

**JEWISH AND PAULINE STUDIES, by W.D. Davies, SPCK, 1984, pp. xi + 419.  
£25.00**

When Professor Davies retired from his chair at Duke University in North Carolina, some of his students arranged for this collection of essays to be published. For this we are in their debt as well as his, because in this volume may be found not only well-known contributions, like those to the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* and to *New Testament Studies*, but also some important pieces not readily accessible. They fall into three categories: studies on strictly Jewish themes; Pauline studies; and studies which are wider in scope, such as 'Conscience and Its Use in the New Testament' and 'The Moral Teaching of the Early Church'.

They vary in the sort of readership to which they were originally addressed, some having New Testament specialists in mind, and others directed more to the general though not altogether uninstructed reader. They include an extended and highly pertinent review of H.D. Betz's *Hermeneia* commentary on Galatians, and a long piece on the seventeenth century 'mystical messiah', Sabbatai Svi. In the former he issues a warning against accepting too readily Betz's setting of Galatians against a Hellenistic rather than a Jewish background (in the previous article he has some equally valuable things to say about Daniélou's depiction of 'Jewish Christianity'). For many readers the least familiar piece will be that on Sabbatai Svi. Although he may accept too readily Scholem's rejection of substantial influence from Christianity on Sabbatai Svi and his followers, he does nonetheless give a highly interesting treatment, noting important differences from but drawing instructive parallels with early Christianity. At the very least we can see how a messianic movement can move a long way from Judaism as usually understood while still intending to remain within it and being based on a prevalent understanding of it.

There are sixteen disparate essays (from 1954 to 1981, updated in the text and especially in the footnotes). What do they have in common? Not surprisingly they share an authority, that of a very great scholar totally lacking in pretentiousness. They are all written in a style that is lucid and agreeable to read. Needless to say they all betray the view that to understand the New Testament generally and Paul particularly, it is important to look to the contemporary and near-contemporary setting in Judaism. Professor Davies many times returns to his point that Paul (like other NT writers) saw in Jesus the Messiah, and thus as the inaugurator of a new age. This constitutes the eschatological framework for all that Paul says about the Law; for him, Christ takes the place within the Christian movement that the Torah had traditionally held. The general point must surely be taken, though it is difficult to ascribe to Paul as confidently as Davies does the centrality of the messiahship of Jesus as such. Similarly, not all scholars will agree that the tradition of the life and teaching of Jesus was as important (or indeed as well-known) in Paul's case as Davies thinks, yet that Paul's thought is centred on christology can scarcely now be gainsaid.

This collection is an impressive reminder of the depth and breadth of the work of one of the most significant figures in present-day biblical study. All serious libraries will need this book, and all serious New Testament students will need to ponder or ponder what it says.

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