

Book Reviews

Groves, Joseph W. *Actualization and Interpretation in the Old Testament*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 86. Atlanta: Scholars Press 1987. vii, 223 pp. Bibliography. No Indices. ISBN 0-89130-966-7.

No modern scholar has equaled the influence of Gerhard Von Rad on the study of Old Testament theology. Central to Von Rad's impact was his discovery of powerful hermeneutical and theological forces at work in the growth of the Old Testament tradition. Joseph W. Groves provides a competent analysis of the centerpiece of Von Rad's exegesis: the concept of "actualization," which denotes the process by which the Old Testament writers made the past acts of God, and the ancient traditions about those acts, live afresh for the recipients of a later time. After a brief introduction outlining the modern preoccupation with bridging the gulf between historical-critical description of the Bible as an historical "artifact" and Christian theology's approach to the Bible as a normative rule of faith, the first chapter sketches the essential character, roots and unfolding of Von Rad's understanding of actualization. Groves finds the roots of Von Rad's conception in Herder, Gunkel and Mowinckel. Herder understood the interpreter of a text to be one who made the past live again, contemporizing material otherwise locked into its own historical context. Gunkel's pioneering form-critical work presented a portrait of the biblical literature's steady, organic development, thus disclosing concerns for contemporaneity within the material itself. Mowinckel's anthropological understanding of the cult as a vehicle for uniting the present worshiper to the primal time of God's activity located actualization at the heart of Israel's worship. Groves then traces the evolution of Von Rad's approach culminating in *Old Testament Theology*, relating actualization to the other major elements of Von Rad's theological approach: promise-fulfillment, typology and the creative word of God in history.

The second chapter follows the development and extension of Von Rad's approach in the work of Martin Noth, Claus Westermann, Hans Walter Wolff, D. R. Jones, P. R. Ackroyd, Brevard S. Childs, Norman Porteous, James Sanders and Odil Hannes Steck. This chapter overwhelmingly documents the pervasive impact of Von Rad's theological method on the best in modern theological interpretation. In particular, Groves demonstrates the close relationship among actualization, redaction criticism and canonical interpretation. Incidentally, Groves's correct linkage of Brevard Childs's emphasis on canon as the context for exegesis with Von Rad's theological understanding of tradition development provides a welcome correction of the misconstrual of Childs's proposal as an ahistorical, purely synchronic "literary" approach somehow related to "new criticism" or structuralism (for example: John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984], pp. 140-179).

The third chapter presents an extensive analysis of the nature of actualization as Von Rad presented it. Groves distinguishes three types of actualization in Von Rad's work. In literary actualization a text simply revivifies an old image or tradition. Cultic actualization derives from Israel's worship and is only indirectly related to the Old Testament text, although the core concept of cultic actualization is typically invoked for elucidating the texts. Chronological actualization focuses on the organic development of the biblical tradition with its inner hermeneutical and theological character. The latter is most distinctive of Von Rad's exegesis. Groves's exposition is sympathetic, but his criticisms are equally trenchant. He argues that actualization is not unique to the Bible, discussing in turn the connection between cultic and chronological actualization, Israel's sense of history and Israel's sense of time. He then argues that actualization, as Von Rad described it, is not central to inner-biblical exegesis, though clearly some kind of reuse of ancient tradition is the theological engine driving the Old Testament forward. Finally, Groves argues the actualization does not, as Von Rad and others thought, provide a suitable bridge between historical-critical analysis and the religious concerns of contemporary readers of the Bible.

In his final chapter, Groves offers a reformulation of the concept of actualization growing out of his own exegesis of some critical passages for developing the concept: Deut 5:1-3, Amos 9:11-15 and Isaiah 36-39. In these discussions he points out that the reuse of tradition is usually discernible not by reconstructing the growth of the material, but by analyzing the present literary contexts of the passages. His redefinition of actualization, therefore, emphasizes how the new literary context of a passage affects its meaning. Sometimes actualization involves a shift in the semantic level of a text. Other times actualization involves literary interrelationships indicated explicitly by vocabulary resonances. Other times actualization involves rethinking an entire biblical book. For Groves, the Bible's reuse of ancient tradition is best understood by careful scrutiny of the text's present shape. The final chapter summarizes the argument and sets out the parameters within which further development of the concept must move.

