



THE SPRINGFIELDER

October 1974
Volume 38, Number 4

Book Reviews

I. BIBLICAL STUDIES

THE ENJOYMENT OF SCRIPTURE. By Samuel Sandmel. Oxford University Press, New York, 1972. 300 pages. Cloth.

The author of this volume is Distinguished Service Professor of Bible and Hellenistic Literature, Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati. He is a former president of the Society of Biblical Literature. He is the author of *The First Christian Century in Judaism and Christianity*, *The Hebrew Scriptures* (1963), and many other books.

The purpose of this book is different from the author's *The Hebrew Scriptures: An Introduction to Their Literature and Religious Ideas*, 1963, although both have this in common that they discuss the literature of the *Tanakh* (The Torah, the Prophets and the Writings) from the perspective of the historical-critical method and within the context of the conclusions of higher criticism as developed by rationalistic scholars in the last two hundred years. This may be seen from the chart in the introduction which sets forth the standard critical positions on the alleged development of Old Testament history and literature.

Dr. Sandmel intends this book to be a "purely literary appraisal" and is convinced that he has filled a need that heretofore had been neglected, with the possible exception of Job, of which a number of literary appraisals exist. Where some form of literary evaluation exists, he says: "Most of the literary appraisals are, however, apt to be incidental and are invariably laudatory, and often laudatory in the extreme, to the point that one sometimes gets the impression that the critical faculties have been suspended or not called on at all" (p. 3).

Orthodox Jews will not exactly be pleased with Sandmel's volume, for it contains deprecatory statements concerning various portions of the Old Testament. Thus he wrote: "I too can join in the big admiration which some, indeed much, of scriptural literature merits, but at the same time there is some of it which I find tedious and pedestrian (such as the legislation for animal sacrifices in the Book of Leviticus); some of Scripture I must candidly say I find less than abhorrent (such as the hymn of hate which is the substance of Nahum). Passages are written in such a way as to condone the cruelty, vindictiveness, and even mayhem being described, and such passages offend me, as I shall note at the appropriate time" (pp. 3-4).

In addition to registering his "dissent from a blind worship of Scripture," he also is critical of Old Testament technical scholarship, in which Sandmel was trained and in which he claims he achieved competency. Before embarking upon his task of dealing with the literary method and quality of the various books comprising the Old Testament, he delivers this broadside against Higher Criticism: "It is also dull and unimaginative. Mind you, the biblical scholarship is not incorrect; it is only pedantic, unperceptive, and, worst of all, has recently turned gushingly pious. And some of it is so oriented to linguistic dexterity, calling into play the accrued knowledge of Semitic languages, that it has made the Book of Psalms, a collection of 150 poems, a textbook in Hebrew grammar, and

the devil with the poetry. Some of the scholarship reflects a desperate effort to trace alleged developments in ideas or attitudes, so as to recover social or traditional antecedents with the consequence that a passage can lose its force and value through the sacrifice of context to hypothetical background."

Since this is a book of judgments, the author believes that many of his readers will disagree with many of his assertions. Any person, Jew or Gentile, who holds a high view of the *Tanak* will of necessity have to challenge many of the assertions as well as the low view Sandmel entertains of God's revelation in the Old Testament.

Raymond F. Surburg

LEITFADEN BIBLISCHER HERMENEUTIK. Eine Orientierungshilfe.

By Herbert Kosak. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, 1970. 169 Seiten. Kartoniert. 6.50 Mark.

In the foreword the author states that this manual is to serve as an orientation for Biblical hermeneutics, and has in mind especially pastors, vicars, teachers of religious instruction (*Katecheten*) and people participating in religious instruction by means of the radio. Specifically the author desires to acquaint his readers with the hermeneutical issues that have surfaced in the dialogue that has taken place in German ecclesiastical circles in the last four decades. Professor Kosak hopes that the manual will also help interested lay persons to understand what has been transpiring in this important area of theology.

In the introduction he discusses the importance of hermeneutics for proper exegesis as utilized in sermon writing and the proclamation of the Bible in the pulpit. In Part A, Kosak takes up the basic problems that become apparent in the writings of those German scholars who anew have taken up the question, what does the text mean or say, in relationship to Biblical proclamation.

