

They may also indicate that the community has acquired a new level of maturity, that its members have come to realize that reflecting carefully on their faith and life can enrich their experience and enhance their witness.

I hope that Guy's book is an indication that Adventism has reached a point where it can confidently survey the resources at its disposal, think methodically about its task, and develop an expression of its faith and life that will do justice to the vitality of the movement—to the breadth of its vision and the depth of its convictions. But only time will tell.

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Dederen, Raoul. *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*. Commentary Reference Series, vol. 12. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000. xxiv+1027 pp. Hardcover, \$37.95.

Under the skillful editorship of Raoul Dederen, Emeritus Professor of Theology at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* consists of twenty-eight chapters articulately addressing all the major doctrines of Christianity and the distinctive doctrines of Adventism. The subjects of these chapters closely parallel those of the SDA Statement of Fundamental Beliefs. The chapters were written by twenty-seven contributors, with the editor authoring the two chapters on Christology and ecclesiology. This *Handbook*, representing a wide diversity of scholarly disciplines, was ten years in the making. It was produced in cooperation with the Biblical Research Institute Committee, which reviewed each chapter. "The aim of the editorial staff and contributors has been to produce a work of reference written in a spirit of unqualified loyalty to the Scriptures as the written Word of God, in the hope that these pages will be fruitful for personal reflection in faith and practice" (xi).

Each chapter includes four sections. The first section, and by far the most prominent, presents a given subject from a scriptural perspective. A second section highlights the historical and theological developments of the doctrine. The last two sections offer a selection of quotations from Ellen G. White and a short selected bibliography. Given the high caliber of detailed biblical and theological studies found in the first two sections, the third section on Ellen White's thought is a disappointment. Only a few chapters offer commentary on her perspectives, while the rest provide only quotations. This gives an unfortunate semblance of proof-text methodology when it comes to Ellen White, a methodology that many are consciously trying to get away from.

One of the great assets of this work is its theological strength. To the editor's credit, the different authors' theological contributions are well linked together so that many chapters build on each other. This volume is focused on its intended theological purpose. Thus the chapters on "Revelation and Inspiration" and "Biblical Interpretation" convey a clear and consistent theological approach. The same can be said of the chapters on the "Doctrine of Man," "Sin," and "Salvation."

Throughout the *Handbook* one finds evidences that common beliefs are shared by Adventists and many other Christians on such doctrines as the infallibility of Scripture, an Arminian/Wesleyan understanding of the doctrines

of man and salvation, simplicity of lifestyle, and a nonsacramental ecclesiology.

To better understand distinctive Seventh-day Adventist doctrines and their theological underpinnings, Christians of other denominations will benefit greatly from reading the chapter on "Revelation and Inspiration," in which a high view of Scripture is presented without a verbal/dictational doctrine of inspiration. Likewise, in the chapter on the "Doctrine of God," one will find a biblical approach to God's relationship with the world (temporal subordination) that rejects both the classical views of Platonic dualism, timelessness, and open theism. The theological contributions of this chapter are, I believe, crucial to understanding some distinctive Adventist beliefs, in particular, the doctrine of the Sanctuary.

The two chapters on the "Law of God" and the "Sabbath" present a positive view of the laws of God, including the Decalogue and other biblical laws as a reflection of the divine character. This approach counteracts accusations of legalism that the Seventh-day Adventist denomination has faced. Both chapters argue that observance of the Decalogue is the response of faith to the gift of salvation.

Known for its apocalypticism and interest in end-time events, Seventh-day Adventism is the only denomination to still retain a historicist eschatology. This approach, which offers a more biblical alternative to the currently popular tribulationist dispensationalism, occupies the last third of the *Handbook*. Given the current interest in both conditional immortality and annihilationism, the *Handbook* also contributes much to this discussion with its timely treatment in the chapter on "Death: Origin, Nature, and Final Eradication."

