

ple." This work could have been more sensitive to underlying Gentile sympathies contained within the gospel.

Cousland's work, as a whole, provides for the scholar definitions by which to clarify the identity of the crowds and the manner in which they are utilized in the Gospel of Matthew. This includes characterizations, attributions, and the manner in which they are contrasted with the disciples (who are the ideal followers). It is an excellent counterpart to Michael J. Wilkins' *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew's Gospel*. Of particular interest in Cousland's work is the crowd's portrait of Jesus, as demonstrated through their confessions, which are outlined in chapters 8 and 9. Here, the crowds are granted a more prominent position in Jesus' self-definition, helping one to understand the manner in which Jesus was to be perceived as the "Son of David" and the "Prophet". Cousland's overall conclusions regarding the crowds are positive (i.e. Israel is rejected initially by divine intention but is not excluded within Matthean salvation history and is included in the Matthean mission). The theology of Matthew, in this work, is Pauline (285), which is then of interest to a very broad scope of readers.

*The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* begins with very specific definitions of the crowds and moves to larger theological interpretations of the Matthean gospel text; it is a work that forms a Matthean theology while examining Pauline similarities. It is, as it claims, of interest to those involved in the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity, and it leads one down a path both clearly presented and well founded.

Karl McDaniel

McGill University

---

*Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism*. Edited by David A. Black. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. ISBN 0-8010-2280-0 Pp. 157.

---

*Rethinking New Testament Textual Criticism* brings together five symposium presentations articulating differing views regarding the theory and praxis of New Testament textual criticism (delivered at a symposium arranged by D. A. Black, held at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in April 2001). As suggested by the title, *Rethinking* is aimed at bringing readers up to date regarding contemporary issues and debates within the field of text criticism as well as challenging conventional views. The advocates of the views represented are well known for their scholarly contributions in this field. This book will profit primarily those already familiar with the issues and intricacies of New Testament textual criticism, albeit beginning students equally will profit from a careful reading.

Eldon J. Epp introduces the discussion with a sixty page synthesis of the past generation of scholars and their text critical work. Rather than presenting

an apologetic for a particular view, Epp's article outlines several major issues facing textual critics today. Epp is cautiously optimistic regarding future progress, to the extent that practitioners have learned from past mistakes. Epp reviews and critiques the value of commonly used textual canons, the text types and the evaluation process of variant readings. How these tools are used will inexorably affect the format of critical editions purporting to represent the "original text."

The following three articles consist of differing views in theory and praxis as commonly held today. Michael W. Holmes has become a leading spokesman for the reasoned eclectic method within textual criticism. Holmes' article is a cogently written defence of reasoned eclecticism, undoubtedly the most popular view among textual critics. Holmes tackles head on both the rigorous eclecticism of Elliott and the documentary hypothesis (= Byzantine priority) of Robinson. After exposing perceived weaknesses with the alternative theories, Holmes acknowledges the limitations and shortcomings of reasoned eclecticism. The inclusion of numerous examples assists the reader in following Holmes' principal arguments. He nevertheless maintains that the history of textual transmission in conjunction with the commonly accepted canons of criticism makes the reasoned eclectic method the best option for reconstructing the autograph text.

J. Keith Elliott presents readers with a succinct and well-written argument for thoroughgoing (*a.k.a.* rigorous) eclecticism. Elliott rejects any notion of "preferred" manuscripts and opts rather for the evaluation of variants on a per-variant basis. Elliott prefers internal canons of criticism and maintains that these should take precedence over favoured manuscripts. Elliott provides numerous examples of how contemporary scholars determine the autograph text by focussing on internal criteria rather than following preferred manuscripts. He dispels any naïve (mis)understanding regarding what reasoned eclecticism is all about, engaging the issues with discernment.

Maurice A. Robinson almost single-handedly has advocated the Byzantine priority position within the last decade. As a refreshing change, gone are the polemical and theological arguments sometimes associated with this view. Instead, Robinson presents a case centred within contemporary text critical praxis. Robinson contends that a convincing case for the Byzantine text can be made by using the documentary evidence in conjunction with accepted canons of criticism. He maintains that the weakness with alternative views is their failure to reconstruct a viable history of textual transmission that will account for the rise and dominance of the Byzantine text.

Moisés Silva concludes the symposium with a helpful overview and summary of the issues discussed. His evaluative and summative comments help one to consider the main problem areas and where further research is needed.

Despite the fact that the four keynote speakers each presented differing methodologies, a consensus nevertheless developed regarding certain key issues. First, the venerated canon of "the shorter reading is to be preferred" was

seriously questioned by all presenters. Thus Epp expresses reluctance in the blanket use of the canon (27-30), a sentiment echoed by Holmes (29), Elliott (107), and Robinson (129). Another major point of agreement is in regard to the history of transmission. Again, all participants acknowledge that this is of crucial importance to text critical work. Reconstructing a viable transmission history covering both the early and late stages of manuscript copying remains a primary task facing textual critics and serves as a criterion by which manuscript evidence will be evaluated and a "best," "original," or "autograph" text reconstructed. The fact that no satisfactory transmission has yet been produced or accepted by the majority of scholars is something the key speakers find troubling.

Although there appear to be few typographical errors (e.g., Scrivener for Scrivener, 145 n. 5), a few minor shortcomings of the book can be pointed out. The book contains two indices (Subject, Scripture), but these are incomplete since they focus primarily upon the main text and not the footnotes. Subject and scripture references within the main text are habitually recorded, but similar references that appear in footnotes are inconsistently included/excluded, thus limiting its use. Also, even some index items within the main text are omitted, e.g., references to Metzger and Hort (24), the Alands (40, 41, 48), Ehrman (57), and Welte (104).

Another problem in this book is the uneven length of the various articles. Epp's article runs a lengthy 60pp, the articles of Elliott and Holmes each run 24pp, and Robinson's article runs a mere 14 pages (Silva's wrap-up summary is properly brief and is not an issue here). The brevity of Robinson's article makes his case appear weaker than that which appears in the major contributions of Epp, Holmes, and Elliott. Since a footnote (126 n. 2) references an Internet source that presents Robinson's full-length symposium presentation, a better decision would have been to publish his original extensive discussion within the pages of this book as opposed to an overly brief summary.

While the presenters do not shy away from detailed and complex discussion, they generally do not use overly technical language. The articles are written in a manner that both scholar and student will appreciate. The result is a stimulating book, full of insights and furnishing readers with a good idea regarding the current theories and possible future directions for text critical studies. The broad range of the book in presenting three mainline alternatives among textual criticism serves as an excellent introduction to the current situation and should provide a starting point for subsequent studies and discussion.

Readers can be thankful to D. A. Black and Baker publishers for their interest concerning these text critical issues with the publication of these papers. For those interested in a relevant and timely summary regarding issues and concerns within New Testament textual criticism, I highly recommend this book.