

*Not Ashamed of the Gospel: New Testament Interpretations of the Death of Christ.* By Morna D. Hooker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, 143 pp., \$10.99 paper.\*

In this slim volume, Morna Hooker, Lady Margaret professor of divinity at the University of Cambridge, makes a helpful contribution to our understanding of the significance of Christ's death. Her differentiated, Biblical-theological approach is particularly commendable when dealing with a topic that is often treated in an atemporal and merely systematic fashion. The chapters on Paul, Mark and John, clearly the best portions of the book, were first given as lectures; the ones on Matthew, Luke-Acts, Hebrews and I Peter/John/Revelation were added for this present publication. For students of Jesus or of NT theology, this is a welcome source of information, and it is one that is less intimidating than, for example, Raymond Brown's recent two-volume tome *The Death of the Messiah*.

By way of critique, three points merit special attention. First, Hooker's total exclusion of Jesus' understanding of his own death will leave many evangelical readers unsatisfied. Is it really justified, or even entirely possible, to discuss what, for example, Mark thinks of Jesus' death without reference to Jesus' self-understanding? Second, in relation to widely held views on Jesus' death Hooker's is not an entirely conventional treatment. Most notably, she dismisses the notions of substitutionary atonement and propitiation regarding Christ's death. Hooker rather expresses Christ's death in terms of a "sharing of experiences" (i.e., union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection; cf. e.g. Romans 6), Christ having died, "not instead of the human race, but as their representative." Also, she prefers the term "expiation" to "propitiation." Third, some of the author's individual judgments are subject to debate, such as her contention that Matthew's resurrection stories are "full of improbabilities" or her reference to Luke's "scanty geographical knowledge."

These criticisms, however, should not detract from the fact that this book retains its value as a concise and informative summary of the distinctive interpretations of Jesus' death by the different NT writers. If the above cautions are kept in mind, the work may be commended as supplementary reading for classes on the subject.

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