This book is thorough, well argued and insightful. Groves makes frequent recourse to the original German, when most use the English translation, and he often traces Von Rad's thought through successive German editions of *Old Testament Theology* (cf. p. 43). The volume is helpful particularly in the context of the present discussions of "inner biblical exegesis" and the debate surrounding the role of the canon for theology. Here, however, its primary weakness becomes apparent. This volume, though appearing with a 1987 publication date, is the author's 1979 Yale dissertation. Nowhere is the reader informed of the time lag between the writing and publication, nor does the author note whether or not the original work has been revised. The publisher must bear responsibility for omitting this information. The book takes no cognizance of developments since 1979, such as Michael Fishbane's *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985). Groves also seems to consider redaction criticism a dead-end and fails to develop fully the implications of his own discussion for reformulating redaction criticism. It is no accident that the early New Testa-

ment redaction critics, who generated great theological excitement and stimulated renewed interest in the evangelists, drew their inspiration from Von Rad. Indeed, Groves's arguments, in the light of present discussions, offer important clues for assisting historical-critical interpreters to recover a holistic vision of their theological task.

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Molina, Luis de. *On Divine Foreknowledge: Part IV of The Concordia*. Trans., Introduction and Notes, Alfred J. Freddoso. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1988. xii + 286 pp. \$34.95, Cloth. ISBN 0-8014-2131-4.

It is increasingly common for philosophers, especially those who are concerned with theological topics, to take medieval philosophy as their point of departure when they want to explore "the literature" on some issue. And on many topics, the most thorough and rigorous discussion to be found is by a medieval philosopher. Indeed, contemporary philosophers often discover that moves they have made and distinctions they have employed were worked out in great detail by their medieval predecessors. Unfortunately, however, much of the interesting medieval philosophy remains untranslated, and thus inaccessible to those who do not read Latin.

In this volume, Alfred J. Freddoso, who teaches philosophy at Notre Dame, has made widely accessible a text which has attracted considerable interest in the past few years. The author, Molina, was a sixteenth Century Jesuit who was one of the main figures in a rather intense controversy concerning the relationship between divine sovereignty and human freedom. Freddoso's translation covers only one part of Molina's main work, *The Concordia*, the full title of which is *The Compatibility of Free Choice with the Gifts of Grace, Divine Foreknowledge, Providence, Predestination and Reprobation*. As the title indicates, Molina was concerned to maintain genuine human freedom--which philosophers usually call libertarian freedom--without in any way weakening the claim that God has absolute foreknowledge and is fully provident.

All of these issues converge in Molina's treatment of divine foreknowledge. What is most distinctive about Molina's views in this regard is his idea of "middle knowledge," which he characterizes as that knowledge

by which, in virtue of the most profound and inscrutable comprehension of each faculty of free choice, He saw in His own essence what each such faculty would do with its innate freedom were it to be placed in this or in that or, indeed, in infinitely many orders of

things even though it would really be able, if it so willed, to do the opposite...(p. 168).

To oversimplify, God's middle knowledge is his knowledge of what all possible free persons *would* do in all possible circumstances or situations. Since these persons are free, they could do otherwise, but God knows what they would in fact do if He created them in such and such circumstances.

God providentially orders the world in light of His middle knowledge, according to Molina. So God's foreknowledge of what will actually happen depends logically on both His middle knowledge and His knowledge of which persons and circumstances He has chosen to create.

The idea of middle knowledge is a very fruitful one which has been applied to a number of current discussions in philosophy of religion. Probably the best-known recent application of the notion is that of Alvin Plantinga in his various formulations of the "Free Will Defense" as a response to the problem of evil. (It is noteworthy, however, that Plantinga was not aware of Molina's work when he initially devised his free will defense and he admits he did not know whether it was commendation or condemnation when he was first called a Molinist!) In our day, as in Molina's, his views have become the subject of considerable controversy.

Freddoso has enhanced the value of his translation by including a lengthy (81 page) Introduction which is a substantial work of philosophy in its own right. Much of this is given to explicating the modal, metaphysical and logical distinctions which are important for understanding Molina's argument. Freddoso also takes pains to set the discussion of divine foreknowledge in its larger theological context, particularly stressing its connection with the orthodox doctrine of providence. In the last section of the Introduction, he defends Molinism against a number of objections.

