

work done in disciplines other than their own. For instance, the article exploring the topic "Angels" devotes only two short paragraphs to the OT, while five paragraphs focus on occurrences in the NT. Also, of fourteen paragraphs dealing with "Clean and Unclean," only a short paragraph deals with the concept in the NT. Articles on topics such as "Army," "East," "Israel," "Jewelry," "Lament," "Law," "Son of Man," "Trade and Commerce" are based totally on the Hebrew Bible, leaving the reader without valuable insight into early Christian understanding and background. Authors of such articles as "Dragon," "Locusts," "Many Waters," "Plague," and "Serpent" do not even mention their symbolic usage in the book of Revelation. A few articles, such as "Honor/Shame," do not refer to any biblical texts in support of their interpretations. The volume claims to be a dictionary of the Bible and, as such, the topics should be discussed in light of the Bible as whole.

Correspondingly, another major weakness, in my view, is that some authors show a substantial lack of homework. For instance, the author of "Armageddon" jumps to the conclusion that "no actual battle is described in Revelation; for the author, the battle in principle had already been won through the death and resurrection of Jesus." The author seems to be unaware that although the battle of Armageddon is introduced only in Rev 16:12-16, the real battle is described in Rev 19:11-21, as recognized by many scholars including Ladd [256-257], Fiorenza [940], and most recently by Aune [866-867] and Beale [834-835, 838]. Another example is the article titled "Descent Into Hell," where the author ignores 1Pet 3:19-20, one of the most difficult NT texts on the subject.

Finally, I would like to see the articles on the books of the Bible follow a standard form or outline dealing with, for instance, authorship and date, composition, contents, and major themes. It appears that each author follows his or her own outline.

In spite of the above criticisms, I find *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* to be an excellent mine of information for a Bible student. Its quality speaks for itself. The dictionary does not claim to contain all the answers pertaining to the Bible, and it would be unrealistic to have such expectations of any one-volume dictionary on the Bible.

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Hastings, Adrian, ed. *A World History of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. x + 608 pp. Hardcover, \$35.00.

Most church-history texts are primarily Eurocentric and North American in their focus. This is natural, for the history of Europe and Christianity is so intimately intertwined that Christianity has come to be seen mainly as a Western religion. It is no wonder that when Western imperialists set out to subjugate the world, Christianity was perceived as a tool of colonialism and imperialism by many non-Europeans. Many people wrongly assume that there is hardly any noteworthy history of Christianity outside of the West. *A History of World Christianity* sets out to dispel this notion. It is obviously a monumental task.

This book is a welcome change from traditional church-history texts. It is a multi-authored book edited by Adrian Hastings, who himself contributed the

chapters on Latin America and the history of Christianity in the Roman world from A.D. 150 to 550. It is a plural history that looks at the story of Christianity from the viewpoint of different ages and continents, with little effort to impose a dominant theme. Thirteen chapters, each of which is structured differently, seek to reflect the various spiritual, intellectual, political, and social trends. An attempt is made to include the diversity of the world's culture as it is expressed in Asia, Africa, North America, Australasia, and the Pacific.

In his Introduction, Hastings suggests that the nature and history of Christianity is hard to understand because of the variety of its manifestations (1). Misunderstanding arises when people impose upon the whole of Christianity, past and present, their limited experience of it or their observation or opposition. Christianity shows incredible contrasts. For example, among the Quakers it is a rather unritualistic religion. In Eastern Orthodox and monastic traditions, it is ceaselessly ritualistic. In some areas and certain periods of the world, it was and is an apolitical and minority religion, while in other places and times it has been an imperial and persecuting religion. In some forms it is activist, evangelistic, and missionary, while in others it is purely contemplative. It has lauded celibacy, but has also glorified marriage. It has pursued poverty as an ideal, but has also been linked to the growth and triumph of capitalism.

As Christianity was carried to areas of traditional and animistic religions, it tended to draw people not because they became converted, but because of the superior technology of missionaries who sought not only to convert but also to civilize. This was evident in many parts of Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific. In places like China, Japan, and India, with long traditions of advanced civilization and entrenched religious tradition that was sometimes part of state bureaucracy, Christianity made little headway and progress was only possible with the permission of the ruling class.

