

Besides, rabbinic religion manifests itself both in the reduced emphasis on Proverbs (7) and in its spiritualized interpretations in medieval Jewish scholarship.

Fox respects the integrity of the book of Proverbs as a male-oriented text (16). He also considers the fact that the voices of both parents are to be heard in the book's instructions (83). He reminds that *tokahat* (reproof) is always critical and negative; it may take the form of corporal punishment, but is usually verbal. By way of example, he cites Job's reproof of his friends, whose deceitful speaking will arouse God's anger (Job 13:6-13). However, Fox believes that the *tokahat* "does not always presume a past failing" (99).

The thoroughness of Fox's analysis (see, e.g., essays on words for "wisdom" and "folly," though we miss an entry on *yir'at YHWH*), the felicitousness of his critiques (as when Toy "has neatly stated the opposite of the truth" [103]), his competent handling of the sources (particularly the Egyptian sources), his elaboration on the two major tropes of "paths through life" (128) and "life as a banquet" (305), and his subdued logic all assure that this signal work will be treasured by the world of ANE wisdom scholarship for a long time to come.

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Gager, John G. *Reinventing Paul*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. x + 198 pp. Hardcover, \$25.00.

John G. Gager is William H. Danforth professor of Religion at Princeton University, where he has taught since 1968. His major works are: *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 1983); *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Prentice-Hall, 1975); and *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* (Abingdon, 1972). He also edited *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (Oxford University Press, 1992). It is evident from these titles that Gager has focused his research on the religious and sociological aspects of the NT and its environs.

The twofold thesis Gager tries to develop in *Reinventing Paul* is (a) that the traditional view of Paul—with its perceived center being the notion that God rejected Jews and replaced them with Gentiles as a new people of God—is "wrong from top to bottom" (50), and (b) that in all of his writings, Paul never made an "argument against the Jewish law in relation to Israel and the Jews" (57).

In his introduction, Gager introduces the traditional view and observes a problem that it raises for its proponents—namely, that Paul apparently makes contradictory statements about Israel and the role of the law (4-7). Gager then outlines four approaches that scholars have used to solve this problem and stresses that the last approach has been the major one. It involves subordinating "one set of passages—always the pro-Israel set—to the other [anti-Israel set]" (9).

Disagreeing with the traditional view, Gager lays bare a three-pronged methodology for a more accurate picture of Paul (16). Paul must be understood within the first-century contexts of (a) the Jesus tradition and (b) Greco-Roman Judaism and according to (c) the Greco-Roman conventions of rhetoric. Six presuppositions undergird his methodology (10-13): (a) One can never expect to get to Paul's actual intentions behind the text; (b) the meaning of a text depends

on the text and its readers, and thus Paul's readers may not have received the message he desired to communicate; (c) one must not try to resolve Paul's contradictions in order to rescue him from embarrassment; (d) Paul's extreme importance as a cultural artifact should be recognized inasmuch as his influence has been pivotal in shaping Christianity as a culture; (e) Paul must be heard as a true first-century personality; and (f) modern "translations, dictionaries, and commentaries" are tainted with "preexisting interpretations" (13).

In his first chapter, Gager details the traditional view of Paul and attempts to explain how this view arose and persisted for nearly two thousand years. According to his analysis, it arose from three "tendencies" (36): (a) reading one's own time and culture back into Paul; (b) universalizing Paul's particularist concerns; and (c) distancing Paul from his Jewish background.

Gager uses the next chapter to offer the crux of his new view—namely: Paul had nothing negative to say about Israel, its laws, or Judaism per se and his allegedly negative statements about the law concern only the relationship of the law to the Gentiles and vice versa. Gager bases these proposals on several arguments (50-66), three of which may be noted here: (a) Paul's experience of "conversion" was to a Jew within Judaism; (b) Paul's missionary activities were focused on Gentiles; and (c) for some Jews, Gentiles drawn to Judaism were never obligated to the law in the same way as the Jews were.