Although his case for Molinism is impressive overall, his response to one objection is particularly disappointing. He argues, contrary to some critics, that there is no reason for a Molinist to deny the "principle of predilection," according to which God distributes the favors of His grace unequally (pp. 65-66). This principle, of course, is readily embraced by those who hold that God bestows or withholds His grace as He will. It does not, however, fit as easily into a Molinist framework, especially since one of Molina's aims was to construe the doctrine of predestination in a way which does justice to the claim that God desires to save all persons. If the principle of predilection is accepted, Molinism does not seem to represent much of an improvement over the views Molina opposed.

This volume is of obvious interest to those in the Wesleyan tradition since the issues Molina debated with his opponents parallel those in Protestant theology which separate Calvinists on one hand, and Arminians and Wesleyans on the other. I suspect many Wesleyans will find in Molina a powerful ally on matters of foreknowledge, providence and predestination.

This is not, I should add, a book for the casual reader or the half-interested. But those who still recognize the value of hard thinking on classical theological questions will find it to be very stimulating and helpful for their concerns.

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Webber, Robert E. *Celebrating Our Faith: Evangelism Through Worship*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986. 118 pp. \$11.95. ISBN 0-06069-286-3.

The hype of the American church today is numerical growth and congregational planting. The market is inundated in one way or another with "how to" books on the subject of harvest. There is mass, personal, para-church and lifestyle evangelism...name it, it is for sale. So one might think that Webber's *liturgical evangelism* is just another new gimmick or fad technique. Not so! Webber's approach is as old as the third century. His generative idea comes from Hippolytus's *The Apostolic Tradition*. The idea is developed by a Protestantization of the modern Catholic version of this ancient evangelism called the "rite of Christian initiation of adults" (RCIA). The approach is grounded in a sound Christology, a strong theology of the Church, a structure of ritual and stages of faith development.

From Hippolytus, via Piaget, Erikson and Fowler (and I would add John Wesley), Webber constructs three rites of passage in a person's conversion. Within these rites there is a period of inquiry, times of instruction and discipleship, a period of purification and enlightenment, the moment of initiation into Christ and His Church, and a final period of integration into the life of the Church. Webber adequately demonstrates these stages of conversion chapter by chapter, presenting for each a biblical background, experiences of the early church and a modern application of the tradition.

Webber's own disjunctures in faith have already given us such helpful books as *Worship Old and New*, *Worship Is A Verb*, and *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*. He is well acquainted with the sources, giving excellent Notes, Bibliography and an Epilogue which cites helps for making the liturgical model a cutting edge in local congregations today.

The book stresses only first-generation Christians--the conversion of adults. I would like to see a book by Webber covering second-generation Christians--the faith development of infants and young children. Such a book might clear up some of the vestiges of his Baptist theological heritage which

appear here and there in his sacramental theology (e.g., chapter 7). One rejoices, however, in his ecclesiology, especially in regard to the process of conversion and continual renewal of the church. This book is a must for the season of Lent!

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Davies, W. D., and Allison, Dale C., Jr. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*. Vol. I: Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I-VII. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988. 731 pp. \$55.16. ISBN 0-56709-481-2.

It is remarkable that the Gospel of Matthew, which has exerted primary influence upon Christian life and thought from the very beginning of the Church, has received so little attention by English-speaking commentators during the past seventy-five years. The last of the great English commentaries on the First Gospel appeared in the dawning years of this century; and in spite of the immense learning and acute critical insights contained in them, these works are now clearly outdated. The most significant recent commentaries have been written in German or French, and left untranslated into English (one thinks of Lohmeyer, Gaechter, Grundmann, Gnilka, Luz and Sabourin). The English-language commentaries which have emerged in the last several years have either been limited by the space restrictions of the series in which they appeared (as with the otherwise fine volume by David Hill in the New Century Bible Commentary), or have suffered from idiosyncratic biases (as with the commentary by Robert Gundry).

The time is ripe, then, for an up-to-date, thorough, learned and perspicacious commentary on Matthew. And there is no better place to look for such a work than in the new series of the International Critical Commentary. The New Testament scholarly community desperately needs a great commentary, written from within the English-speaking world, on the First Gospel. Is it to be found in this massive work by Davies and Allison?

One approaches this commentary with great expectations. Both authors are mature scholars who have written widely in New Testament studies, with particular attention to the Gospel of Matthew. W. D. Davies, especially, has earned a wide and well-deserved reputation as a fair, informed and profound interpreter of the New Testament. Moreover, this commentary is of immense size. The volume under review, itself over 700 pages long, covers only the Introduction and chaps. 1-7; two subsequent volumes are planned.