Section B is devoted to giving an overview of traditional hermeneutics, beginning with Martin Luther, who adopted interpretative positions that revolutionized Biblical interpretation. After this Kosak follows with a brief description of developments in Lutheranism after Luther's death until the introduction of the historical-critical method. Under the influence of Schleiermacher, the father of modern theology, there also occurred a change in the concept of what is meant by hermeneutics; he defined the latter as "the art of understanding." Kosak contends that the historical-critical method was characterized by three positions: 1) to help the reader arrive at a full comprehension of the language of the text or passage transmitted; 2) to determine the historical circumstances under which the text came into being; and 3) the ascertainment of what is the inner life of the text. Out of the latter developed form and redaction criticisms.

The use of the historical-critical method resulted in a situation between 1880 and 1920, with the exception of the article by G. Heinrici in *Realencyklopaedie fuer protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (1899), that there was no attempt at a formulation of a book on hermeneutics in Germany. In 1922 E. von Dobschuetz in his inaugural address in Halle called upon his colleagues to resume the quest for a viable Biblical hermeneutics. Various reasons are offered by Kosak for the failure of the historical-critical method to produce a satisfactory exposition of Biblical texts.

In Part C the author deals with what has come to be known as "the new hermeneutic." In the thirty-five pages devoted to explicating what is involved in the new hermeneutic, he endeavored to show the contribution of different scholars. He lists the efforts of Karl Barth in the two different editions of his Romans commentary (editions 1 and 2); explains the contribution of Bultmann through the demythologization program; evaluates the so-called "non-religious" interpretation of Biblical concepts of Bonhoeffer; sets forth the views of Herbert Braun, Paul van Buren, and Dorothee Soelle, with their depictions of Christian existentialism under the form of "Mitmenschlichkeit." Thereupon the linguistic views of Ernst Fuchs and their relationship to human existence, the idea of proclamation in the word-event as developed by Gerhard Ebeling, the ontological theory of interpretation of Hans Georg Gadamer, who did not hold that hermeneutic consisted in adopting and utilizing rules for understanding but regarded hermeneutic as "Aufweis der analogen Nature des Verstehungsprocesses," are presented. Kosak concludes his recital of the new hermeneuticians with the views of Eberhard Jungels, Paul Tillich and Eugene Rosenstock-Huessey.

Section D acquaints the reader with various attacks that have been made upon the "new hermeneutic" by students of Karl Barth, namely, Helmuth Gollwitzer, Georg Eichholz, Otto Weber, Hermann Diem, Hans Joachim Kraus, and Hans Urner. Despite the attacks on the old hermeneutics by Bultmann and post-Bultmannians, there are still evangelical scholars who more or less use it; among the scholars employing it, Kosak mentions Paul Althaus, Ernst Kinder, Walter Kuenneth, Emmanuel Hirsch, Wilhelm Staehlin and Otto Haendler. Men like Gerhard Gloege, Gottfried Voigt and Hans Jonas are portrayed as scholars agreeing with the new hermeneutic but at the same time endeavoring to place boundaries around the historical-critical method beyond which the interpreter should not proceed.

Hans Rudolf Mueller-Schwefe, who tried to develop a form of linguistic theology in reaction to Martin Buber, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Satre, is said to have missed the mark according to Rosenstock-Huessy, a judgment supported by Kosak also. Wolfhart Pannenberg's history of salvation interpretation, which identifies secular and religious history as being of the same cloth, which amounts to a rejection of the new hermeneutic, Kosak labels a failure.

Section E, the last part of the book (pp. 115-165) deals with what the author calls the individual major problems of hermeneutics. Discussed as serious problems are the Biblical canon, how many books belong to the Biblical canon, the nature and transmission of history in the Old Testament, allegory and its relationship to typology, the matter of determining the "Sitz-im-Leben" of a narrative, the quest for the historical Jesus, and the issue as to how eschatology in the Bible is to be understood.

