

and references to Christian arguments, are provided in Berger's highly helpful commentary on the text. The reader is also assisted by an analytical table of contents, an extensive bibliography, and indexes to biblical citations and to topics, sources and authors. Five appendixes provide further and more detailed examination of such issues as "The Use of the Plural in Reference to God," "The Law as Allegory," and "The Christian Exegesis of Genesis 18."

This fascinating book, by providing a modern edition and translation of a key text, focuses on a facet of church history relatively unknown to most Christians, yet of crucial importance to our understanding of medieval doctrine, exegesis, and culture. Theologians interested in some historical perspective on Jewish and Christian beliefs, historians concerned with the social and religious situations of medieval Jewry, and even literary historians interested in the backgrounds of medieval legends (e.g., the tale told by the Prioress in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that Jews conducted ritual sacrifices of Christian children) will find *The Jewish-Christian Debate in the High Middle Ages* challenging and thoughtful. As Berger notes, "The array of arguments in the *Nizzahon Vetus* is almost encyclopedic, and the book is therefore an excellent vehicle for an analysis of virtually all the central issues in the Jewish-Christian debate during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries" (p. 36). That it is, but because of Berger's impressive scholarship, the "Old Book of Polemic" becomes an excellent vehicle for a much broader understanding of the Middle Ages, both Jewish and Christian.

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Childs, Brevard S. *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1979. 688 pp. \$28.50.

It seems that about every decade a monograph appears which threatens to alter the direction of a discipline. Childs's *Introduction* is such a work. The method it advocates may significantly influence exegetical work on the OT in the 1980s.

Calling his method the "canonical analysis/method," Childs takes as his starting point the final, or canonical form, of the received Hebrew text. This final form is given priority because it preserves the full witness of the encounter between God and Israel, and has been transmitted by and shaped religious consciousness of both synagogue and church for two millennia. The canon principle shifts the emphasis away from historical

reconstruction of the literature and its *Sitz im Leben* to the religiously normative value of the final canon.

Childs does not ignore historical-critical concerns. However, since these methods have concentrated on diachronic textual genesis, he feels they have failed to give proper weight to the religious witness of the canon. To show how critical methods have led to an impasse in addressing the crucial religio-theological value of the text as text, Childs employs critical *Forschungsberichte* as a prolegomenon to his discussions of each book. While the study of the prehistory of the text is essential in its own right, the final canon provides the criterion by which the shaping, expansion, or stability of earlier stages may be assessed. The manner in which these traditions are emphasized or subordinated in the total canonical witness permits a more precise religious interpretation of them.

Use of the canon principle with the Pentateuch and Genesis illustrates Childs's approach. In keeping with his treatment of each division of the MT, he surveys the history of critical research of the Pentateuch and concludes with the implications of the canon principle for solving the "present impasse" of pentateuchal studies. He then prefaces Genesis with a full bibliography of the important older and more recent treatments of relevant issues, follows with a concise review of the history of critical research on Genesis that singles out the inherent impotency of historical-critical approaches in getting at the theological dimensions of the text, and climaxes by applying the canon principle to each section of the book. This procedure reveals how both traditional and literary strata have been redacted in a way that each has assumed different but complementary roles in the final shape. The so-called two creation accounts provide an example: Here J has been subordinated, not merely juxtaposed, to P, and now unfolds the history of mankind as the "intended offspring of the creation" (p. 150).

The final result of such redaction, Childs states, is that Genesis now serves the "community of faith and practice as a truthful witness to God's activity on its behalf in creation and blessing, judgment and forgiveness, redemption and promise" (p. 158). He concludes his analysis with a discussion of the theological and hermeneutical implications of the canon principle for Genesis. Treatment of the other OT books follows this same general pattern.

Aside from the presentation of a special introduction for each book and division (pp. 107-655), Childs reviews the history of *Einleitungs-*research (pp. 25-45), and sets the issue of text and canon in a methodological context (pp. 46-106). The work concludes with a consideration of the relationship of the Hebrew canon to the Christian Bible (pp. 657-671).