The strengths of this book lie more in its intention rather than its outcome. It has sought to present Christianity as a global religion and has somewhat succeeded in giving voice to areas of the Christian world that have been severely neglected. However, it has still devoted 220 of its 533 pages to North America and Europe, showing its Western bias. The book seeks to keep a balanced perspective regarding the role of Catholic and Protestant streams within Christianity without tilting toward one of these traditions. The annotated bibliography of church-history texts from the various regions of the world is extremely valuable. The chapters on India and China provide information on the history of Christianity in that part of the world that is seldom known by students in the West. Inclusion of places such as Australia and the Pacific, which are rarely considered in any text concerning the history of Christianity, is very helpful.

Some of the weaknesses of this work are exemplified by the omission of the role of the radical Reformers in the Reformation and their subsequent impact upon modern Protestantism. The Caribbean region is not mentioned, even though it was the first place in the New World to be Christianized, and many of the mistakes and tragedies that would be repeated all over the Americas had their genesis here.

This volume is worth reading because it has expanded the horizon of Christianity beyond the narrow confines of Europe and America. It has brought

into focus the repeated mistakes of Western missionaries in their misguided attempt not only to convert but also to civilize non-Christians. The book fills a tremendous void in the literature of Christian history and I hope it will spur other church historians to research and write on the history of Christianity with a broader global prospective.

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Hostetter, Edwin C. *An Elementary Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Biblical Languages: Hebrew, vol. 1. Ed. Richard Hess and Stanley E. Porter. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000. 176 pp. Hardcover, \$85.00.

This book covers a large spectrum of grammatical information in relatively few pages. Though intended for the elementary level, its thirty-four lessons also introduce information well suited even for intermediate students. Lessons 1 to 13 deal with the basic and nominal aspects of the language (e.g., alphabet, accents, adjectives, nouns) and lessons 13 to 34 present strong and weak verbs. Each lesson engages a specific topic (e.g., lesson 1—alphabet; lesson 2—vowels; lesson 4—dagesh). This organization, along with a subject index provided at the end of the book, makes it easy to locate topics. Another commendable aspect is the fact that most exercises presented at the end of each chapter require the student to use a Hebrew Bible along with a lexicon. For example, the lesson 11 exercise (“Construct”) instructs the student to identify five words in Gen 12:11, 15, 17 that are in the absolute state and preceded by constructs.

Some minor flaws in the presentation can be observed. In the Introduction, the author promises “to inject certain labels of contemporary linguistics” (7). The exposition, however, follows traditional grammar, and one looks in vain for contemporary linguistic labels in this work.

In lesson 9 (41-45), section 3, nominal patterns are discussed, but there is no mention of segholate words or the concept of changeable and unchangeable syllables. A brief exposition of these matters would enable the student to better understand how some words inflect when they receive suffixes or change to the construct state. Later in the book, the expression “segholate” simply appears without any reference to previous explanations (114). In lesson 11, the author should have explained that the *taw* in the feminine construct comes from an original feminine ending *at*, which for the most part dropped out in the subsequent development of the language but which appears when a word becomes construct or receives a suffix. The term “mobile shewa” is employed for the first time on page 63, while in the earlier section devoted to “shewa” the author referred to it as “vocal shewa” (30). To avoid confusion, a more unified terminology should have been used. A few typographical errors could be mentioned. The Hebrew clause in lines 3 and 4 of page 61 should be inverted. There is no vowel for the *taw* in 2ms and *teth* 2fs/1cs on page 79. Page 130 reads “linterpret” for “Interpret.”

This grammar does not go beyond the traditional Hebrew textbooks. One could ask what the purpose of such a publication would be. Its major advantage is conciseness. Though small, it covers the content needed for an elementary Hebrew course, and even beyond. I would not recommend it for self-study, but it could be profitably adopted as a textbook for use in a Hebrew course under the guidance of a teacher.

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