

as an attempt at an integrated study its structure must be taken on its own terms. The book is a treasury of studies about Baptism and one's persistence in following the author is well rewarded.

MARY CHARLES MURRAY

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES by Luke Timothy Johnson, Sacra Pagina, Volume 5. *The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1992. Pages xvi + 568.*

This is a good, solid, useful commentary, in which many students will find the information they need for their work on *Acts*. They will not find bold hypothetical reconstructions of first-century history or an exposition of Lucan theology designed to bring it forcibly into the twentieth century; they will not find the most up-to-date methods of "literary" criticism. The book is no worse for that, even though some may dismiss it as old-fashioned. It contains a relatively short Introduction. There is a page on the text of *Acts* — barely enough to point out that there is a "Western Text Tradition" and an "Alexandrian Tradition". "*Acts as History*" deals with Sources (it is difficult to see beyond Luke's editing) and Reliability (extreme positions should be avoided; Luke's shaping of the narrative is an important pointer to the kind of history he intended to write). "*Acts as Apology*" claims that "Luke's Apology is . . . in the broadest sense a theodicy. His purpose is to defend God's activity in the world" (p. 7). The point is well made, and recurs from time to time in the Commentary. "Literary Dimensions" is confined to Narrative Devices and to Literary Structure (Geography; Prophecy); it is hard to see much advance when we move on to "Prophetic Structure of Luke-Acts". Finally we have "Religious Themes": the Holy Spirit, the Life of the Church; the Discernment of God's Activity; Universality. Professor Johnson insists that Luke emphasises the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles; he seems here to be rather more favourable to the Jews than he is in the commentary on the last chapter, where Luke's point is "God's fidelity to his people and to his own word" (p. 476). It is not God's fault or Paul's that the Jews do not believe.

Each section of the text is provided with Translation, Notes, Interpretation, and Bibliography. The translation is clear and straightforward; renderings that might invite disagreement are usually defended in the notes. These contain a great deal of information, clearly set out, and provide (as one expects) explanation of obscure sentences, literary parallels, and historical and geographical data illustrative of Luke's narrative. The references are well selected and numerous; one hopes that readers will not feel overwhelmed. Discussions of literary, linguistic, and historical questions are well-informed, balanced, and on the whole convincing - no commentator expects every reader to agree with him all the time. One reader, for example, is not convinced that when Luke records that Sapphira fell dead at Peter's feet he wishes us to see the irony of an "unintended obeisance". This is an example of what may be a somewhat exaggerated emphasis on the authority of the apostles. On 13.8 it is correct to say that "the difficulties are impossible to resolve", but it is unconvincing to adduce Barnabas (4.36). "'Son of Consolation' . . . certainly did not 'translate' *bar-Nebo*"; but "Son of Exhortation" might have translated *Bar-Nebuah*, Son of Prophecy. The passages cited on 15.1 (Philo, *Mig. Ab.* 92; *Spec. Leg.* 1.8-11, 304-306; 1 QS 5.5; 5.28 [is a

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!

C.K. BARRETT

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