Duffy, Eamon. *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. 326 pp. Hardcover, $35.00.

Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes is a superbly illustrated volume written in conjunction with the TV production of the same title. Eamon Duffy is Reader in Church History at the University of Cambridge, a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and the author of *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580,* Yale University Press, 1992.

Since, by the author's own admission, "no historian can claim equal competence and grip across the 2,000-year stretch" (ix), writing a history of the papacy is a daunting task. Thus, Duffy concedes that his book is not "the" history of the papacy, but only "a" history, because no single volume can embrace an institution that is so ancient and so intricately interrelated with the history and culture of Western civilization. It is not his intention to become entangled with a detailed historical and theological presentation, but rather to provide an overview of the history of the papacy, from Peter to Pope John Paul II. Selective in his presentation, Duffy concentrates on major themes, portraying the papacy as a bastion of universal Christian vision and a force for human freedom.

The book is designed for a "non-specialist" reader, and documentation is sparse except for the detailed bibliographical essay found at the end of the book. A glossary of technical terminology, a chronological list of the popes and antipopes, and an index are also included.

Saints and Sinners is organized into six sections, representing the major eras in church history, with each section divided into four chapters. The first section, "Upon This Rock," is the most significant. Here Duffy deals with the earliest history of the church and attempts to trace the development of ministry from the apostolic era to the birth of papal Rome. Surveying NT writings and other early Christian documents, Duffy describes the historical development which culminated in a firm establishment of the successor of Peter upon the Apostolic See of Rome and the subjection of the other Christian centers to its authority. In this section Duffy also establishes some important assumptions that are essential for the main thesis of the volume. His fundamental belief is that the development of papal authority, the involvement of the papacy in the political spheres of the Roman Empire, and the adoption of the Roman style of church government, was divinely ordained and guided. Indeed, according to Duffy, without the Roman Empire and its eventual endorsement of Christianity, the future triumph of the Church would have been in doubt. Thus, through the interrelationship with the Empire, the papacy as a divine institution was hailed as the principle of Christian unity and was prepared to carry on Christian mission through the disintegration of the classical world into the future.

In parts 2 and 3 the author takes the history of the papacy through the controversial period of the Middle Ages, when the popes initiated the Crusades, authorized the Inquisition, as well as attempted to introduce significant spiritual reforms, all leading to the establishment of papal monarchy and absolutism. Parts 4 to 6 deal with modern times, i.e., from the age of the Reformation, through the triumph of Ultramontanism and the reaction to nationalism and modernism of the

late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries, to the most recent history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Space does not permit a comprehensive review of Duffy's stimulating and sometimes provocative viewpoints. Only some major issues, therefore, will be dealt with in this review. It is to Duffy's credit that, although being a Roman Catholic and in spite of his assumption of the divine institution of the papacy, he attempts to present an objective history of the papacy with all its pitfalls, as well as its high points. He candidly admits that, strictly speaking, neither the NT nor any early Christian document even hints that Peter's special role as a leader of the disciples was or could be passed on to any single "successor," nor that there is any evidence which supports the papal theory. In addition, he admits that there is no historical evidence of Peter's ever having been the leader of the Roman Christian community. Instead, he suggests that the gradual development of the papal office was forged through historical necessity, such as the need for leadership during the persecutions, as well as the maintenance of doctrinal purity and organizational unity in the face of heretical teachings.

In many places Duffy has harsh words for the individual popes, as well as for the Church as a whole. On the other hand, he sees the institution of the papacy as a divinely-established leadership of God's Church on earth, not unlike the guidance of God over the history of Israel, be it under a good or evil king.

