

The chief value of this work is the judicious survey by the author of the many monographs and articles written on the religion of ancient Israel which are often inaccessible to the beginning student of the subject. However, it should be noted that the necessary tentative and theoretical nature of much of the discussion in regard to the Biblical text itself raises the question whether Vriezen has really succeeded in his task. The translation by Hoskins is fair. His English is plagued by the Dutch original, and many of his sentences are hastily executed. The book is enhanced by 31 pages of notes at the end of the volume, good indices, Biblical references, and 16 pages of plates.

A minor point: On page 150 the Paschal legends are associated with the feast of Maṣṣoth, and not Massoth as printed. Also, on page 286, n. 158, Sh. (for Shemuel) Yeivin is the author of *A Decade of Archaeology in Israel, 1948-58* (1960).

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Westermann, Claus, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*. Translated by Clayton White. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967. 222 pp. \$ 5.00.

The volume under review represents primarily a form-critical appreciation of the most characteristic form of prophetic speech, the judgment-speech, with a special emphasis of that speech form as directed against individuals and against the nation Israel. The fact that no recent major study on the patterns of prophetic speech has appeared which does not consider Westermann's *Grundformen prophetischer Rede* (1960) as a point of departure, indicates the value of this highly informative guide, which is sufficiently well-documented to point the way to further areas of study. White as a translator is excellent. His translation, interspersed with a few printers' errors, reads smoothly, with hardly a Germanism, and he wisely adheres to the terminology of the original. His most significant departure is the translation of the German expression *Wort*, used frequently by the author to describe the basic prophetic message, by the English word, "speech" or "utterance" rather than the more accepted term "oracle," which is restricted to translate the German *Orakel*.

Professor Westermann, at present Professor of OT at the University of Heidelberg, begins the study with a selective review of the form-critical scholarship of thirteen scholars who have investigated the patterns of prophetic speech since 1900. No one can write such a survey without inviting disagreement. He mentions *inter alia* the research of Steuernagel, who discovered the major forms of prophetic speech: The accusation directed by the prophet to the nation Israel, and the announcement of judgment; Hölscher, who analyzed the rhythmic form of the prophetic speech; Gunkel, who exposed the

diversity of the prophetic speech forms; Balla, Scott, and Hempel, who recognized that Gunkel's categories of reproach (*Scheltwort*) and threat (*Drohwort*) constitute the basic unit of prophetic speech and cannot be separated; and L. Koehler and J. Lindblom, who independently of each other revealed that the prophetic speech was primarily delivered as a messenger's speech. However, he devotes little attention to articles by S. Mowinckel, H. Junker, A. R. Johnson, A. Haldur, and others who maintain a definite cultic influence on Israel's prophetic literature. Westermann's charge that the Scandinavian and English research on cult prophecy is not concerned with speech forms is unconvincing and unwarranted. Thus, what we have in the first third of the book is a stimulating discussion of much of the scholarship on the problem of the formal structure of prophetic speech, and this review should prove immensely valuable to those for whom the German works—all the selections are in German except R. B. Y. Scott, "The Literary Structure of Isaiah's Oracles" (1950)—are inaccessible.

In his own contribution Westermann, following the lead of H. W. Wolff, maintains that the basic unit of prophetic speech is the judgment-speech (*Gerichtswort*) which appears to have a definite form: (1) Commissioning of the messenger (at times wanting); (2) Summons to hear; (3) Accusation (*Anklage*); (4) Messenger formula. (e.g., "Thus says the Lord . . ."); (5) Announcement (*Ankündigung*). The Accusation and Announcement constitute the main elements of a messenger's speech (*Botenwort*), which the prophetic speech form is essentially, and the prophet is seen as a unique messenger since the messenger formula (*Botenformel*) which accompanies his words is *koh 'amar Elohim/YHWH*, and the announcement of his message, usually terse and direct, is considered as the word of God. The author's appeal to the messenger-commissioning procedure as found in the Mari letters does not add to his thesis, since his discussion is fragmentary and fails to consider the position of these letters in the life of the people.

Westermann is most impressive and illuminating in his sections on the "prophetic judgment-speech directed toward individuals" (= JI), which he closely associates with the regular court legal form, but fails to elucidate the nature of their dependency, and in his description of the "judgment-speech against the nation Israel" (= JN), a speech form developed from the JI by the writing prophets of the eighth-seventh century. A detailed selection of texts and pericopes from prophetic and non-prophetic Biblical passages supports Westermann's understanding of JI and JN, which are essentially characterized by the two elements of the Announcement: (1) Intervention of God; and (2) Results of the divine intervention. However, the distinctive usage of JI and JN (borrowed intentionally from the Formgeschichte terminology of Psalms ?) appears to be overemphasized by Westermann since the individual addressed is not a person *per se*, but a representative of the nation, *i.e.*, king, prophet, etc., and the message

directed toward him has implications for the collective body of Israel. The last twenty pages of the book deal with the variants of the prophetic judgment-speech, *viz.*, the woe-speech (*Wehe-Worte*); the curse; the legal procedure; the disputation (*Streitgespräch*); the parable; the lament; and the prophetic Torah. This section, while containing much that is thought-provoking, is regrettably sketchy and incomplete. Noticeably lacking, for example, is a clear distinction between the prophets of doom and prophets¹ of weal (*Heilspropheten*); an evaluation of the promise oracles, exhortations, and utterances to foreign nations, all three important variants of the basic prophetic speech, is also missing.

Professor Westermann expresses in the preface to the English edition that this translation can encourage contemporary discussion of Biblical studies between American and German scholars. It is this reviewer's belief that his wish is being fulfilled. But more important, this volume stands as an exemplary introduction to mature form-critical research, and will reward careful reading by the student of the Biblical interpretation. Finally, it is hoped that in future printings indices to the authors cited and to Biblical references would be included to enrich the value of this book.

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Williams, Colin W., *The Church*. "New Directions in Theology Today,"
4. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968. 187 pp. \$ 2.45.

Since the task of the Church is to bear witness in the world and not simply to maintain traditional structures of organization and of doctrine, it will follow that if it is to perform that task of witness it will seek to understand how that will be appropriate or even possible in the changing world of today. This is not of course a new thesis. This book, and the series of which it is a part, in spite of the title, "New Directions in Theology Today," does not attempt a developing of new directions, but a reporting of them. To perform the task of witness appropriately will involve enterprising rethinking on the Church's part of its structure, methods, theology, and ministry. This book serves as a reminder of the earnest work that has been done (and often not by recognized leaders of the Church viewed as an "organization") for the sake of improving the effectiveness of the Church's witness. If Williams' thesis is correct, the leadership of the churches will be less and less in the hands of a traditionally ordered institutional form. He is careful to point out, however, that this will not mean the abandoning of "institutions." If new forms and new places of obedience are demanded, new direction for the Church may come in spite of institutional diehardism. Williams makes us aware of the need for the Church to be flexible and responsive in the face of the world's need. Indeed, in a certain sense the world must be allowed