This hermeneutical manual is useful in showing how a German professor sees and evaluates hermeneutical studies in German since 1922. Germany, ever since the age of rationalism and the development of higher criticism, has influenced Biblical studies in Western Europe and America. Kosak is not sympathetic toward the old hermeneutics but favors the historical-critical method and the new hermeneutic as enunciated in the writings of Bultmann, Ebeling, Fuchs, and other post-Bultmannians. Verbal

and plenary inspiration and the inerrancy of Scripture are anathema to our author.

If the problems mentioned in this book are real and if the science of hermeneutics is subject to radical changes such as are shown in this manual, then of course, no person really can be certain of what the Word of God teaches and uncertainty and doubt can be the only outcome of the use of such views of interpretation.

Raymond F. Surburg

LUTHER'S WORKS. Volume 10. First Lectures on the Psalms. Edited by Hilton C. Oswald. Translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1974. Cloth. xii and 484 pages, plus index. \$13.00.

The 55-volume American edition of Luther's works in English calls for five of the volumes to be devoted to Luther's lectures. Volumes 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 are to contain Luther's lectures on the Psalms. Volumes 12, 13 and 14 appeared in the very beginning of this great publication project and now volume 10 is available for present-day Luther students.

Luther's earliest public lectures at the University of Wittenberg dealt with Psalms called, "The Prayer Book of the Church." The Psalter was one of the favorite Biblical books of Luther. A reading of Luther's writings shows that the Wittenberg reformer loved the Psalms. On the basis of the New Testament Luther saw Christ at the heart of the Psalms and found all the elements of the Christian Gospel in this book. Luther's interpretation of the Psalter is Christocentric. Thus he asserted about Psalm 34 that its author wrote "this psalm about Christ" (p. 158). In Psalm 38 Luther states the crucifixion of Christ is described (p. 77), while in the 58th Psalm Luther found a prediction about Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection, and ours with him (p. 324) and the 69th spoke about the future sufferings of Christ and His church (p. 35).

This volume is instructive for determining the progress Luther made in the area of hermeneutics. It is well known that the Reformer was violently opposed to the allegorical method. He opposed especially the fourfold sense of Scripture which was standard hermeneutical procedure in the 15th and 16th centuries. Although he realized the great dangers of interpreting Scriptures according to the literal, tropological, allegorical and anagogical methods, he at times fell back into the ways that he had been taught and in which he had at first interpreted Scriptures (cf. pages 382 and 450 for examples).

Church history records that when Luther began his lectures at the university of Wittenberg on the Book of Psalms, many students flocked to his Biblical expositions, which were quite different from those obtained in usual Roman circles. In the Psalm lectures the student of the Lutheran Reformation will find the beginning of Reformation theology, as well as an assault upon the concept of righteousness achieved by works.

A comparison between Luther's psalm interpretation and that practiced today by Lutheran critical scholars shows that in some respects they are quite different, especially when Lutheran critical scholars rule out direct Messianic predictions in the Psalter. The New Testament would side with Luther and not with twentieth century critical scholarship on this important and central interpretative issue.

Raymond F. Surburg

PROPHECY INTERPRETED. By John P. Milton. Augsburg Book Concern, Minneapolis, 1960. 139 pages. Paper. \$2.75. (Reprinted in 1972.)

The author of this volume was Professor of Old Testament at Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota. Here the reader will find a number of essays that deal with Old Testament interpretation. This book, concerned with a specialized area of Biblical Old Testament interpretation, namely, Biblical prophecy, is radically different from the views expressed by Lutheran German theologians as found in Claus Westermann's *Probleme alttestamentlicher Hermeneutik* (Muenchen: Kaiser Verlag, 1960, 366 pages).

Prophecy Interpreted furnishes a good guide to the understanding of some of the most fascinating, yet least understood, portions of Bible prophecy and the prophets. In four essays Dr. Milton lays down fundamental principles for interpretation of prophecy. He then goes on to apply these principles to a specific modern problem—the Biblical basis of Israel's claim to the Holy Land.