In the face of such high expectations, the commentary generally disappoints. One senses difficulties already in the first pages of the Introduction, which deal with method. Here the authors (seem to) opt for a wholistic approach, one that takes seriously the traditional historical-critical analysis, while at the same time employing insights from literary criticism and canonical criticism. Such an integrative approach is to be commended; but this kind of integration requires thorough understanding, reflection and a high degree of hermeneutical sophistication. These authors are unable to pull it off. For one thing, they do not fully understand the literary and canonical methods, as they themselves admit. Further, although they state that literary criticism and the more traditional approaches are complementary, they actually cannot believe this; for they (wrongly) identify the notion of semantic autonomy, as espoused by the New Critics, with literary criticism in general. It is obvious that semantic autonomy leaves no room for historical interpretation of the text. The upshot is that, despite asseverations to the contrary, Davies and Allison react against the literary and canonical criticisms. Indeed, they have produced a commentary that interprets the text almost entirely on the basis of historical (mostly Jewish) parallels and to some extent the evangelist's editorial changes vis-a-vis Mark and Q, but gives no significant attention to evidence from the narrative itself. In fact, this commentary is less concerned with the logic of the narrative for interpretation than were the older commentaries by Plummer, McNeile and Schlatter.

This methodological confusion not only concerns the Introduction, but has implications for Davies and Allison's interpretation of the book as a whole, as well as individual passages within the book. For example, because Davies and Allison cannot find perfect historical parallels to the form of our canonical Gospels, they conclude that our Gospels have no overall genre at all; they are simply hybrid works that contain within them various kinds of genre. This view not only represents a problematic return to Dibelius's notion of *Kleinliteratur*, it also tends toward a rejection of real literary (and theological) integrity and coherence in the Gospel.

Moreover, Davies and Allison frequently interpret individual passages only on the basis of historical parallels, with no attention given to the immediate or broader contexts, and with relatively little attention given even to Matthew's redactional aims. This tendency sometimes results in interpretations that actually contradict the context, as when they maintain that the infancy and baptism narratives emphasize the theme of new creation (a notion certainly absent in Matthew's Gospel), or when they suggest that the devil's act of showing Jesus the kingdoms of the world (4:8-9) causes Jesus to possess them ("the act of showing the kingdoms of the world seems to be a legal one--to see is to possess").

In spite of these methodological shortcomings, this commentary contains a wealth of background information, exhaustive citations of rabbinic and other Jewish parallels, and clear presentations of the history of interpretation on various passages. One should add, however, that the authors are stronger in listing historical data than they are in drawing persuasive conclusions from them. In

addition, the authors frequently discuss grammatical points in the text, but they usually fail to make theological application from their grammatical observations, even when such applications could certainly be made with justification.

We conclude, then, that Davies and Allison have provided a sometimes helpful commentary, but not a great commentary. The New Testament scholarly community still awaits a commentary on Matthew that matches, for example, the magnificent work by Joseph Fitzmyer on the Gospel of Luke.

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Lohse, Eduard. *The First Christians: Their Beginnings, Writings and Beliefs*, trans. M. Eugene Boring. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983. 126 pp. ISBN 0-8006-1646-4.

Bishop Eduard Lohse of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Hanover, West Germany, formerly taught New Testament at the University of Göttingen. In addition to his scholarly contributions to the mission of the Church, such as his commentary on Colossians and Philemon in the acclaimed Hermeneia series, he is gifted at writing for the informed lay person. His *The New Testament Environment* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976) is a satisfactory undergraduate text, and *The First Christians* would be useful as a basic reading for an adult class in the church.

The book amounts to a thematic introduction to the New Testament with attention to the communities of faith in which its documents arose. It is divided into five chapters: the person of Jesus, His words and deeds, the beginnings of the Church, the distinctives of the early Christian community and the distinctives of the New Testament. The author's thesis is thoroughly evangelical and thoroughly Lutheran: "The New Testament is a collection of writings that show what the first Christians believed and preached..., the gospel of God's grace, which in Christ is extended to all people of the world. It is this news, this gospel, that is the heart and center of Scripture, giving unity to all its parts" (p. 7).

