

*Dictionary of Premillennial Theology.* By Mal Couch ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996. 448 pp. Cloth. \$23.99.

Published in 1996, this book continues to be a handy resource for anyone seeking to understand dispensational theology. Indeed, it might well be re-titled, “Dictionary of *Dispensational Theology*.” Fifty-six scholars contributed more than 180 articles on such topics as the Rapture, Hermeneutics, the New Covenant, the Tribulation, the Millennial Kingdom, Faith, and Salvation. The articles are concise yet informative and each article is followed by a helpful bibliography.

The book is laid out in an easy to use format similar to an encyclopedia. Not uncommon with a first printing, the observant reader will notice several typographical errors—some of them rather obvious. For instance, in the list of contributors, one contributor’s name is misspelled and in the transliteration guide, the Greek letter *chi* is omitted.

Each contributor seems to answer the unstated question: what do Premillennialists believe about \_\_\_\_\_. When there are varying viewpoints within Premillennialism on a particular doctrine, each viewpoint is mentioned, usually with a proponent cited. As you might expect, non-dispensational views on major doctrines are also addressed and critiqued within each article. However, articles on more obscure doctrines tend to address only dispensational views. For instance, Rodney Decker of Baptist Bible Seminary in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, writes a helpful article on the New Covenant in which he superbly compares the dispensational understanding of the New Covenant to the amillennial view. By contrast, the article on the Marriage Supper of the Lamb focuses mainly on the dispensational understanding. In general, the manual serves more as a practical guide to dispensational theology than an exhaustive defense of it.

The articles on Salvation and Faith were of particular interest to this reviewer. Elliott Johnson, professor of Bible Exposition at Dallas Theological Seminary, contributed the article on “Faith.” Though brief, it adequately refutes the common, though inaccurate charge that Dispensationalism teaches two different ways of salvation: one in the OT and another in the NT. Johnson correctly affirms that the requirement for salvation in every age is the same: faith.

Roy Beacham, who contributed the article on “Salvation,” concurs: “In each era of history, people were expected to believe God’s revelation...and recognize the complete inability of humankind to live up to the established criteria of God’s stewardship. People...were expected to acknowledge their insufficiency and cast themselves, by faith, wholly on the mercy of God.” Both of these articles were faithful to the clear biblical teaching that salvation is by grace through faith alone. One wonders, however, if we should question the content of the OT saving faith specified by Beacham. Eternal life has always been conditioned upon faith in the Messiah, not faith merely in the “mercy of God” (Gen 15:6; John 8:56; Rom 4:1-5; Gal 3:6-14).

In addition to theological entries, the book also contains numerous articles on key current and historical figures within Premillennialism. For instance, John Hannah, Chairman of the Historical Theology Department at Dallas Theological Seminary, writes excellent bio-graphical entries on such notable figures as Lewis Sperry Chafer and C. I. Scofield. Longer than most entries in the book, these two articles alone make the *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* well worth the investment. Other noteworthy biographical entries include articles on Augustine, Jonathan Edwards, George Ladd, John Nelson Darby, H. A. Ironside, Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord, and J. Dwight Pentecost.

As with any theological book—especially one with multiple contributors—each reader will no doubt find some viewpoints with which he or she disagrees. And some readers might correctly point out that much more could be said about certain topics. Nevertheless, the *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* is a worthwhile resource for Bible students.

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