In this volume the author deals primarily with the writings of the Latter Prophets of the Hebrew Bible and not with the Former Prophets. Prophets had much to do with the writing of the Old Testament books (according to the Hebrew classification). The New Testament also refers to the prophetic word as found in the Old Testament. New Testament writers make frequent use of Old Testament prophecy or the claimed fulfillment of some prophetic word considered significant.

In the interpretation of prophecy there is a great deal of abuse occurring in religious circles today. Dr. Milton correctly declared: "But what is prophecy? How shall we read and interpret it?" It has its difficulties for the modern reader; even as it did for the Ethiopian eunuch, who in answer to Philip's question as to whether he understood what he was reading, replied quite naturally, "How can I, unless some one guides me?" The 20th century Christian needs to be supplied with evangelical and Lutheran principles if he is correctly to grasp the prophetic message of the Old Testament.

Milton's hermeneutical principles relative to prophecy are opposed to those of the dispensationalist and millennialistic schools of prophetic interpretation. Milton is convinced that certain sensationalistic preachers are inculcating fear in people through their prophetic interpretation. There are at least four ways in which prophecy according to Milton, should not be employed: 1) It should never be resorted to in order to satisfy human curiosity. 2) It should not be used in the attempt to determine "times and seasons." 3) It should not be utilized with complete disregard of the historically contemporaneous situation, in the attempt to "identify" some person or nation in specific predictive terms. 4) It should never be employed without bearing in mind firmly the relationship of prophecy to the fulfillment of the central idea in the covenant with Israel.

In his second major essay, Milton takes up the question, "Does Israel have a Biblical basis for claiming the Holy Land today?" The Luther Seminary professor answers this question this way: "For the evangelical Christian, who understands the centrality of the Gospel in the interpretation of Scripture, and who has some appreciation for the progressiveness of revelation and therefore of the distinction as well as of the unity between the Old Testament and the New, the answer must be 'no' " (p. 74).

In the third major essay, Milton deals with the relevancy of the Old Testament prophecy for the time in which Christians now live. The Old Testament contains statements that deal with the past, the present and the future. Every prophecy, claims the author, was "preached" to a contemporaneous historical situation. Since the prophets were God's spokesmen to their own generation, it is important to know as much as possible of the human situation in which the prophets were active. Many of the prophecies have a "time-coloring" that dare not be ignored. The Biblical interpreter must also be aware of the Time-Dimension of the *Past*. Two key passages in covenant history must be constantly borne in mind, namely, Genesis 12:1-3 and Exodus 19:3-6. In both of these passages Milton asserts "there is indicated a close bond between three significant elements in Old Testament religion: the concepts of divine election, and of the covenant, and of mission" (p. 89). It is within this framework that the prophetic writings need to be interpreted. The prophetic messages will have meaning if they are read in the light of the New Testament. Milton believes that the God of Abraham is the same God as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this helps make the covenant theology of the prophets relevant for our times.

In summarizing his views about the Time-Dimension in prophecy, Milton contends that "the Present always is seen in the light of the Past, and the Future in the light of both! The theme of prophetic preaching: the ultimate coming of the kingdom of God in all its universal and spiritual implications, in fulfillment of the covenant of blessing with Abraham! The prophetic concept of the judgment-redemption motif and within the framework of the covenant, moving toward a goal!" (p. 107).

The last essay deals with "The Prophets as Preachers of the Whole Counsel of God." Here Old Testament scholars will find views expressed that today are not accepted by critical Old Testament scholarship. Milton correctly argues for the fundamental unity in the Scriptures. He believes that the covenant of blessing with Abraham (Gen. 12: 1-3) is the vehicle for a gospel preached beforehand; that underlying the Mosaic covenant at Mt. Sinai is a foundation of grace similar to the foundation of grace underlying the Calvary covenant of blood. The prophets of the Old Testament proclaimed "the whole counsel of God" just as did the apostles of the New Testament. The Old Testament prophets announced a message about God as Savior, spoke about the redemption that Yahweh's Messiah would accomplish as has been so beautifully prophesied in Isaiah 52:13—53:12. The prophets of the Old Covenant spoke about a way of salvation that originated in the grace of God, about repentance and faith, about the forgiveness of sins as the choicest spiritual gift of God's love. Milton asserts: "Men were saved by grace through faith in the days of Isaiah, as they had been in the days of Abraham; for wherever the living God, who is the only Savior, seeks sinners, and they repent and believe it is sufficient for salvation. There has never been more than one Savior, and that is God; for "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (II Cor. 5:19). There has never been more than one way of salvation, the way of repentance to God and faith in the promises of God which reach their climax and fulfillment in Jesus Christ . . ." (p. 138).

