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Intended for Pleasure (Book Review)

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docetic Christ and we don't have a docetic Scripture. (p. 46)

Certainly, recent debates in evangelical circles concerning the inspiration and authority of the Bible give reason to issue such a warning. Churches of the Reformed tradition in principle holding to the organic view of inspiration, should also take this caution seriously. But where does this concern to do justice to the humanity of the Bible lead us?

Dr. Boer suggests that we must reappraise our rejection of higher criticism. In chapter one, "Is Biblical Criticism Unbiblical?" he explains what he understands by the term "biblical criticism" and its various elements:

It is commonly forgotten not only that there is another category of criticism known as "lower" criticism, but that the "lower" is a twin brother of the "higher" criticism. Both were conceived in and have issued from the same womb. This womb is the rational human mind. The two forms of criticism are so interrelated and basic in the study of the Bible that it is impossible to use the one properly without acknowledging the legitimacy and necessity of the other. (p. 18)

But is Dr. Boer correct? Must one accept higher criticism if he accepts lower or textual criticism? Boer contends that this is so, but nowhere is this contention substantiated. Instead, it seems that the author has over-simplified the issues to the extent that they are, in fact, drastically distorted. Boer characterizes both elements of biblical criticism as being governed by "... the spirit of rational, scientific analysis uninfluenced, insofar as that is humanly possible, by dogmatic presuppositions" (p. 18).

This is the crux of the matter. Is higher criticism an objective, scientific approach to the Bible as Boer indicates? Historically, it does not appear so. One's presuppositions, Christian or non-Christian, enter into this part of life as they enter into all other concerns. To present higher criticism as that "objective" approach to the Bible of benefit to the Reformed-evangelical community is to muddy the waters of the current debate instead of clarifying them.

The real questions still remain: What is a Biblical approach to a study of the Bible? What are the implications of a Biblical view of the inspiration and authority of Scripture? What Biblical norms must shape our study of Scripture? To suggest that there is in the Reformed-evangelical community no understanding in this area is unfair and inaccurate. To maintain that more study and clarity are needed is timely and

necessary.

If we must reject Dr. Boer's approach to this issue as unacceptable, we can at the same time thank him for pressing us for greater clarity on a subject that concerns the entire Christian community and its mission.

Intended for Pleasure by Ed and Gaye Wheat, Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1977, 223 pages, Illustrated, \$7.95. Reviewed by Kenneth Bussema, Assistant Professor of Psychology.

Confronted by the staggering volume of literature available today which is devoted to the understanding of human sexuality, the Christian couple faces a difficult choice in selecting accurate, Biblical advice and information concerning sexual questions or problems. Much of this current literature is a product of Masters and Johnson-type research or *Redbook*-type surveys, and it reflects an attitude that, if it is not shocking, is at least offensive to most Christian readers. *Intended for Pleasure* is offered as an alternative for the Christian couple concerned about their sex life. Dr. Wheat and his wife have prepared a sex manual that they feel offers a "medically accurate presentation of sex in marriage within the framework of the Bible's teaching."

Intended for Pleasure presents medically accurate information; however, this reviewer finds the attempt at articulating a Christian perspective of sexuality less than satisfactory. The authors express their view of the Biblical framework of sexuality primarily in the first few chapters and in a couple of chapters toward the end of the manual. The remainder of the volume reads much like a family doctor's explanation of the major findings of Masters and Johnson's research. An occasional reference to the importance of prayer or a Bible verse supporting the goal of exercises serve as a reminder that this information is being presented to a Christian couple.

Intended for Pleasure serves as both the title and theme of this manual. Dr. Wheat continually reminds the reader that sex is not sin and that God created sex for man and woman to enjoy. The increasingly popular theme of "Christians celebrate your sexuality," is sounded throughout this presentation but a thorough explanation of the meaning of man's sexuality is absent. One can agree with the basic position that sexuality as part of the creation of man is intended for pleasure, but without an explanation of the nature and meaning of sexuality,

human sexuality is reduced to a variety of techniques that are intended to produce pleasure.

