

I raise these questions not to detract from A's achievement, but to show its significance. His book faces the issues and is written with such pedagogical skill that it can easily become a part of required class-reading lists even within Catholic seminaries. It is a tribute to his sensitivity to diverse positions of inspiration that such an ecumenical recommendation can be made.

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RAFAEL AGUIRRE MONASTERIO, *Exegesis de Mateo, 27, 51b-53 Para una teología de la muerte de Jesús en el evangelio de Mateo* (Biblica victoriensia 4, Vitoria, Spain ESET, 1980) Pp 257 Paper N P

This most recent volume in the *biblica victoriensia* series is a doctoral dissertation written under the direction of Prof. Javier Pikaza at the University of Salamanca. It constitutes, in effect, the second major work in the last three years to deal exclusively with the rather enigmatic tradition preserved in Matt 27 51b-53 (see M. Riebl, *Auf-erstehung Jesu in der Stunde seines Todes? Zur Botschaft von Mt 27, 51b-53* [SBB, Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1978], reviewed, *CBQ* 42 [1980]: 582-83). Indeed, both works arrive independently at rather similar conclusions.

The subtitle of Aguirre's work is somewhat misleading, since only the last two chapters deal with the redactional aspects of these verses, i.e., their present position and role in the Gospel narrative. The first five chapters are devoted for the most part to the pre-gospel history of the tradition and present a detailed linguistic, literary, form-critical, and history-of-religions analysis of these verses. As such, the work is best described as a tradition-historical study of Matt 27 51b-53 from its earliest oral stage to its present role in the Gospel of Matthew. These stages may be summarized as follows:

1. A argues that Matt 27 51b-53 was originally a liturgical hymn with strong apocalyptic-eschatological overtones which was used in the synagogal services during the Passover celebrations. The central affirmation of this hymn was v. 52b, the resurrection of the dead, in vv. 51b-52a a series of apocalyptic events led up to this affirmation in ascending order, while in v. 53 another series of events followed directly from it in descending order. A argues further that this apocalyptic-eschatological hymn was largely dependent on an intertestamental interpretation of Ezek 37 1-14 (also reflected in the paintings of Dura-Europos), with the coming of the Messiah, the righteous ones of Israel would rise from the dead and journey to Jerusalem. Thus the hymn looked forward to the resurrection of the just in messianic times and was used in the synagogal liturgy during Passover in conjunction with Ezekiel 37.

2. This originally Jewish hymn was "christianized" by Jewish Christians who saw in Jesus' death the beginning of the messianic kingdom and who continued to use the hymn in their liturgical celebrations of the Christian Pasch as an affirmation, using apocalyptic language, that God's eschatological intervention in this world had already taken place. At this point, A sees the addition of a dogmatic correction by means of the phrase, *meta tēn egerstin autou*. Jesus was the first to rise.

3. This revised Jewish-Christian hymn was then incorporated by Matthew into

his Gospel as part of the crucifixion unit of 27:51-56. A. argues that the tradition has been fully integrated into the Matthean narrative and theological framework: (a) Matthew himself was fully aware of the tradition's dependence on Ezekiel 37 and proceeded to assimilate the immediate context more closely to that vision as well. (b) For Matthew the dogmatic correction from the second stage served as another means of identifying more closely the death and the resurrection of Jesus; already on the cross—and throughout the passion narrative—is the glory of Jesus discernible and anticipated. (c) The tradition is also used in the narrative to confirm Jesus' status as Son of God, to contrast the rejection of Israel with the belief of the Gentiles, to emphasize the definitive eschatological intervention of God in history through Jesus, and to anticipate certain events of the Parousia.

I find the thesis much more convincing at the stage of the Gospel than at the other two stages. A. does an excellent job of situating this tradition in the context of its immediate literary unit, of the Matthean passion narrative, and of the Gospel narrative as a whole. A. does show quite well how the tradition fits into several main lines of Matthean theology. In addition, I find the presentation and development of the thesis to be quite orderly and clear: the organization of the material is superb and the style crisp and lucid. Likewise, I believe the author should be commended for his wide knowledge of and critical dialogue with all recent Matthean scholarship, whether European or American.

I would, however, voice a couple of reservations. Although dependence on Ezekiel 37 is quite acceptable, some of the arguments used in the first two stages seem rather hasty, e.g., the designation of the tradition as a hymn. The author tends to pursue certain issues that are not immediately relevant to his thesis, e.g., a whole chapter is devoted to proving that the tradition in the Gospel has nothing to do with a descent of Jesus into hell, even when it is explicitly recognized that very few scholars hold such an interpretation today. Nevertheless, this is a good and thorough explication of Matt 27:51b-53 and a fine contribution to Matthean scholarship.

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ROBERT BANKS, *Paul's Idea of Community: The Early House Churches in Their Historical Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980). Pp. 208. Paper \$5.95.

Banks' study, as he tells us in his preface, is not "a technical book, nor a popular one either." It is written for those "caught in the middle" between the technical and the popular who are looking "for a comprehensive account of what Paul said about community, yet in terms they can understand." B. achieves his purpose admirably.

The book is both rich and comprehensive. It deals with the social and religious setting of Paul's communities and with their theological basis—freedom through Christ. It deals with the church as a household gathering and as a heavenly reality. It deals with the community as a family and as a body; with intellectual elements in the growth of the community and with physical expression of fellowship; with gifts and ministry and charisma and order; with unity in diversity among members and with the contribution of women in the church; with participation and its responsibilities and



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