This volume will be eminently worth studying and is an excellent contribution to the field of prophetic interpretation. This reviewer, how-

ever, must demur with Dr. Milton on a number of points of interpretation. Having received his theological training at Augustana Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois, now merged with the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Milton reflects the old Augustana Synod's position that Christ would rule during the millennium and that at the beginning of the thousand-year rule of Christ in Palestine the Jews would become followers of Christ, misunderstanding the true meaning of Romans 10:26.

Milton does not believe that Isaiah 7:14 is a predictive rectilinear prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ, as the Evangelist St. Matthew does in Chapter 1:22, 23 of his Gospel. He claims that the Hebrew *almah* means a young woman of marriageable age and not a virgin. However, the seven uses of *almah* in the Old Testament do not support the view that *almah* in 7:14 can mean a young married woman, as data also from the Ugaritic literature shows.

Despite these and some other restrictions that might be made, this is a worthwhile contribution to the growing literature dealing with Old Testament hermeneutics and is far removed from the views presently taught at most American Lutheran theological seminaries.

Raymond F. Surburg

ISAIAH 13-39. By Otto Kaiser. Translated by R. A. Wilson. The Westminster Press, 1973. 412 pages. Cloth. \$12.50.

This book completes the three-volume commentary treatment of the Book of Isaiah. Professor Kaiser, professor of Old Testament at the University of Marburg, also wrote the commentary on Isaiah 1-12, with R. A. Wilson the translator. Westminster's *The Old Testament Library* contains a number of translations from the German commentary series, entitled, "Das alte Testament Deutsch." The Lutheran scholar Claus Westermann has written the commentary on Isaiah 40-66 for this German series, and it was rendered into English by David M. G. Stalker. The Scriptural text which is followed in the English translation is that of the Revised Standard Version of 1959.

In the preface to the commentary Kaiser wrote:

A present day reader will normally open the book of Isaiah in order to learn something about the activity and preaching of the prophet who lived in the eighth century. He will, of course, find what he is looking for in this commentary, in so far as he endeavors to identify the primary material from the prophet, particularly in chs. 28-31. But what a modern reader seeks and the purpose of the men to whom we owe the book of Isaiah in the form in which it has been handed down are fundamentally different. The redactors, as we call these anonymous persons for want of a better term, were not concerned to preserve sayings actually uttered by the prophet as faithfully and as unchanged as possible (p. xii).

Kaiser follows historical-critical scholarship in most of its conclusions on much in 13-39. From the outset he takes his stand with the position of the critics that chapters 24-27 and chapters 36-39 are distinct blocks of separate material. In chapters 28-32, Kaiser holds that we have a basic

collection of Isaianic prophecies. Chapter 33 he does not place with 28-33 and interprets this chapter as "The Inauguration of the Kingdom." Kaiser distinguishes between eschatology, proto-apocalyptic and apocalyptic material. These terms he defines as follows: apocalyptic deals with expectations that look forward to a crisis occasioned by a supernatural or cosmic intervention together with calculations concerning the beginning and ending of the end; eschatology, he holds, treats of expectations relative to Israel's destiny and that of its neighbor nations that do not depart from history. Between eschatology and apocalyptic Kaiser places what he terms proto-apocalyptic. Most of the chapters 13-39 deal with proto-apocalyptic material according to the Marburg professor. Chapters 34-35, frequently called "The Second Isaianic Apocalypse," Kaiser claims announces the "End of Edom and the Redemption of Zion."

