

The fundamental problem in Lähnemann's work — as in Lohse's — is that major theses, such as the historicizing character of the argument, are not integrated with the basic model of the dispute that occasioned the letter. The model is Dibelius': a syncretistic *Sondergemeinschaft* that attracts Christians by offering mystery initiation, encouraging integration of Christ into the *pleroma* of their cosmological speculations (Lähnemann removes from his own construction Dibelius' identification of all this as gnostic).

How can one explicate the argument of Colossians as a real address to Christians who *had submitted* (Col 2:20) to such a *cosmic mystery* by saying that the epistle changes *kosmos* from a metaphysical structure to the realm of preaching, *soma* from the domain of the powers to the church, and *pleroma* from a cosmic (!) entity to the Christian life (p. 151). The problem is not in these perceptions of Colossians' use of key terms. It is rather that such theology would be irrelevant to those who had turned to cosmic religion. The existence of such non-arguments should suggest that the position of the opponents has not been accurately perceived in the model.

Lähnemann finds himself in this position because he drew a picture of the error at Colossae from fragments of words and phrases (pp. 76-81, 100-07) before he engaged in a detailed exegesis of the text (pp. 110-50). Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that a foreknowledge of the shape of the error — from two generations of commentary — made it possible to build a structure of interpretation from vocabulary items.

One could hope that Lähnemann will one day use his perspective on the historicity of the arguments centering on *pleroma*, *soma*, etc., as the pigment for painting another picture of the opponents.

Chapman College

FRED O. FRANCIS

The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament. By WILLIAM SANFORD LASOR. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972. 281 pages. \$3.95. L.C. No. 67-28372.

As indicated by the author, this study addresses itself to the question "What have the Dead Sea Scrolls done to Jesus and the New Testament?" LaSor rejects the facile and often sensational approaches of A. Powell Davies, John Allegro, Johannes Lehmann, and the like. Instead, he proposes his own solution which sees the Dead Sea Scrolls and the NT as moving in two different orbits which "simply do not intersect." Hence, "there is no occasion for either to confirm or deny the other." LaSor may be right (though it seems to me that the issues at stake are neither confirmation nor denial but rather relationship and influence) but only despite the evidence he adduces and despite the methodology he employs in arriving at his conclusion. Thus, the author — when contrasting Qumran and Jesus — states (p. 246): "Qumran was a closed sect . . . It had no message for the world. Jesus extended a gracious invitation to all and built into His disciples the concept of the universal spread of the Gospel (Matt 11:28-30; 8:11-12; 28:19-20)." LaSor conveniently overlooks such passages as Matt 10:5 and 15:24 and their possible relationship to Qumranian particularism. When discussing the Essenes (chap. 10) and the early church (chap. 12), little or no mention is made of the very rich material in the church fathers. While it is certainly true, for example, that one must shake Epiphanius well before using, he nevertheless ought to be consulted. In his discussion of Qumran eschatology (p. 102), LaSor asserts that a priestly Messiah is not to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. He dismisses 1QS 9:11 as a

textual problem (which it most certainly is not) and overlooks CDC 8:24 (note the repeated preposition), not to mention the priestly character of the Zadokite sect, all of which point to a priestly Messiah (or, more accurately: messiah). Generalizations abound, several of which seem to take their point of departure from a confessional stance. The reader is informed (p. 85): "The Bible, Old and New Testaments, Jews and Christians, Protestants and Catholics, Eastern and Western Catholicism — all have always unanimously repudiated Humanism (=Man can save himself) as a possible option." Many pious and not so pious Jews would disagree; I suspect also that not a few who consider themselves Christians would take issue with this particular formulation. Again, such statements as (p. 64) "The spiritual concept of the Law was certainly present in Judaism; had it not been, Paul could never have argued successfully against rigid legalism . . . It is now clear that the Qumran sect also recognized the *more positive* [italics mine: S.Z.L.] application of the Law" tell us more about LaSor than they do about Qumran.

Despite such solecisms, the book as a whole is incredibly lucid and sober. Its content already requires updating, a feature common to every major publication on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thus, for example, against LaSor's Day of Atonement theory (p. 73) and against his understanding of the Qumran Melchizedek (pp. 183-4), see now J. Milik, "Milkî-šedeq et Milkî-reša'," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 23 (1972), pp. 95-144. Also, LaSor's treatment of divorce at Qumran (pp. 241-42) needs to be revised in the light of Y. Yadin, "L'attitude essénienne envers la Polygamie et la Divorce," *Revue Biblique* 79 (1972), pp. 98-99. Nevertheless, as a popular introduction to the problem it addresses, LaSor's book is unsurpassed.

Yale University

SID Z. LEIMAN

The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon's Commentary on John (Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series, vol. 17). By ELAINE H. PAGELS. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973. 128 pages. \$3.50. L.C. No. 72-10120.

Prof. Pagels makes two basic points in her investigation of Gnostic exegesis. Through a comparative analysis of extant fragments of Valentinian Johannine exegesis, she concludes firstly that "exegetical decisions are grounded theologically on the ontological trinitarianism which is expressed mythically in terms of the pleroma, the kenoma, and the cosmos" (p. 34). These three mythic stages provided the exegete with three correlated frames of reference which established the criteria by which he selected the passages for his contextual exegesis and in terms of which he interpreted any given verse. For example, Pagels shows that having selected John 1:3 for interpretation, Ptolemy understood this verse in terms of the myth of the pleromatic aeons, Theodotus referred it to the savior who, having emerged from the pleroma, constituted Sophia in the kenoma, the "emptiness" or void, while Heracleon referred this same verse to the creation of the cosmos (p. 26). Pagels has shown that Valentinian exegesis, far from being the bizarre and wild speculation often claimed by its "orthodox" critics (chap. 2), was in fact grounded in a consistent mythological understanding. Thus she has indicated the primacy of Gnostic myth for any understanding of Gnosticism.

The second basic point Prof. Pagels makes is that the Valentinian tradition "applies the metaphysical principle of the three ontological levels of being hermeneutically, discerning in the gospel three distinct levels of exegesis. Visible, historical events