While Duffy's attempts at objectivity are refreshing, his presentation has several shortcomings. Most significant is Duffy's certainty that the historical and political process that produced papal Rome was divinely ordained regardless of the means through which it was achieved. Having found no support in the NT nor in the early Christian writings for this, he is forced to make some unwarranted assumptions that occasionally sound rather triumphalistic. The belief that Christ will always protect his universal Church against error, and that the Roman Catholic Church is the true and only Church of God on earth allows Duffy to gloss over the most atrocious acts committed by the papacy throughout the centuries. Duffy strongly believes that there were many popes who were unworthy of being the successors of Peter and does not condone their evil actions, some of which he describes in detail, but he sees them as part of the greater picture in this great divine-human project where human error is inevitable and sometimes even justifiable.

Duffy's treatment of the interaction between the popes and the Reformers also leaves a lot to be desired. The rise of Protestantism was a major event that shaped the history of sixteenth-century Europe, and yet, it is dealt with marginally and rather negatively. The issues raised by the Reformation are hardly addressed and Duffy dismisses most of them.

Finally, it is difficult to assess who the intended audience of Duffy's book really is. The superbly illustrated format suggests a coffee-table volume designed, by the author's own admission, for a casual, "non-specialist," reader. The text itself, however, requires much more than a casual knowledge of church history and of the theological problems that have arisen throughout that time.

Despite these shortcomings, *Saints and Sinners* is a fresh and stimulating approach to the history of the papacy. Although the implications which Duffy draws from his central thesis are often questionable, his book, nevertheless, gives

the reader a broad and sweeping argument for understanding the papacy and its interaction with Western history and culture in a new, refreshing way.

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Dunn, James D. G. *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon: A Commentary on the Greek Text.* The New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996. 388 pp. Hardcover, $32.00.

In their foreword regarding the series the editors refer to the paucity of recent NT commentaries that cater to the needs of students of the Greek text. It is to meet this need that the *New International Greek Testament Commentary* series was developed. At the same time, the editors do not consider the series a "full-scale critical commentary" (x), though they make liberal use of the many articles and monographs of NT studies that continue to be produced. Their goal is to provide a theological understanding of the text, based on historical-critical-linguistic exegesis. Of course, the words "historical" and "critical," when put side-by-side, might suggest to some readers liberal presuppositions that would, in their view, irreparably flaw the work. In general, the series does not take a liberal, critical approach, and in the present volume James D. G. Dunn does not reflect such presuppositions. Dunn, who is Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham, England, has written numerous NT works, including two other commentaries: one on Galatians and a two-volume work on Romans for the *Word Commentary* series. His commentaries reflect his careful attention to detail, his unusual ability to identify ancient parallels, and a keen insight into modern-day applications. In keeping with the title of the series, the editors have attempted to be "international" in character by drawing on the specialized qualifications of worldwide authors. The aim of the series is "to serve those who are engaged in the ministry of the Word of God and thus glorify God's name" (xi).

Dunn's style of writing is clear and understandable for persons from a broad spectrum of intellectual acuity. However, as the series title suggests, the work will be best appreciated by those who received above-average marks in Greek and have dusted off their Greek Testaments at least once or twice in the last six months. After an extensive bibliography of commentaries and "other literature," Dunn examines both Colossians and Philemon, giving considerable emphasis to the Jewish and Hellenistic cultures in the first century. He also pays particular attention to how these books portray the Pauline mission to the particular communities that received them.

Dunn applies his careful scholarship to the expected introduction issues such as time, place, and occasion of the writing of the letters. For Colossians, in addition to the historical/cultural/geographical background, Dunn devotes considerable attention to the elusive heresy/philosophy that called forth Paul's vigorous reproofs. It is a helpful, even necessary prelude to the commentary. After the introduction, Dunn carefully works his way through the text, Greek-phrase-by-Greek-phrase without a running English translation of those phrases. Although a translation is given at the beginning of each pericope of verses, the design favors those who don't have to keep paging back to check the translation in order to follow the exegesis.

The Pauline authorship of Philemon poses no problem, but Colossians is another story. While Dunn doesn't take a strong stand against Pauline authorship,