The *Handbook* includes four chapters on practical Christianity under the rubrics of "Stewardship," "Christian Lifestyle and Behavior," "Marriage and Family," and "Health and Healing." While Seventh-day Adventists have been commonly known for their lifestyle rules and prohibitions, these chapters make a remarkable and positive contribution to practical theology and personal ethics by drawing clear principles from the biblical materials and applying them to modern life. Not only are biblical arguments set forth to support an Adventist perspective on lifestyle issues, but clear and sound theological arguments and principles are drawn from the biblical materials and applied to modern life. It is unfortunate, however, that nothing is said about abstinence from harmful substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, which is a part of the Adventist lifestyle that is well supported by medical science.

The order in which some chapters are presented is puzzling. Given the strong theological links between all the chapters, I get the sense that some chapters are out of sync. I believe the chapter on "Creation" should have been presented before the "Doctrine of Man," and the one on the "Great Controversy" theme before those on the "Sanctuary," "Divine Judgment," and the "Remnant and Three Angels' Messages." I was disappointed to see the Great Controversy theme left to the very end of the book, since many other chapters allude to it. For the last 150 years, this theme has been at the core of Seventh-day Adventist theology, faith, and practice, and earlier Adventist statements of beliefs used this topic as an organizing principle. Does an appendix treatment of this theme mean that it is not as prominent in Seventh-day Adventist theology as it used to be? If such an unfortunate trend continues, it will ultimately alter other aspects of Adventist theology, as well as faith and practice.

In spite of a few weaknesses, the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* will undoubtedly become an authoritative expression of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. Although this book does not intend to answer all theological questions, it is nonetheless a remarkable achievement that has been long overdue. No theological work of this magnitude has ever been produced by this denomination. By filling a large void, it benefits both the denomination and the wider Christian community. I concur with the editor, who says that "this volume is sent forth . . . in the hope that it will be of use in Adventist and non-Adventist homes, classrooms, and libraries, as well as in pastoral offices as a handy and valued reference tool for information on various aspects of Adventist understanding and practice" (xi).

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Barker, Margaret. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants What Must Soon Take Place (Revelation 1.1)*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000. xii + 447 pp. Paperback, \$29.95.

Margaret Barker, Old Testament scholar and former president of the Society for Old Testament Study, has written a provocative commentary on Revelation that pulls together and culminates a number of her previously developed views (e.g., *The Older Testament: The Survival of Themes from the Ancient Royal Cult in Sectarian Judaism and Early Christianity* [London: SPCK, 1987]; *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* [London: SPCK, 1991]; *The Great Angel: A Study of Israel's Second God* [Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1992]; *On Earth as It Is in Heaven: Temple Symbolism in the New Testament* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995]; and *The Risen Lord: The Jesus of History as the Christ of Faith* [Valley Forge, PA: Trinity, 1996]). She states, in fact, that "all of my publications have been leading in this direction, and their conclusions form the foundation for this book" (xiii).

Although the book contains twenty-two chapters, these do not correspond to Revelation's twenty-two chapters. The first three chapters contain the key conclusions mentioned in the books above, here grouped into three foundational themes (Jesus, the temple, and the priests of Israel), undergirding the rest of her commentary. In the fourth chapter, Barker sets forth her views on the development of Revelation as a literary product. The remaining chapters do not attempt a verse-by-verse commentary; instead, she discusses broad theological themes within the overall sequence of chapters in Revelation, and thus there is some repetition of material throughout the book. An excursus on the Parousia and its relation to Christian liturgy follows the commentary proper. It is followed by less than five pages of endnotes (although some lengthy footnotes, enclosed within parentheses, masquerade as text; cf. 116-117, 189-190, 2652-66, and 324). A succinct discussion of primary sources and two helpful indices (persons, places, and subjects; and biblical and ancient texts) round out the work.

Barker derives her reading of Revelation by comparing it to primary sources of the Second Temple period—in particular, the Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus. But she also sifts through apocryphal, apostolic and postapostolic, gnostic, medieval, rabbinic, kabbalistic, and merkavah texts to contextualize her overall interpretation and to trace trajectories from it. Her career