Chapters 36-39, called by Kaiser "the Isaiah stories," contain materials that are almost identical to II Kings 18:13, 17-20:10 and also II Chronicles 32:1, 9-26. Kaiser follows the critical position that the redactors of Isaiah took this block of materials from the Book of Kings, where these accounts were penned by the anonymous author of Kings. He advances the view that by means of form critical method the scholar can watch the development of the traditions into the form which they were given by the redactor or redactors of the Isaiah book, which actually is an anthology by different authors. Kaiser spends a number of pages challenging the accuracy and historicity of the account of the Assyrian attack upon Jerusalem and of its miraculous deliverance by the Angel of the Lord.

Kaiser spends considerable effort in showing how unreliable the narratives are that are given in chapters 36-39. Great erudition is employed to break down the average laymen's faith in the reliability of the Scripture.

Chapter 32:1-8, traditionally interpreted as a prophecy of the Messiah's kingship and kingdom, is said to be a product of the wisdom schools and does not reflect a prophetic tradition. Kaiser writes: "But the pressure of the characteristic conceptions of Wisdom are such that one rightly hesitates to describe it as a Messianic text" (pp. 320-321).

True prophecy and the miraculous are explained away by Kaiser because critical scholars reject these elements of the Biblical narrative. By doing this, the reviewer is convinced, no commentator can do justice to any narrative, whether it be in the Old Testament or the New.

Raymond F. Surburg

FINDING THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW. By Henry M. Shires. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1974. 251 pages. Cloth. \$7.50.

This volume is the product of a study written while Professor Shires of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, was on sabbatical leave. The author points out that in the New Testament there are more than 1600 direct citations of the Old Testament; and altogether there are nearly 1300 different Old Testament passages involved in the New Testament. It is the thesis of Shires that the New Testament's use of the Old Testament is grounded in a Christian view of history. Jesus Christ is the key by which the mysteries of the past, present and future are unlocked.

The author has provided material which will be of interest and use to any pastor, teacher or lay person interested in the relationship of the New Testament to the Old. It is the author's contention "that for the Christian the Old Testament, which is apt to be less well known and less often read or studied, takes on an entirely new significance when it is understood as a foundation stone for the New Testament. Jewish Scripture is seen in a completely new light when there is appreciation of the degree to which Christian authors are indebted to it" (p. 10). The interdependence of the Old and New Testaments are shown in this study. The two testaments simply cannot be separated from each other.

Shires has placed Biblical students in his debt by his rather comprehensive study. In chapter 1 he depicts the New Testament view of the Old Testament; in chapter 2, how the Old Testament is employed in the New; in chapter 3, "What type of material was chosen for citation"; in chapter 4, "Jesus and the Old Testament"; in chapter 5, "Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament"; and in the last chapter the use of the Book of Psalms in the New Testament. Pages 183 to 205 contain eleven different tables, which contain much valuable and useful data.

In the bibliography the reader will find a listing of books that can be consulted which will help to deepen his knowledge of this important aspect of Biblical hermeneutics.

Those of our readers who believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures will disagree with some of the interpretations and conclusions reached by Dr. Shires. While he is respectful in his assertions of the nature of the Bible, he has made his study from a critical-historical perspective. It is Shires' position that the hermeneutics of the Biblical writers is to be evaluated by current hermeneutical theory. An example of this position is made on page 48: "In their apparent desire to discover as many instances of fulfillment of prophecy in the life of Jesus as possible, the Evangelists occasionally exceed the limits of credibility." In the use of typology in the New Testament, the writer of Hebrews was supposedly influenced by Philo's allegorical method (p. 50). He also argues for the thesis that the New Testament writers practiced reinterpretation, thus giving completely new meanings to passages of the Old Testament used in the New. Like all critical scholars, Shires also holds that there are contradictions in the Bible. The view of the Holy Bible in this volume is not what might be termed "the high view."

Despite these criticisms the book does contain much valuable material and can serve the valuable purpose of stressing the unity of the two Testaments which has always been a hermeneutical principle of historic Christianity, but an axiom greatly challenged by many higher critical scholars.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE SERPENT WAS WISER. By Richard S. Hanson. A New Look at Genesis 1-11. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1972. 128 pages. Paper. \$2.95.

