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Book Reviews

by Russell Maatman

Romans, Chapters 1-8 and *Romans, Chapters 9-16* by William Hendriksen. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980 and 1981. 303 pages, \$14.95, and 230 pages, \$12.95. Reviewed by James A. De Jong, Professor of Theology.

Dr. Hendriksen's two-volume commentary on Romans was his final contribution to his "New Testament Commentary" series to be completed before the Lord took him home. Through his years of diligent work after retiring from the pastorate, Dr. Hendriksen was able to write expositions of the four gospels and the entire Pauline corpus, except for I and II Corinthians. His work is already highly regarded and widely used by pastors and laymen in North America and abroad. It is safe to predict that his books will continue to serve the church of Jesus Christ well for decades and even for generations to come.

As were his previous commentaries, the two volumes on Romans rest on careful, thorough scrutiny of the best Greek readings. Yet the author does not intimidate the non-specialist; technical points are relegated to the footnotes. His work is marked by helpful illustrations, analogies, line drawings, and pastoral observations. At points his material assumes a devotional character, as when he casts the beautiful eighth chapter into poetic form (I, pages 294-298). His work is distinguished by his excurses or short essays on crucial topics; his notes on ecclesiastical gifts and functions (II, pages 480-413) and his three interpretations of Romans 11:26 (II, pages 379-382) are examples of this pattern. After explaining verse by verse each chapter of Romans, the author includes a summary of his exposition. Read seriatim, these summaries alone provide a quick but thorough overview of the Hendriksen interpretation of Romans. Thus,

throughout the commentaries one sees the unique touches that make these volumes so distinctively the work of William Hendriksen.

While the Hendriksen commentaries were never written with the technical theologian in mind, the Romans volumes, like their precursors, are theologically decisive. About questions regarding Romans 9:13 as adequate support for the classical Reformed doctrine of election and reprobation, the author says, "Having examined the objections, the result is that the doctrine of divine election and reprobation, based, among other passages, on Rom. 9:13, stands. The arguments against it are shallow and fallacious" (II, page 324). Likewise the author forthrightly defends the position that Romans 7:14-25 is a description of Paul's own condition as a believer and thus, by extension, that of believers generally (I, pages 222-239). He strongly affirms apostolic office and authority against "much present-day religious literature" (I, page 39). Thus, if Hendriksen's theological interpretations are one-sided, they are clear presentations of positions that have predominated in the history of Reformed exegesis.

The "New Testament Commentary" series belongs in every Reformed church, every Reformed pastor's library, and every Christian school collection. While it should never be the sole basis or resource for interpreting a passage, Hendriksen's exegesis should be consulted regularly by interpreters and serious students of the Bible.

Trumpeter of God: A Biography of John Knox, by W. Stanford Reid. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982. 353 pages. Reviewed by William Nawyn, Associate Professor of History.

Originally published by Scribner's in hard-cover in 1974, this biography of the Scottish reformer and founder of the Presbyterian Church, John Knox, is from a scholarly point of view an impressive work. It does credit to the author, a leading evangelical Christian historian of our day, now emeritus professor of history at the University of Guelph in Ontario. It takes Knox, sometimes in great, almost excessive, detail, from the early preparatory years in Scotland, through the impor-

tant formative and foundational years as an exile in England and on the continent of Europe—especially with Calvin at Geneva—on through the years of leading and molding the Scottish Reformation, and finally into the last days of declining health and waning influence.

Reid sharply disagrees with those who contend that Knox was but a minor figure, arguing instead that he was a significant and influential person in his day and has had an important influence on history to the present