In at least three regards, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* differs strikingly from the standard *Einleitung*. First, due to Childs's principle of canonical priority, the question of canon, usually considered a final stage in the growth of traditions and thus placed last in discussion (cf. Eissfeldt and Fohrer), is taken up near the beginning. This is not merely a structural difference in his presentation, but reflects the impact of canon analysis on introductory studies.

Second, whereas standard treatments devote by far the major portion of analysis of individual books to a reconstruction of the prehistory and offer relatively little consideration of the theology of the canonical form, Childs reverses this. The fact that the prehistory is for him only a prelude to the meaning of the final form is no mere coincidence, but represents a different method at work. Childs, in fact, presupposes the reader's acquaintance with the pertinent history of research before coming to his work. In this sense his is a supplement to, and not a replacement for, the standard introductions.

Third, because he focuses on the canonical whole, one finds little discussion of form-critical matters that occupy the extensive attention of both Eissfeldt and Fohrer. In effect, Childs—true to his method—"leap-frogs" fragmentary analysis to concentrate upon the whole.

In the judgment of this reviewer, Childs must be understood as a reaction from the side of critical scholarship to the myopic historical preoccupation of historical criticism. He iconoclastically seeks to break the "historical" spell of the more accepted method, but, like all pacesetters, risks overcorrection. Not only does there appear little place for an accidental or carelessly redacted canonical pericope, but the canon principle appears to become a panacea for all the ills of OT research.

Conservatives will tend to find here a confirmation of their claim that historical criticism fragmentizes and relativizes the text. But Childs has recently made explicit that his acceptance of *Traditionsgeschichte*, the role of the community as tradents, and the temporal conditionality of the text, move him in an entirely different direction from conservatism (*JSOT* 16 [1980]: 52-60). Childs's *Introduction* is certainly a protest; but it is also a program, not an abandonment of the critical method.

Certain questions, however, still remain. For instance, is the *Einleitung* the appropriate genre for carrying out canonical analysis? Although theological sensitivity to the final form of the text sets Childs apart from standard introductions, this frequently overshadows the accepted focus of *Einleitungs*-studies, viz., the growth of the canon, history of the text, and the provenance of individual books. His work thus moves exegetically and theologically beyond the ambit of introduction.

Second, what safeguards are there to keep the canon principle from becoming a subjective instrument by which the scholar superimposes his own interpretation upon the text? It seems to this reviewer that in a great many cases insufficient information is available to decide why a given pericope is found in its present position. Redactional judgments at best rely on inference; hence, in the final analysis, many of Childs's specific proposals appear dependent upon his own reading of the final form.

Also, we query still further: What authoritative role did the pre-canonical materials play before they reached final form? These earlier stages were "regarded as canonical," Childs admits, but only in the final form "in which the normative history has reached an end" can the "full effect of this revelatory history" be perceived (p. 76). The fixed canon hence exercises a "critical norm" (*ibid.*) over the way earlier stages are hermeneutically to be read. Assessment of earlier canonical stages is difficult no matter whatever the method, but does not Childs's canon principle further widen the chasm between us and the precanonical period? While the role of the final form of the text has been neglected in critical scholarship, Childs's emphasis may simply swing the pendulum in the opposite direction. Balance between both historical and religious dimensions seems desirable, but such balance is not achieved at the expense of one over the other.

Despite these misgivings, this reviewer finds Childs's work to be impressive and indispensable for further exegetical work. He has charted a new path and has challenged scholarship to follow. Undoubtedly he will be with us for some time to come.

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Conybeare, F. C., and Stock, St. George. *A Grammar of Septuagint Greek*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1980. [73 pp.], \$5.95.

In 1905, Ginn & Co. of Boston published the joint work of Conybeare and Stock, *Selections from the Septuagint*. This original work was comprised of three parts: (1) an introduction to the LXX, (2) a grammar of LXX Greek, and (3) selected readings from the text of the LXX. Of these three sections, the analysis of LXX grammar was the most important contribution.

Because this work has been out of print for some time, yet is frequently referred to in scholarly discussion, and inasmuch as no adequate replacement has as yet been forthcoming, Zondervan Publishing House has issued