Dr. Richard S. Hanson, professor of religion at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, has written a volume that purports to take a new look at the first major section of the Book of Genesis, chapters 1-11. The

author claims that his book is neither a commentary nor an introduction to this opening portion of Holy Writ. Rather it is to be considered an attempt to reclaim this important part of the Bible, referred to about forty times in the Old and New Testaments, "for the person who likes to read for insight and entertainment and for the preacher who would like to preach on those ancient motifs and stories."

For Hanson the first eleven chapters of Genesis contain myths, which the modern man does not consider to be historical accounts. Regarding the story of Noah he states in the preface that the view taken formerly about this account can no longer be treated that way today. The reason is: "Our scientifically trained senses tell us that there is too much of the impossible and the improbable in the story to permit us to take it very literally, or very seriously, for that matter, and our training in textual criticism forces us to center our interest on the curiosities of how the different sources have been wrought together rather than on the message in each account" (page 11). The outcome of this new attitude has resulted in the situation that few preachers would preach sermons on the flood account. "Noah and his ark are relegated to the kindergarten curriculum (where it is useful and fun to learn to count by two's), Adam and Eve don't make it beyond doctrinal applications in confirmation class, and Cain and Abel get lost somewhere in the fourth grade of the Sunday school" (page 11).

The title of this book is: *The Serpent Was Wiser*. Who was the serpent? In endeavoring to suggest an answer he calls the reader's attention to an early sect of Gnosticism, the Ophites, who revered the serpent as the one who showed man the *gnosis* that makes him Godlike, and says Hanson, "they may not have been the first and were not the only ones to see the wisest of all God's creatures as a hero rather than a villain" (page 47).

Possibly the serpent actually spoke for God! With such anti-Biblical notions it will not come as a surprise to the believing Bible student that the author completely departs from the true intention of the Biblical narratives and engages in speculation, philosophizing and allegorization, by means of which one can read out of the Scriptures what one desires, provided the person has a very fertile imagination. These eight chapters are surely not real essays in Biblical theology, which they are supposed to be.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE LONG DAY OF JOSHUA AND SIX OTHER CATASTROPHIES. By Donald W. Patten, Ronald R. Hatch, Loren C. Steinhauser. Pacific Meridian Publishing Company, Seattle, 1973. 328 pages. Cloth. No price given.

This has as its subtitle "A Unified Theory of Catastrophism." Dr. Charles McDowell, Chairman of the Department of Geography, History and Political Science, Western Campus, Cuyahoga Community College, Parma, Ohio, asserted in the historian's foreword:

Patten, Hatch and Steinhauser's work on catastrophism comes to the market place in an age when the accepted ideas of cosmology

(astronomical history, of the solar system) have been exposed as being partially unsound. Increasingly, as data is gathered by the space age probes and research of the Moon, and other planets, evidence is mounting that the inner part of the solar system has been exposed to interplanetary catastrophes. It has not had a history of unbroken celestial peace, or functional isolation.

Ours is a period of academic flux with innumerable breaches in the established systems of thought. Patten, Hatch and Steinhauser have provided a theoretical framework by which we are able to approach the reconstruction of past events (p. vii).

Today scientists and other scholars opine that man can only know truth in the natural realm by the comparison of an idea with the most exact data observable at present. However, the three authors of *The Long Day of Joshua* deviate from the current stance by comparing data observable today with scars of the solar system from the past, and also by a comparison with what men of the past saw, experienced and recorded in past writings.

Two years ago, 1973, was the 500th anniversary of Copernicus and this book is presented in keeping with the spirit of Copernicus, who was not appreciated by Luther, "who according to the authors was not able to synthesize new scientific data because of his narrow frame of reference." The Patten-Hatch-Steinhauser volume attempts a study of catastrophism in ancient times before 700 B.C. The book analyzes an era of catastrophies which the earth is alleged to have encountered in ancient times. The authors assert:

The causes of the catastrophes was Mars--Mars in another orbit surrounded by orbiting meteoric debris (like asteroidal material), Mars feared by many ancient peoples as the deity of 'war.' The war was, of course, a cosmic warfare rather than a political warfare. Later, when Mars settled down into a non-catastrophic orbit, it continued to be the god for the Romans, as was Indra (Mars) in ancient Teutonic mythology. For the pantheistic Romans, all of the five known planets were deities (p. 1).