To further substantiate his viewpoint, Gager uses his third and fourth chapters to engage two Pauline epistles in which "issues of the law, the Jews, and the new dispensation of Jesus Christ occupy center stage"—namely, Galatians and Romans (16). Thus, in the third chapter, Gager argues that Galatians, as a document written to a Gentile audience, does not address Jews at all. Gager pursues the same line of thought in the fourth chapter on Romans. Although Gager recognizes that, unlike Galatians, Romans actually speaks about Jews (101), he argues that every statement in Romans concerning the law and Judaism is addressed to or applies to Gentiles only. Critical to Gager's presentation in this chapter is his assumption that Paul wrote Romans as an attempt to ward off misunderstandings that resulted from Galatians.

A point that is hinted at in the third chapter and brought to a head in the fourth chapter, particularly with Gager's discussion of Romans 9-11, is that Jesus Christ is the savior of the Gentiles only. The Jews will be saved by God himself, not through Jesus. This point is repeated in Gager's concluding chapter.

I have several criticisms of this work, but I will highlight only two major ones. First, Gager's approach to Paul contains a somewhat self-contradictory element. On the one hand, Gager views Christianity as a nonentity in the first century and sees Paul, along with Jesus and the apostles, as living and working within the framework of Judaism as Jews (e.g., viii, 53-57). On the other hand, Gager sees Paul as addressing only members of the Jesus-movement, whether Gentile members directly or Jewish members (in competition with Paul) indirectly. Paul's statements about the law and Judaism concern "disputes within the Jesus-movement, not with Jews or Judaism outside" (69). It is unclear as to how these two sets of ideas can both be true, especially when Gager himself acknowledges that Paul came into conflict with Jews outside the Jesus-movement

(e.g., 67-68, 148-149) and that disputes within the movement reflected ones occurring more broadly within Judaism (e.g., 61-64).

Second, Gager never appears to engage the Greek texts of Paul in a way that would inductively build his case. Rather, he seems to read the texts simply in the light of his presumed picture of Paul and with heavy reliance upon the works of Krister Stendahl, Lloyd Gaston, and Stanley Stowers.

Despite my criticisms, it should be made clear that Gager raises some important issues. For example: Was Paul's gospel addressed primarily to Gentile and Jewish participants of the Jesus-movement? Was there a double standard in the Jewish community with reference to it so that Jews were obligated to the law one way and Gentiles in another way? Is it possible to read Paul without subordinating one set of statements to another set that apparently contradicts the first? These questions among others urgently call for further investigation. So Gager's new book is a welcome catalyst for further debate on these important points. My qualm is with the way he has chosen to develop these crucial points.

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Hayward, James L. ed. *Creation Reconsidered: Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives*. Roseville, CA: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000. 382 pp. Paper, \$19.95.

This volume is dedicated to Richard Ritland and takes the side he championed in the controversy over origins, which continues to fester within Seventh-day Adventism. The twenty-seven papers making up chapters in the book were first presented at a 1985 field conference in which Ritland played a leading role. Thus it would be fair to say that *Creation Reconsidered* is as much a product of Richard Ritland as it is of James Hayward, who collected and edited the papers.

Because this is a collection written by different authors in different disciplines, it is not surprising that the contents are as eclectic as the subtitle "Scientific, Biblical, and Theological Perspectives" implies. Chapters range from explanations by Ervin Taylor and P. E. Hare of the reasoning and science behind radiometric and amino-acid dating techniques, to a historical review of interaction between Christianity and geology in the nineteenth century by Gary Land. Theological papers by Richard Hammill and Frederick Harder are juxtaposed with Raymond Cottrell's chapter on the inspiration and authority of the Bible and the extent of the Genesis flood. The opening and closing chapters of *Creation Reconsidered* exemplify the variety of material within the book. The volume begins with a paper by Clark Rowland, who used his background as a physicist to make the case that all knowledge is partial of necessity and the assumption that reality exists must be made if we are to study the world around us. Rowland reasons that the presupposition that God exists is a corollary of this primary assumption. The final chapter, entitled "A Skeptic's Prayers," is made up of two somewhat angst-ridden prayers written by Elvin Hedrick and printed without comment.

Despite the variety of authors involved in making *Creation Reconsidered*, the quality of writing is uniformly good and generally at an easy-reading level for most people. A number of chapters would fit perfectly into any well-written