantly, Isaiah's vision of the paradise to come (11:6-9; 65:25) has no part in his understanding of paradise lost. Only when commenting on 9:4 (402) does Mathews take seriously the sacredness of animal life in these early chapters of Genesis. Although Acts 15:29 is listed in the discussion of 9:4, this NT text does not enter anywhere into his comments on the Christian appropriation of the text.

Concerning the "sons of God" in Genesis 6:2, Mathews concludes that the reference is to a class of antediluvian humans, not supernatural beings. Though many conservative evangelical commentators have allowed 2 Peter 2:4-5 and Jude 6 to influence their understanding of Genesis, Mathews passes over these studies in silence. Though Mathews is selective concerning the biblical texts which he will allow to affect his understanding of Genesis, he is not any more biased than most other commentators. As with any other commentary on Genesis, this one must be read critically, noting both the presuppositions of the author and the places where these presuppositions are applied inconsistently. In conclusion, Mathews' commentary on Genesis 1-11 represents a significant contribution to scholarship on Genesis, which means it must be read critically.

One N. Bedford, #101
Madison, WI 53703

JAMES E. MILLER

McGrath, Alister. *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. 287 pp. \$21.99.

Joining the current evangelical discussion on the relevancy of truth in a postmodern environment, Alister McGrath asserts in this book that evangelicalism has an intellectual foundation and coherence that demonstrate its credibility in the academic world. The book is best understood as a prolegomenon to the formation of an evangelical mind and builds upon other contemporary evangelical works on this subject, particularly his *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995). For the most part, McGrath does very well at explaining why evangelicalism's passion for truth has a coherence and logic of its own and cannot be accommodated within a postmodern context.

The book is divided into five chapters which fall into two parts. In the first part, McGrath articulates how the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the authority of Scripture are of direct relevance to the intellectual coherence of evangelicalism. In chapter one, he begins by affirming the pivotal place of the person and work of