By the use of a plethora of insights into the culture prevailing at the time of the New Testament, and the tools of New Testament research and criticism, Lohse demonstrates this unity by interacting with the diversity he discovers within scripture. The particular circumstances that called forth the various books of the New Testament and the unique perspective of each author or community of faith gave rise to contrasting reports within the New Testament which cannot be reconciled or harmonized. For example, Lohse believes that

the reasoning by which James refutes those who were attempting to separate faith and works would not have been acceptable to Paul (p. 86).

Lohse does not attempt to harmonize these contradictions. Rather, he takes the differences of the various witnesses seriously and celebrates their common testimony to the distinctive and common faith of the first Christians. For example, the synoptic gospels cast Jesus' words at the Last Supper in the context of a farewell Passover meal. The fourth gospel, in contrast, portrays the Last Supper as a farewell, but not a Passover meal. It is important for John that Jesus dies at the very time the Passover lambs were being sacrificed in the Temple. Lohse concludes that since the time of the farewell supper cannot be determined precisely, its meaning must not be derived from its cultic setting as a Passover meal, but from the words of Jesus that are preserved in several of the traditions. Lohse points out that many religious groups in late antiquity gathered for cultic meals in order to be empowered by the deity or to become deified themselves. But a distinctive feature of the faith of the first Christians was that no cultic meal or ritual activity could mediate divine power. Rather "at the celebration of the Lord's Supper the death of the Lord is proclaimed, the one who died and was raised 'for us'" (p. 75).

Lohse agrees with Luther that books like James, Hebrews and the Revelation are of less value than the other books of the New Testament (p. 120). And the result is a tendency to read the unity of the New Testament witness in Pauline terms. Nevertheless, in tension with his Lutheran tradition, Lohse rejects reading the Sermon on the Mount as a mirror reflecting the believer's inadequacy and, thus, revealing the necessity of divine grace. While the focus upon grace is good theology, the Scripture itself calls for another interpretation (p. 56).

This little book is well written, easily understood and includes suggestions for further reading for anyone who wants a short and manageable treatment of the New Testament in its environment. It would be a valuable textbook for adult classes or small disciple groups in the church. While the chapters are descriptive and not hortatory, they challenge readers to enter into the faith of the first Christians and live it out in their own cultural contexts. In churches where participants are unfamiliar with New Testament criticism or are unprepared to deal with a plurality of viewpoints within Scripture, the book will need to be taught by a person prepared to deal with these matters.

The thrust of *The First Christians* is thoroughly constructive and positive, for Bishop Lohse insists that the books of the New Testament "unanimously testify to the Gospel of God's grace, which in Christ is extended to all the people of the world" (p. 120).

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Kikawada, Isaac M. and Arthur Quinn. *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis 1-11*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985. 144 pp. \$10.95, paper. ISBN 0-687-02602-4.

Isaac M. Kikawada teaches ancient Near-Eastern studies at Berkeley, and Arthur Quinn is a professor of rhetoric at the University of California at Berkeley. Their book contributes much to biblical scholarship. Although the book's main thesis, that Genesis is the work of one skillful author (although he may have used sources), may not be persuasive, the book will serve well as an introductory text for some literary courses. Interested lay people and college and seminary students encountering biblical criticism for the first time will find this book helpful. The authors describe some of the intricacies of biblical criticism, but also demonstrate the aesthetic beauty of the biblical text.

The authors maintain that classical studies done over the past one hundred years support their claims for the authorial unity of Genesis. In 1938, W. Schadewalt (also Cedric Whitman in 1958, in *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press]), reversed the scholarly opinion about the nature of Homer's *Iliad*. Previous to his study, *Iliasstudien*, classical scholars had assigned the *Iliad* to the death of a thousand indeterminate sources. Current Homeric studies (outside of Germany at least) no longer employ a documentary, but rather a unitary approach to the *Iliad*. A similar reversal has not, however, taken place in biblical studies, especially in the study of the Pentateuch.

Kikawada and Quinn maintain that the documentary hypothesis "remains an hypothesis" (p. 13). Their thesis is that the unity of Genesis is probably more subtle than the unity of the *Iliad*. It has escaped our best powers of observation until now. They are *not polemical*, nor are they championing the evangelicals. Their hope is to perform an objective test for the possible unity of Genesis 1-11 which is picked, of course, because this is a section that the documentary hypothesis has traditionally used to establish its leading arguments for the sources JEP.

