

DAVID L. TURNER, *Matthew* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008). Pp. xx + 828. \$49.99.

The Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series, conceived as an expository tool for pastors and preachers, is grounded in conservative evangelicalism but attempts to interact with exegetical research irrespective of provenance. Simultaneously, the series attempts to provide interpretations applicable to contemporary pastoral concerns. Turner's commentary certainly follows these guidelines: he engages the text with a critical and informed knowledge of exegetical debates, and he usually provides solid guidance for Matthew's readers. His remarks on the distinctive aspects of this commentary include acknowledgment of his progressive dispensationalist background. On occasion he includes references particular to dispensationalist debates, such as in his analysis of Matthew's use of the kingdom. Dispensationalism, with its conviction that there are chronologically different "dispensations" in which God relates differently to people according to successive covenants, has often viewed the distinction between the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of heaven" as relating to different dispensations, the former being universal, the latter being mediatorial, and both uniting only at Christ's return.

Turner places Matthew's Gospel squarely within a Christian-Jewish community engaging the debates surrounding formative Judaism. Distinctive Matthean features are the turn to the gentiles, which entailed a mission faithful to a teaching of Jesus that included the fulfillment of Torah. Thus, T. sees the Matthean community as one voice among highly diversified Jewish movements rather than a sign of any parting of the ways.

This traditionally structured commentary begins with introductory literary and historical matters. T.'s main exegetical approach can be broadly defined as narrative criticism, and perhaps because of this emphasis, the historical discussions appear somewhat cursory. Various alternatives to authorship, sources, date, and location are mentioned but rarely discussed for their merits, or even determined. For example, after mentioning Antioch and various Galilean or Syrian possibilities for Matthew's provenance, T. states, "grasping the message . . . does not depend on knowing the location" (p. 14). This seems simplistic after placing the Gospel in formative Judaism. In literary matters T. proves more decisive, arguing for a five-book structure. The introduction concludes with a discussion of subjects identified as theological emphases: Matthew and the Hebrew Bible (although T. does not specify whether Matthew actually uses the Hebrew text), Matthew's genealogy, christology, the kingdom of heaven, conflict over authority, and the church and the gentile mission. Such choices of emphases are always subjective, and perhaps the space given to the genealogy is surprising considering the results. The other choices seem obvious. Yet their treatment again has something of a cursory nature. If the Hebrew Bible is so important for Matthew, why not attend in more detail to the versions of the text used in the Gospel? T. states that

the kingdom is at the center of Matthew's message, and he discusses the use of the phrase "kingdom of heaven" in relation to reverence for the divine name, with "kingdom of God" as its stylistic variation, and in terms of the presence and future of the kingdom. Again one might argue that there are better explanations for the use of "kingdom of heaven," such as the possible relationship with Matthew's frequent use of "father in heaven" or "heavenly father" to refer to God. A few words on why the kingdom becomes so important in Matthew and whether there is a relationship to the historical Jesus would have been nice.

The commentary proper is clearly structured. Each section begins with an overview, followed by a new translation, detailed discussion of individual verses, then particular subjects. Additional notes incorporate text-critical issues. T.'s narrative-critical emphasis is on occasion difficult to follow in the format, but on the whole it proves to be a wise decision in eliciting Matthew's story. The discussion of topics arising from the text is evenhanded and exhibits a thorough knowledge of secondary literature. On occasion T. provides unexpected forays beyond Matthew, as when he states in the context of 16:18, "Peter's future role as preacher to Jews and gentiles (Acts 2, 10) is also projected here" (pp. 406-7), to explain Peter's extraordinary role in this passage, although T. goes on to see Peter not as an individual but as a representative of the disciples as a group, thus defusing the issue of Petrine primacy.

This commentary is expository in the best sense of the word. Readers will be able to follow all the important exegetical discussions, and T. proves a usually reliable if not very adventurous guide. Furthermore, T. sets the Gospel in the "*intra muros*" context that in the past fifteen years or so has developed from a minority position to a widely accepted theory. The expository nature of the commentary has, however, two drawbacks. First, T. seldom ventures to formulate his own theories, and in some crucial discussions such as the one on 27:25 this can lead to a lack of depth. Second, quite often exegetical positions are mentioned, yet their supporting arguments are not. Consequently, I would hesitate to recommend the commentary to students. But the volume is aimed at pastors and ministers; they will find here much to appreciate and above all an easy and concise access to the Gospel and its problems of interpretation.

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