

Is there any wonder, then, that the postconciliar church is experiencing such difficulty in appropriating Vatican II and living it out in all its consequences? Vatican II was not just “another council” among many, but a council that has called for radical reorientation in the church. This cannot be accomplished overnight, nor can it be implemented without the pain of experiencing deep differences among the members of the church. What a council does not address, or addresses poorly, ineluctably becomes the task of future theological efforts and eventually, perhaps, of another council. We have seen this before in the history of councils: Constantinople completing Nicaea with its teaching on the Holy Spirit, Chalcedon adding balance to Ephesus’s Christology, Constantinople III further amplifying the Christology of both Ephesus and Chalcedon, and finally Vatican II addressing the office of bishop and thus correcting an ecclesiological imbalance left by Vatican I.

The first 50 years after Vatican II are the down payment for many more years of self-reform and struggle ahead. That is why L. speaks so often and so eloquently of the centrality of hope in the postconciliar period. Many will read the signs of division in the church as indications of the final testing of the church under the onslaughts of modernity and post-modernity; and many will even accuse the church of failing catastrophically and forecast its imminent demise. L., however, is not among them. His view is that the church, fortified with the primacy of love and the theological virtue of hope, can courageously enter a period of new vitality on behalf of the gospel and a newfound spirit of service to humankind. In spite of his criticism of much in today’s church, L. is a person of Christian optimism who calls us to join him on the journey. In this sometimes-divisive phase of the postconciliar church’s search for the significance and meaning of Vatican II, L. once again challenges us to engage our theological imagination and not just our theological reason in the task of “dreaming the church” for which we yearn into existence. With the appearance of *L’Église en travail de réforme*, L. once again has shown himself to be among the most important ecclesiologicals of our time.

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FIRST CORINTHIANS. By PHEME PERKINS. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012. Pp. xiv + 238. \$27.99.

Commentaries are notoriously difficult to review; they are probably best used when one wants to think about a particular portion of a text, rather than read the whole document straight through at a sitting. They can, moreover, tend toward the radically unreadable. Here, however, we have a model of the genre. This is partly because of the freshness of so

many of Perkins's insights, and partly because she has set the work out in sections, rather than as a verse-by-verse treatment of 1 Corinthians, so that it is possible for the reader to see the wood rather than the exegetical trees.

First Corinthians is clearly a text that P. has sat closely with over very many years. There is no substitute for that kind of long consideration, and in these days when there is too much rushing into print in pursuit of "targets," one has to say "O si sic omnes!" This is a reader-centered commentary, aimed primarily at students, and it can safely be put in the hands of those who are just beginning their study of the letter. Each section of the commentary offers first a brief introduction (with occasional text-critical comments) to provide an overall view of the section as a whole. Then in smaller pieces P. elucidates the letter's train of thought, before finally considering "theological issues," in which she explores the relevance of the section to a modern reader. On the way, a student will gather a good deal of helpful material about the background of Corinth and the growth of Christianity from its earlier rural setting to its urban incarnation in the hands of Paul and his fellow (or rival) evangelists, in the immense social and economic dynamism that Corinth had displayed since its refounding in 146 BC. P. provides an excellent account of the archeology of first-century Corinth; she is admirably thorough in her dating of the Gallio inscription, on the links of the Seneca family to Paul, and on the difficulties of dating 1 Corinthians.

In the commentary itself P. makes good use of contemporary material (from Qumran, for example, and from Hellenistic and rabbinic literature), sensibly laid out by the publishers, who helpfully included shaded boxes that shed light on what Paul is about. P. offers a fine account of the divisions in Corinth and a plausible suggestion about the process whereby the letter came to be. Clearly the tensions between Paul and Apollos are important here, and P. may be correct in downplaying the tensions more than many earlier commentators have done. The problem, she argues, is that the Corinthians have turned themselves into an Apollos camp and a Paul camp, creating divisions where none should have existed. P. offers an ingenious solution to the difficult passage "not beyond what has been written" (4:6b) and defends Paul against the overdone charge of abusive manipulation of his readers.

Taken as a whole, this commentary gives the reader a strong sense of how the argument of the letter holds together. There is, for example, an excellent analysis of chapter 13, which for liturgical purposes is too often detached from its setting; P. explains well how the chapter fits into its setting in the overall thrust of the letter. She also helpfully exposit chapter 15 on what Jews believed (or might have believed) regarding life after death, and what difference the resurrection of Jesus might have made. Because the text is not printed out in the commentary, it is essential for

readers to have the letter open as they read; that is an excellent thing, as it invites students to contemplate what Paul actually wrote. P. gives an admirably clear account (perhaps sometimes a bit too clear) of difficult texts such as the First Adam and Second Adam texts in chapter 15, and offers the acute insight that “the simplicity of Paul’s own argument obscures the mess he makes of philosophical exegesis” (188). Included is an excellent appraisal of the importance of the collection issue for Paul, though I think that P. misses a point about the mistrust within the community revealed by 16:1–4.

P.’s final theological reflections are characteristically perceptive on the notion of growth into a single church. Not all scholars will agree with all of her conclusions, but that is not important; she always plays fair in building her case, and her great strength is in the careful disentangling of the interwoven threads that can make Pauline argumentation so baffling at first sight. I warmly commend the book.

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JEWES ON TRIAL: THE PAPAL INQUISITION IN MODENA, 1598–1638. By Katherine Aron-Beller. Studies in Early Modern European History. New York: Manchester University, 2011. Pp. xii + 278. \$100.

Drawing from the rich inquisitorial archive of the Archivio di Stato in Modena, Aron-Beller presents a wonderfully rich, engaging, and valuable study that simultaneously explores the fate of Jews and *convertos* at the hands of the Inquisition and the status of Jews and Jewish-Christian relations more generally in the duchy of Modena.

The Holy Office, established in Modena (as well as neighboring Reggio) in 1598, contains nearly 400 *processi* (eight percent dealing with practicing Jews) from that time until its close in 1785. The focus of the book is on the first 40 years of inquisitorial activity—the most active period, which ended with the ghettoization of the Jews. A.-B. provides important details for the history of the Inquisition in Modena, as well as an intelligent and useful overview of the papal Inquisition (including its development, processes, and political tensions), its historiography, and the nature and interpretation of the documents it left behind.

A.-B. crafts a very useful context by examining the political conditions existing between the Este dukes and the papacy, the history and status of the Jews in the Duchy of Modena (particularly informative for the 16th and 17th centuries), and the creation and functioning of the Inquisition in Modena. Tense and unstable relations between local secular authorities and the tribunal impacted the scope and efficiency of the Holy Office