In three chapters of literary analysis on Genesis 1-11, the writers conclude that they have "found an author with such complete mastery over his materials (whatever their source) that it makes no literary sense to speak of him as an editor" (p. 83). Chapter four, "One Noah. One Flood: The Coherence of the Genesis Version" (pp. 83-106) summarizes the evidence for the unity of Genesis 1-11. In addition to their appeal to the "unitary hypothesis" in Homeric studies, they cite a number of biblical scholars in support of this conclusion of unity. Bernhard Anderson, Francis I. Anderson, G. J. Wenham and, in a negative vein, Jeffrey H. Tigay. Kikawada and Quinn argue that Tigay has shown how much it would take to establish the documentary hypothesis of Genesis 1-11 (Tigay, *The Evolution of the Gilgamesh Epic*, [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982]).

In chapters five and six, Kikawada and Quinn branch out and suggest the application of the unity of Genesis 1-11 as a paradigm for finding biblical unity

in other biblical texts (e.g., historical books). They do not develop a convincing case for their further proposals in these last pages.

Kikawada and Quinn remain irenic throughout their study and are not “re-belling against a century of Old Testament scholarship,” as the publisher’s blurb suggests. They rather build upon the insights gained by past research, even when they disagree with it. It appears to me that Kikawada and Quinn have demonstrated a great amount of unity in Genesis. But more problem passages remain to be treated, and the *nature of the unity* of Genesis does not necessarily demand the conclusion they suggest.

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Craigie, Peter C. *The Old Testament. Its Background, Growth, and Content.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986. 351 pages. \$18.95, cloth. ISBN 0-687-28751-0.

The name of Peter Craigie is well known in conservative circles of Bible scholars. Craigie, before his death in 1986, was for several years the dean of the faculty of humanities at the University of Calgary. Other useful works of his include *The Book of Deuteronomy* (1976), *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (1978) and *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (1983) (all from Eerdmans). The last-mentioned title indicates Craigie’s intense interest in the language and literature of the West Semitic world. He brings this extra-biblical knowledge to the fore in the present work as well. This is all to the good of the reader. As a United Methodist, the reviewer is grateful to Abingdon for taking on such a necessary publishing project with so capable a scholar.

One thing that strikes the reader almost from the first is that Peter Craigie attempts throughout his work to present both what modern mainline historical critical scholarship and what traditional and conservative scholars think about the Old Testament. Thus, one will find here positions with which one will not always agree (Craigie himself frequently does not). But one *will* find a fair description of “how the other half” thinks--and this from a scholar who is highly conversant with such positions. The key word for describing his references to historical critical and other issues is “balance.” Unlike many conservative students, he is able to see the value in certain liberal positions with which he may not always agree. He is open to any logical, defensible positions which will help to explain the present form of the Old Testament books. And Craigie frequently offers a level-headed critique of entrenched positions on both the liberal and conservative sides of scholarship.

The work is divided into five parts. Part I introduces the book and deals with "The Phenomenon of the Old Testament." Here are contained brief but informative discussions of the nature of the Old Testament, the titles of the separate books which compose it, canon and formation of the entire Hebrew Bible, its languages, chronological perspectives, the preservation of its texts, its place in contemporary religions and its relationship to the humanities. In the latter two sections Craigie illustrates the pervasiveness of the Old Testament's influence in modern secular society and thus demonstrates our need to understand it.

Part II is labeled, "Background of the Old Testament Period." Here is where Craigie really excels. In this sixty-page section he describes the important civilizations of the ancient Near East which contribute to an understanding of ancient Israel's own culture and literature. In the first half of Part II, Craigie places the summarized Old Testament story in the context of historical developments of the great civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. In a second subdivision he discusses the value and admitted limits of archeology in enhancing our understanding of the Old Testament. Here he discusses several important sites such as Tell Mardikh (Ebla) and Qumran. The value of physical and literary archeological remains are assessed. There is much in the Old Testament which archeological discoveries have not explained; nor can one expect them to.

Part III, the longest portion of the book at 150 pages, may be considered the "meat" of the book since it deals with the individual Old Testament books. Here, in conformity with his opening remarks on canonization, Craigie deals with the literature in its Hebrew canonical order: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. This portion of the work orients the reader to the sacred literature so that one is exposed in canonical sequence to the historical prophetic books followed by the major and minor prophets. Likewise, Craigie treats the Writings in two digestible sections (Psalms with Wisdom Literature and other books of the *kethubim*).

