

reference to the conjectural supplement in 5.26 intended?]) come far short of suggesting that first-century Jews, 'however important to them the religious and ethical interpretation of circumcision may have been, would have contemplated omitting the rite. At 15.20 Professor Johnson rightly notes the equivalence of abstinence from *haima* (as understood here) and abstinence from *pnikton*, but does not ask why Luke should have included both words. At 18.12 reference to Dinkler's article on the *bema* at Corinth would be helpful. At 18.18 Professor Johnson writes, "a long period of time is to pass before Paul reaches Jerusalem — at least two years," but he appears to think that 18.22 reports a visit to Jerusalem. There is no point in continuing this list of what are for the most part minor omissions or differences of opinion. Some of them touch on carelessness, a matter that will be referred to below.

More interesting and more important is the matter contained in the paragraphs headed *Interpretation*. Not all of this is new; this is inevitable, and what is not new is well weighed and assessed. One notable feature is the demonstration of the way in which Luke uses literary arrangement to make his points. A good example occurs on p. 385, ". . . Luke's use of 'misapprehension' to set up Paul's own *apologia*." The Jews misunderstand his attitude to Law and Temple. The Roman tribune thinks him a revolutionary. All are wrong; the way is clear for Paul, in the following chapters, to define his relation to Jews and Romans. More subtle, and perhaps not quite so convincing, is the relating of spiritual to material services. Of the Seven he writes (p. 111), "He needs to show that these Hellenistic missionaries were fully prophetic figures, like the Twelve; but he also wants to show that their authority is derived from that of the Twelve and in continuity with it. He accomplishes both tasks by having the seven placed over the distribution of goods. The transfer of spiritual power (through the laying on of hands [but by whom? the question is not considered]) is symbolized by the taking on of 'table service' (as it was for Jesus and the Twelve)." This perhaps needs rather more careful analysis.

But this is a good commentary, which I hope will be widely used. It is the more unfortunate that it is marred by many misprints or small errors, which occur almost entirely in transliteration of Greek, a few Latin words, and in the titles of non-English books and articles. I have counted (without attempting the office of proof-reader) 154. And what is one to make of *phylakoi* (as the nominative plural of *phylax*), of Nichomachean Ethics (every time), of *hellenai* (as the nominative plural *hellen*), of the adverb *epanankes*, of the prothesis of a conditional sentence, of *gynaikais* (as the dative plural of *gyne*)? One suspects that Professor Johnson may have left some tasks to an assistant and may now perhaps have a new assistant!

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**GENESIS I THROUGH THE AGES.** By Stanley L. Jaki. *Thomas More Press*, 1992, Pp. xii + 317.

In this book Stanley Jaki, a writer best known for his work on the history of science, strays into the area of exegesis, or rather the history of exegesis. Still the foray is not so strange as it might seem, for Genesis I has often been interpreted in a way which fuses biblical interpretation with scientific speculation. This "concordism" is the *bête noir* of the author. The book

charts the history of exegesis of Genesis I from the Jewish sages to the commentators of the patristic age, of the middle ages, of the reformation and up to the present. The aim of the book is not primarily historical, though it is pursued historically. The aim is a proper interpretation of the text which can secure a "literal" reading which is not prone to, comparison or confusion with scientific cosmogenesis. By "literal" Jaki does not mean "fundamentalist", for he sees fundamentalism as just another form of concordism. He means rather an account of the intended meaning of the text, of its first and original meaning, of its *genre*.

This endeavour is however vitiated by the various factors. The most obvious is the complete lack of sympathy Jaki holds for any of the commentators on whom he is commenting. At one point he comments on the results of modern Catholic Biblical scholarship thus: "In an increasing number of cases one could hear young priests inebriated with the latest exegetical buzzwords, preach rank heresies. They were busy giving the impression that no Catholic could intelligently read the Bible prior to the dawn of that new-fangled maturity." An irony of this tart comment is that Jaki himself displays in his book so little sympathy with previous exegetes as to be open to the very same criticism. For instance Jaki's own view is in many ways similar to that of Saint Augustine. Yet he repudiates Augustine as an author with "nothing noteworthy" to offer yet "whose exegesis of Genesis I cast a very long shadow indeed". As for his own exegesis, some is thought-provoking, but he is not a biblical scholar and his suggestions are quite uneven. The consideration of Babylonian myth in chapter 1 would have been better expanded to include Canaanite parallels, especially in the light of John Day's study *God's conflict with the dragon and the sea*. When Jaki finally presents his own view in diagram form on p. 91 he makes a major mistake. He puts the land animals not with the human beings on day six, but with the birds and fish on day five! Having had this pointed out to him (by a professor of law, John Finnis), he includes an erratum with a corrected diagram. The new diagram is simply the old scheme but with the land animals drawn in small next to the man and the woman. Yet their presence on day six clearly unbalances Jaki's scheme and lends weight to an alternative scheme, that is, the pairing of days one, two and three with days four, five and six; the first three days give the habitats and the next three days, The creatures that populate them. This picks up a parallel between Psalm 104 and Genesis I which Jaki dismisses, it also sends us back to the scheme of St. Augustine which Jaki explicitly repudiates.

Despite looking like a book on the history of ideas, the history is treated roughly and is really no more than a vehicle for a certain view of the correct interpretation of Genesis I. When we actually get to the promised interpretation the result is mildly interesting but not radically different from many of the ancient and modern commentators he criticises. This book is hard work yet the rough and unsympathetic treatment of previous exegetes and the weakness of his own exegetical skills do not justify the effort.

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