During a period of 1700 years Mars is supposed to have repeatedly, or cyclically, made a close fly-by near (or through) the Earth-Moon system. The cycles of ancient near fly-bys averaged once every 54 years. In this book the authors contend that seven astronomical cataclysms, which besieged the earth occurred between 2500 B.C. and 701 B.C. The following catastrophes were precipitated by Mars: The Noachian Flood (circa 2500 B.C.); The Tower of Babel Catastrophe (1930 B.C.); The Sodom-Gomorraha Catastrophe (1877 B.C.); The Exodus Catastrophe (1447 B.C.); The Long Day of Joshua (1404 B.C.); The Greater Davidic Catastrophe (972 B.C.); The Joel-Amos Catastrophe (765 B.C.) and The Isaianic Catastrophe (701 B.C.). Each of these events, with the exception of the Noachian Deluge, is said to have been caused by a close approach by the planet Mars which was in a resonant orbit with the earth.

To appreciate and evaluate the arguments and theories of this book the reader would need to have knowledge of higher mathematics, astronomy, and astrophysics. The authors wish to show the harmony between science and the Bible. They take issue with fundamentalists, who, when

they are unable to explain the details of history, such as the Long Day of Joshua, claim God waved a magic wand and performed a miracle. On the other hand, they claim that the anti-Biblical theories controlling cosmology, geology and astronomy are unsatisfactory because they do not take into account the evidences of catastrophism, for which supposedly they claim there is evidence in the history of the solar system.

The three authors, including those scholars also who contributed the forewords, believe that "catastrophism is the doctrine that the Earth has experienced sudden overwhelming physical events in the past. Catastrophism is the doctrine of ancient historians; it is the Biblical doctrine; and it is the scientific doctrine" (p. 318).

Raymond F. Surburg

A COMMENTARY ON THE MINOR PROPHETS. By Homer Bailey. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1972. 428 pages. Cloth. \$6.95.

The author of this very useable commentary, who has served as Vice President and head of the Bible Department of Florida College, Temple Terrace, Florida, intends this to be an exposition especially for Christian laymen and the busy pastor. It would be a useful and edifying commentary to be used in connection with family devotions or for groups studying the twelve Minor Prophets in Bible classes or study groups. The riches of God's Word in the group known as the Minor Prophets will be shown in this division of God's revelation.

Bailey has organized his commentary in such a manner that first there is presented a brief introduction to the Minor Prophets. Then he takes up separately each book, working through each with *General Observations* (discussing such matters as authorship, date, interpretations, message, and lessons, *Outline of the Book*, and *Commentary* (unfolding the meaning of each passage and verse in clear and understandable language).

The Twelve Minor prophets are presented not in the order found in our English Bible but in the chronological order in which the author believes they appeared on the stage of Old Testament history. Bailey states: "The date of at least two of the books, Obadiah and Joel, is uncertain. I begin with these two because the evidence seems to place them early. However, I realize the evidence is not absolutely conclusive" (preface).

The author mentions the views of various critical scholars on matters of introduction and interpretation. S. R. Driver, F. C. Eiselen, Robert Pfeiffer, and Briggs and others are cited but Bailey favors the positions of such scholars as George L. Robinson, Merrill F. Unger, E. J. Young, Cunningham Geikie, Keil and Delitzsch, Theod. Laetsch, H. C. Leupold, E. B. Pusey and other conservative scholars.

The Messiah is found predicted and spoken about in a number of the Twelve Minor prophets and, where the New Testament has interpreted an Old Testament passage, Bailey accepts such interpretation as correct because he believes that Holy Scripture has one author; namely, the Holy Spirit. More Old Testament expositions along this line are needed in our day when the reliability and authenticity of God's revelation are misinterpreted, questioned, or explained away.

Raymond F. Surburg