Unfortunately, Dr. Wheat seems to have fallen into this secular reductionistic tradition. The total of the Bible's framework for sex in marriage is found in a list of eleven principles (pp. 23-30), each with specific Bible references given as a guide to finding God's design in marriage. Several of these principles, from a psychological viewpoint, are good advice, but they in no way serve as a foundation for a Christian perspective on sexuality.

After attempting to set the stage for a Christian understanding of sexuality, Dr. Wheat presents a series of techniques designed to help couples deal with typical sexual problems. Perhaps the most common problem, "the tortoise and the hare," is dealt with first. After the admonition that sex is intended to be pleasurable for both persons and the importance of praying about this problem, the Masters and Johnson technique for premature ejaculation is described in detail.

The authors next address themselves to the problems of orgasmic dysfunction for both men and women. With a promising title, "Fulfillment Ahead," the non-orgasmic wife is offered a series of techniques designed to allow her to experience pleasure and eventually orgasm. The techniques suggested involve touching and manual stimulation. The suggestions offered to the impotent (non-orgasmic) male are less complete. After summarizing the basic clinical components of impotence, the authors suggest that the husband forget his problem, and through talk, touch, and teasing learn to experience sexual pleasure.

Throughout these chapters, the focus is on experiencing pleasure by the person having difficulty; little or no attention is given to the fabric of the marital relationship, nor to the Biblical injunction to give oneself for the other's satisfaction (I Cor. 7). Clinically, these chapters and the manual as a whole are rather simplistic and inadequate. A comprehensive integration of the many possible emotional and psychological factors connected with man's sexuality is absent.

Can *Intended for Pleasure* be helpful to the Christian community? Yes, for the couple in need of practical guidance. Yes, for any couple too "uptight" sexually to discuss their difficulty. Yes, for use in conjunction with ongoing marital counseling. But no, for those seeking a clearly Reformed approach to man's sexuality. Believe in Christ, pray about your problems, and practice the correct technique do not provide an adequate Christian perspective on this subject.

Masterpieces of Religious Verse, James Dalton Morrison, Editor, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1977, 701 pages, paperback, \$9.95. Reviewed by Merle Meeter, Associate Professor of English.

This well-bound edition, with a forest-brook scene on the cover, is a reprint of the 1948 Harper and Brothers' edition. Over 1,500 poems—most of them complete—by more than 900 poets are superbly indexed by Author, Title, First Line, and Topic in this excellent collection, the most comprehensive volume of religious poetry on the market. The years and years of compilation and correspondence necessary to prepare a work of this magnitude are awesome.

The contents are arranged under seven headings: Book I. God; Book II. Jesus; Book III. Man; Book IV. The Christian Life; Book V. The Kingdom of God; Book VI. The Nation and the Nations; and Book VII. Death and Immortality. Moreover, there are ten to forty subheadings under each major rubric.

The word "religious" in the title is aptly chosen, for the poems do indeed reflect religious perspectives—as all of life is at root religious—albeit, of various types. Although the orientation of much of the poetry is Biblical-Christian, many of the collected poems were obviously written by pantheists, deists, unitarians, transcendentalists, humanists of various allegiances, and proponents of Hinduism and other mystical religions.

Among the more outspokenly non-Christian poets anthologized here are Aristophanes, Matthew Arnold, Emily Bronte, Robert Burns, Lord Byron, Stephen Crane, George Eliot, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Euripides, Thomas Hardy, William Ernest Henley, A.E. Housman, John Keats, D.H. Lawrence, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Omar Khayyám, Plotinus, Edgar Allen Poe, Carl Sandburg, George Santayana, Seneca, Percy Shelley, Sophocles, Charles Algernon Swinburne, Rabindranath Tagore, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and W.B. Yeats.

My intent in the above listing is to suggest the comprehensiveness of the selection, but also to indicate the diversity of religious commitments and the multiplicity of gods formed in *man's* image and designed to supplant the one true Sovereign, the Triune God, Creator of heaven and earth, and Jesus Christ the Savior-King. Nonetheless, the careful study of these representative poems can lead to enlightening comparisons and contrasts. Teachers, pastors,