Craigie describes the "Content of the Old Testament" in a fourth part of his book under the respective chapter headings, "The History of Israel" and "The Religion and Faith of Israel." Here the reader is confronted with problems and perspectives in the study of Israel's history. Craigie recognizes that the historical narratives are written from a theological perspective using (from the modern historian's point of view) incomplete sources. Even given the differences in scholarly opinion on matters of authorship and date, Craigie strives to offer the modern scholarly consensus on Israelite history. This is composed of the so-called "pre-historic" and "historic" periods. Genesis through Judges represents for most liberal scholars those Old Testament narrative works which refer to the former period. Craigie admits, with the consensus, that the history of Israel as contained in the books falling into the second category is less contentious.

Having laid this foundation Craigie then moves through a discussion of each of the main historical periods which gave rise either directly or indirectly to the content of the Hebrew canon: the patriarchs, Exodus and Sinai, settle-

ment of Canaan, the united and divided monarchies, and the exile and restoration. Here Craigie's position is conservative and well-informed about the Near-Eastern history into which the biblical periods fit. This section includes several helpful charts which contain dates for figures associated with the historical, prophetic and "writings" literature.

In the second chapter of Part IV ("The Religion and Faith of Israel") the author acquaints the reader with the components of ancient Israelite cult, common religious beliefs and ideas, the prophetic contribution to the faith of ancient Israel, and the place of the Wisdom traditions. One will come away from this section feeling less estranged from the peculiar idioms of, say, the classical prophetic books and the Psalter.

The "Epilogue" comprises the final brief section of the book. Here Craigie orients the reader toward the modern study of the Old Testament: what scholars are interested in pursuing at present. The final segment of Part V consists of the useful annotated bibliography of books for the study of Old Testament literature, history and culture. Besides the Scripture index there is a general index keyed to biblical names and topics of study. Due to the nature of his concise discussions, the former index often directs one to crucial passages for understanding each book.

An example of Craigie's balanced approach may be seen in his treatment of the composition of Isaiah. He recognizes that there were reasonable grounds which gave rise to the formation of a hypothesis of multiple authorship for this book such as differences in historical perspective and literary style (pp. 153-154). Conservative scholarship, in attempting to maintain the unity of the book regarding authorship, represents "a minority position within biblical scholarship as a whole" (p. 155). On the other hand, he also recognizes that the author or editor has done nothing to confirm the modern notion of multiple authorship. Rather "...it is essential to recognize that the book of Isaiah in its present form is presented, apparently deliberately, as a single and unified work" (p. 155). This fact suggests that it is to be read and comprehended in its entirety.

Likewise, in grappling with the date of the book of Daniel, Craigie presents both the older traditional view of a late sixth-century authorship alongside that held by many modern scholars: circa 167-164 B.C. He then opts for a moderate position admitting that "a firm dating of the book remains debatable and difficult" (p. 247). Nevertheless, the book is not intended as "a prophetic timetable of either the ancient world or the twenty-first centuries." Craigie recognizes that the most important issue at hand is to understand the visionary message of Daniel, a task which is all too easily clouded "by fighting the battles of historical criticism..." (p. 248). Daniel must be understood from the standpoint of its place in the genre(s) of apocalyptic literature.

The reader of this review will have rightly discerned that Craigie has packed a tremendous amount of useful information for the beginning and advanced reader in a relatively small space. Craigie has once more demonstrated his mastery at digesting much information into brief, readable sections.

The Old Testament is helpfully illustrated throughout with maps, chronological charts, script figures and museum photos. This is especially helpful in orienting the reader toward the ancient Near Eastern setting of the Old Testament (Parts II and IV).

The book is intended primarily for undergraduates, and this reviewer believes it achieves the goal of condensing an enormous subject into a readable, accurate, introductory package. However, *The Old Testament* will prove useful to seminary students and pastors as well. This reviewer has already found it helpful as a quick reference source to the historical background for Old Testament books. No doubt it will serve this function for busy pastors. In fact, Craigie's work should make the Old Testament far more accessible and less intimidating to a wide audience of pastors and educated laity. And this is well in keeping with the lifetime goals of Dr. Craigie, who was himself a committed churchman.

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