

Chapter VI addresses Pauline “problem texts” which relate directly to the Sabbath. Part 1 deals with Col 2:14-17, and is, in my opinion, very well written and convincing. The same may be said for part 2, which considers the Sabbath in Romans and Galatians.

Part 1 of the final chapter provides interesting and helpful information concerning a number of individuals and groups who have rediscovered the biblical meaning and spirit of Sabbath observance and have endeavored to apply it to the observance of Sunday. Even more interesting and encouraging for SDAs, part 2 identifies some former Sunday-keeping groups which have rediscovered the significance and meaning of the biblical seventh-day Sabbath and have begun to observe it.

*The Sabbath under Crossfire* is somewhat repetitious in places. Many theologians, even some among SDAs, may not regard it as equally valid or valuable in all chapters and sections. It is, however, and will undoubtedly continue to be, a very important, useful, and helpful book in ongoing discussions concerning Sabbath/Sunday issues and observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. For this, its author is to be commended.

Ronald D. Bissell

Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present*. Downers Grove, IL, and Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1996. 608 pp.

Gerald Bray writes as Anglican Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama. Formerly, he served as Lecturer in Christian Doctrine at Oak Hill College, London. In this book, he has, perhaps, achieved his magnum opus. To my knowledge, this is the first thorough historical survey of biblical interpretation that carefully analyzes the impact of hermeneutical methods on Christian tradition and theology at every stage of Christian history.

Bray's survey is well organized and readable, on the whole. Though not so indicated in the table of contents, each historical period follows the same structure: an introduction to the period and its particular methods of biblical interpretation; a list of the interpreters and their work, giving a brief summary of the major contributions of each; a summary of the major issues that were especially relevant to the period; an analysis of the most representative methods of interpretation; a bibliography; and finally, a case study selected to demonstrate the hermeneutical methods typical of the period. This organization proves most helpful in clearly communicating the distinctive features of each period, though there is some redundancy or overlap between different sections. Only the sections on the interpreters are somewhat laborious and poorly organized in terms of indicating divisions. The problem is due largely to the fact that some minor group headings are set in exactly the same style as the units that fall under them, making it difficult at

times to tell where a group begins and ends (see, e.g., 230-36). On the whole, the interpreters are presented chronologically, though occasionally there seems to be a certain randomness to the sequence.

Despite the fact that Bray, at a personal level, clearly leans toward a fairly conservative and traditional model of biblical interpretation, he is to be commended for maintaining a reasonably objective and fair attitude toward and evaluation of the more critical interpretational methods. He endeavors to assess their strengths and weaknesses on their own terms as far as possible, without an overtly apologetic or dogmatic agenda. He seems genuinely interested in understanding the history of biblical interpretation according to the dynamics of the respective periods and the developments that took place in both the secular and religious spheres. It can be seen by the attentive observer that biblical interpretation was largely a product of the times and varied according to the prevalent world-view, educational background of the interpreters, and religious, political, and scientific developments taking place during each respective historical period. It is only when Bray gets to the post-modern period that he begins to lose some of his objective distance from his subject and betray his strong bias against sociological methods of interpretation, especially feminist interpretation, and in favor of evangelical, but not fundamentalist, forms of interpretation. He wants the Bible to find a permanent place in the life of the church, directed by the Holy Spirit, and he ends on a note of hope that this may truly happen.

*Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* is a very useful tool for understanding the history of biblical interpretation, including the issues, methods, and personalities involved. It offers more than most such surveys, especially in the periods before the Reformation. Most historical surveys touch only briefly on early Christian interpretation, move rapidly through Reformation hermeneutics, then introduce Semler and the historical-critical scholars, giving primary emphasis to the last two centuries. Bray offers a more balanced survey. Without a thorough understanding of the issues relevant to the different periods, it is difficult to explain why biblical interpretation took the routes it did. Bray provides such an understanding. His work is highly recommended to all who are interested in biblical interpretation, but especially to students looking for a single resource that will cover the field of biblical interpretation comprehensively.

Edwin Reynolds

LaRondelle, Hans K. *How to Understand the End-Time Prophecies of the Bible*. Sarasota, FL: First Impressions, 1997. x + 501 pp.

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