2 and Acts 26 in which he identifies the same feature together with its associated strands. The theme of divine providence and the four inter-related strands of portents, epiphanies, prophecy and fate are then analysed in the subsequent five chapters, using the methodology outlined above.

At the end of his analyses Squires concludes that the theme of ‘the plan of God’ has been shown to have a central and cohesive role in Luke-Acts similar to that which it has in hellenistic historiography. The associated strands are shown as interweaving and reinforcing one another and the main theme in the works of all four writers and the works of Josephus, Squires maintains, demonstrate how this hellenistic perspective is congenial with the Scriptural perspective of the Jewish people.

According to Squires, the Lukan understanding of divine providence is basically a Stoic understanding moderated for popular consumption in the manner of hellenistic historiographers and mediated to early Christians through hellenistic Judaism. In his two volumes, it is maintained, Luke is engaged in ‘translating’ the gospel into its hellenistic context, and providing an apologetic resource in the sense that his work includes elements which would later become identified with Christian apologetic, elements of defence, polemic, assertion and exposition. Luke-Acts therefore borders on missionary preaching in that the story Luke tells can be used to further the Christian cause and to make converts to the faith.

This lucidly written book is to be highly recommended, not only because it contains a detailed and perceptive exploration of what is undoubtedly a major theme in Luke-Acts but also because it provides the reader with thought-provoking and carefully analysed comparative material. However, while it is undoubtedly so that there are a number of themes which Luke-Acts shares with hellenistic histories and while a good case can be and is made for categorising Acts as belonging to the genre of hellenistic history, the same cannot be said for the case which is made for the Gospel in this respect. Indeed a number of questions can be raised about the treatment of Luke’s first volume in this book as there are also with respect to some of the assumptions and comments made about the cultural milieu of Luke himself and his readers. Nevertheless, I look forward to reading further books by this author, not least because the interpretation of the texts which he uses is linguistically informed.

B.E. SPENSLY


Those who know the Anchor Bible Commentary on Luke by Joseph Fitzmyer will have expected the very highest standard in his commentary on Romans in the same series, and they will not have been disappointed. Fitzmyer’s Romans is a publishing event in the world of New Testament studies, for it offers us a clear and penetrating analysis of Paul’s most important epistle from one of the leading Roman Catholic New Testament scholars in the world.

Together with an introduction and commentary, Fitzmyer offers, in the custom of the Anchor series, a fresh translation of the Epistle. His translation gives new and creative renderings of familiar phrases. So the reader is struck by an expression like “weapons” (6:13) or “whatever proceeds not from conviction is sin.” (14:23). But the most recurrent and striking feature in the new translation is the use of “uprightness” for the familiar “righteousness” of our English versions. Here Fitzmyer follows Goospeed in an attempt to avoid “a peculiar ring in English suggesting to many something like self-righteousness” (p. 258). Whether

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readers will readily assume this connotation is debatable. Thus with so important a term as “the Righteousness of God” it is probably better to keep the old word and explain it.

One miss in many modern commentaries the thorough discussion of textual criticism, so common in earlier works. But Fitzmyer’s treatment is admirably thorough. Following Gamble in the important matter of the integrity of the last two chapters, Fitzmyer argues that we should consider them a genuine part of the letter. He concedes, however, that this conclusion could “change with the discovery of new evidence” (p. 50). Essentially, Fitzmyer follows the 1979 UBS3/Nestle 26 which “represents the best available form of the Greek text of Romans” (p. 44). In the commentary notes he regularly resorts to arguments from the best MSS” (7:6, p. 459; 8:1, p. 482; 9:31, p. 758), the “earliest MSS” (15:19, p. 713) or the “oldest and best MSS” (8:21, p. 509). But, as Fitzmyer concedes, the better Greek MSS fail us at 5:1 where “Paul’s utterance is a statement of fact expressing the effect of justification which suits the context better than the hortatory subjunctive” (p. 295). But if internal criteria such as context and style may be used at 5:1 for deciding the textual question, why not also at 1:28 where many Greek MSS have δ θεός as the subject of παρεδόθηκεν? We infer from his translation that Fitzmyer does not think that δ θεός stood in the original text. (It is omitted by Β A 0172). Here he parts company with UBS3/Nestle 26. Yet elsewhere he notes that δ θεός is the most frequently used substantive in Romans (p. 104), a factor that should be given special consideration both at 1:28 and 8:28. In both places the argument that the copist removed the repetitious δ θεός to improve the style is re-enforced by the fact that the oldest and best MSS have the longer text.

Another recurrent argument on matters of the text in this commentary is the claim of assimilation, a copist’s harmonization of the New Testament text to the LXX in quotations. So, for example, at 10:5 Fitzmyer writes of the demonstrative pronoun αὐτός that it is missing in Ms Β*, a copyist’s “harmonization of the Pauline text with the LXX” (p. 589). So also, with 3:4 (quoting Psa. 51:6), where the subjunctive ναυσίνης of Ms B etc. is dubbed “a secondary harmonization of the Pauline text with the LXX reading” (p. 328). Sanday and Headlam noted that there is a similar textual variation in the LXX text of Psalm 51:6. “ναυσίνης is the reading of Β B (defective in A). ναυσίνης of some fourteen cursive texts. The text of the LXX used by Paul differs not seldom from that of the great uncials” (Sanday and Headlam, Romans (1898, p. 72). Harmonization appears to have worked in both directions, and Fitzmyer’s comments on 1:17 indicate that he is aware of this. Sometimes the New Testament was indeed conformed to the Old by scribes. At other times it was the Old Testament that was conformed to the New. The whole matter of assimilation calls for further study. It is clear that New Testament texts were at times corrected by scribes to conform to the LXX. But this can hardly have occurred in circles where the Old Testament was neglected or rejected in favor of the New (eg. Marcion). By contrast one would expect that the New Testament text would be corrected in the direction of the Old in Christian communities where the Old Testament was more highly regarded (for example, in the early Syriac church, see B.M. Metzger, The Early Versions of the New Testament, Oxford, 1977, pp. 96-97).

Just how early this process of assimilation began to operate in the transmission of the New Testament is an especially relevant question in the light of Fitzmyer’s reading of the composition of the Roman Church to which Paul wrote the epistle. This community, Fitzmyer argues, was mixed, “partly of Jewish, but predominantly of Gentile background” (p. 33). Fitzmyer builds on the thesis of Marxsen, explaining the special situation in the Roman church in terms of the Edict of Claudius, “who expelled from Rome Jews who were making constant dis-