
Pro Rege

Volume 3 | Number 3

Article 9

March 1975

Theology of the New Testament (Book Review)

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Recommended Citation

Vander Stelt, John C. (1975) "Theology of the New Testament (Book Review)," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 3: No. 3, 25.

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Christ in the Old Testament, and the apostle's lack of distinction between an Old and a New Testament are all treated from the perspective of their implications for our understanding of Paul.

Most tenuous is chapter eleven, where the author questions the validity of Paul's interpretation of the Old Testament as a model for us today. Hanson judges this impossible since we have a different view of inspiration, of history, and of the mythical and legendary character of Old Testament material which Paul saw as historical. At this point those who depart from Hanson's presuppositions are in a position to profit more from his work than is the author himself! Despite these theological *a priori*s and an occasional colloquialism like "petered out" (twice on page 234), this study with its fine indices and rich bibliography is an important new contribution on a lively theological subject.

A Theology of the New Testament—

by George Eldon Ladd. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1974. 661 pages, \$12.50 (cloth). Reviewed by John C. VanderStelt, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Theology.

George E. Ladd, since 1933 an American Baptist minister and since 1950 professor of New Testament Exegesis and Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, has made an invaluable contribution with this book to the studies in New Testament Theology.

The book is intended primarily as a textbook for seminarians. Without getting lost in details, Ladd has succeeded in providing an accurate and up-to-date account of the exciting developments during the last several decades in the specific (sub) discipline of "New Testament Theology." The book is divided into six Parts: The Synoptic Gospels; The Fourth Gospel; The

Primitive Church; Paul; The General Epistles; and The Apocalypse. Each chapter of the book, except chapters 28 and 29, is introduced with a respectable "Literature" section. An exhaustive "Index of Authors" and "Index of Scriptures" (pp. 633-661) appears at the end of the book.

Although the purpose of the book is to present a positive exposition of the contents of the New Testament and not to engage in a polemic with differing views of other New Testament scholars, Ladd does familiarize the reader in a succinct and lucid manner with the New Testament interpretations of such men as Bultmann, Cullmann, Conzelmann, Moule, Manson, Dodd, Jeremias, Schweizer, Kümmel, Käseman, and Schnackenberg.

Ladd's own position is not far removed from that of G. Vos, N. Stonehouse, and H. Ridderbos. However, be it in a highly mitigated fashion, the author has retained his basically millenarian understanding of the New Testament. This becomes evident especially in his views about the Kingdom and the Church, as expressed in Part I of his book—this Part is essentially the same as Ladd's The Presence of the Future (1973), which is a second revised edition of his earlier book Jesus and the Kingdom (1964)—and in what he writes, especially on pages 629-630, about Revelation 19. Although Ladd and Ridderbos agree that the Kingdom precedes the Church, that the two are to be distinguished, and that the Kingdom is always the background and context for the Church, Ridderbos does see a closer relationship between these two than does Ladd (Cf. Ridderbos, The Coming of the Kingdom, pp. 355-356, and Ladd, pp. 69, 113 and 119). In no way does this detract, however, from Ladd's otherwise penetrating insights concerning the Kingdom and Church.

This book is unquestionably Ladd's most mature and encompassing study to date, an impressive capstone on his seven earlier outstanding publications. It will soon become an indispensable classic in every reputable personal and institutional theological library.