

important researches into the decline and fall of the Kingdom of Israel are little known to the English reader.

Unfortunately, the volumes lack indices of subjects, transliterated Hebrew words, and authors cited in the body of the text. The select bibliography is lost between introduction and commentary. Only occasionally does the author betray the bias of his church when he associates NT titles and references to the prophets, and for some readers of this journal Mays' erudition and wit may have gone too far when he labels Amos 8:4-8 as "Never on Sunday." Typographical improvements are suggested for *nēḥōhāh* (Amos, p. 65), *heḥerabī* (Amos, p. 76), and *zākar* (Hosea, p. 123) where the plosives are made spirant by the preceding half-vowel or vowel; "flour" is *šemah* and not *semah* (Hosea, p. 120), and "prophet" is *nābī*' and not *nābī*' (Amos, p. 136). Nonetheless, these chapters by Mays stand as a carefully researched theological contribution to the study of the formative period when the main lines of Hebrew canonical prophecy were being drawn.

Los Angeles Valley College
Van Nuys, California

ZEV GARBER

Miskotte, Kornelis H. *When the Gods Are Silent*. Trans. with an Introduction by John W. Doberstein. New York: Harper and Row, 1967. xviii + 494 pp. \$ 10.00.

When this reviewer was asked by the editor of *AUSS* to review this book, he was overcome by a sense of uneasiness because he was already acquainted with this tome and had recognized that this is not the kind of book one can read in the easy chair by the fireplace. Those who like a book which departs from any obviously discernible order, which frequently quotes poetry and is itself written in poetic prose (much apparently in white heat), will have only superlative adjectives in praise of such an unusual volume, which is subtitled (on the dust-jacket only) "On the Significance of the Old Testament." Miskotte, a former professor of dogmatics, ethics, church laws, and missions at Leiden University, addresses primarily the Christian preacher, or "interpreter and witness" of Biblical faith, as he always calls him.

Miskotte's book, whose Dutch original dates from 1956 (the present translation has been prepared from the revised and augmented German translation of 1963), has essentially the same concern as Bishop Robinson's *Honest to God*, namely to speak meaningfully to modern man. Miskotte's theme is to bring out the "meaning of the Old Testament for the 'religionless' man in the midst of the silence of the Gods" (p. 161). He would agree with the Bishop of Woolwich in seeing modern man as post-religious, though he finds Bonhoeffer's term "man come of age" as over-optimistic (p. 81), and adopts instead Alfred Weber's designation the "fourth man." "When the Gods are silent" is the age of the fourth man (full-grown in Orwell's 1984), when religion has lost its values and even paganism is no

longer attractive. This is therefore the age of nihilism which appears in the form of "genuine" (*i.e.*, thorough-going) nihilism and "ungenuine" (*i.e.*, popular) nihilism, which is that of the fourth man who has not yet put away the third man, who in turn professes himself to be an atheist but sighs with his next breath, "A pity God doesn't exist" (p. 20).

Part I (pp. 1-98), called "A Mirror of Our Times," describes the age of the "fourth" man in which "the gods are silent" and which "could be called an eclipse of God" (p. 49), where human thinking has dimmed and darkened God's light. The author offers a sensitive analysis of some of the "bellwethers of nihilism" (p. 15) such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Françoise Sagan, Samuel Beckett, and Albert Camus. Whereas Miskotte is here engaged in dialogue with some spirits of the age, he does not short-change himself nor us supposing that they speak for all people of the modern age. He sees definite shifts in emphasis in Romano Guardini, Ernst Jünger, Eugene Rosenstock-Huussy. He goes on to argue that the "third" man is in bondage to "religion," which is nothing but a dead faith or, in Barth's word, the "one great concern of godless man." The "fourth" man has seen through this "religion" and has indeed the OT on his side "when the Old Testament commits happy carnage upon traditional religion and smashes it to bits, . . ." (p. 65). The OT frees man from both "religion" and nihilism by the "Name" which is Yahweh, the true God. The utter rejection of religion does not lead Miskotte, as it does so many prophets of the "God is dead" movement and exponents of a "religionless Christianity," to bleak uncertainty and a pathetic clinging to incoherent ideas. Instead, the removal of "religion" clears the way for genuine faith and the breaking in of the authoritative revelation of God. ". . . the power of the Name will ineluctably send us *into life* that we may exist and act there in immediacy, but above all allow things to come to us and happen to us" (p. 71).

Part II (pp. 99-374), entitled "Witness and Interpretation," asks for the peculiar message of the OT. Schemata which contrast the OT with the NT such as law/gospel, shadow/reality, even promise/fulfillment, are shown to have only partial validity, but not enough to justify the Christians' use of the OT. Both the OT and the NT are relative to the time of revelation: the OT goes out into the time of expectation, the NT into the time of recollection. Both have "the same Object, one and the same Name, one and the same Event, one and the same Salvation" (p. 113). The unity of both OT and NT serves negatively as a line of demarcation over against heathenism (p. 134) but positively for exegesis (p. 145). "Allegorizing is admissible only when the texts themselves contain a reference or a demand in this direction" (p. 143). Christological interpretation, which must not be understood as "pious 'reinterpretation' . . . is simply required of Christian faith" (p. 144). There is no special hermeneutical method reserved for the Bible. The mistake of liberal Biblical criticism lies in "being 'special' in a fatal way; its inhuman refusal to understand

the Biblical writers on the basis of the matter that motivates them . . ." (p. 146). We must not set up a criterion according to our concept to distinguish between what is vital and what is sterile, which means that Luther's principle "which promotes Christ" ("was Christum treibet") must be rejected, since it subjectifies the OT (p. 158). The OT has over against the NT a "surplus": the multiplicity of subjects which makes a general survey difficult; the multiplicity of forms which tends to make a recognition of its intention difficult; the emphasis on the power of God which overshadows his love. The real surplus lies in the primitive mentality, the proclamation of origin and eternity, heaven and earth, the deeds of Yahweh, an open future, the names of God, the evil powers, the Torah, the ethos, politics, the expectation, prophetism, and the principle of hope, etc.

Part III (pp. 375-460) consists of 14 "Examples of an Application" to indicate in expositions of particular OT passages for the present day that not all is theory. They are not sermons, but rather the background material out of which sermons might grow. The treatment of Jonah (pp. 422-38) must be singled out as a masterpiece of sympathetic and evocative handling of the Biblical text.

On the whole, Miskotte's book is a vast, immensely stimulating defense of the authority and relevancy of the OT for modern man. The style is dense, the imagery kaleidoscopic, the language often prolix, and the breadth of learning almost overwhelming. It is unquestionably one of the very best products of dialectic theology which the serious teacher of religion, minister, and interested layman cannot afford to bypass. The OT specialists will not be able to ignore this as a mere subsequent utilization of their work and therefore of no more interest. Those who will read this volume, which has been called in Germany "the theological book of the decade," will be richly rewarded.

Yet we have to register some strictures. Miskotte in showing the relevancy of the OT for modern man works with the excellent hermeneutical principle of letting the Bible speak for itself in its manifold variety. To this reviewer, however, it appears that he offends his own hermeneutical principle by making the prophetic significance the key means for interpreting the OT. Thus he is at a loss to give a positive evaluation of the non-prophetic experience of God. Therefore the revelatory function of the cult and wisdom is subordinated to the prophetic point of view. To relegate the function of the cult to the hieratic constant which creates a bed for the stream of power that flows from the emergent, contingent act of preaching is to depreciate the role of the cult in a manner opposed to the hermeneutical principle of letting the Bible speak for itself.

It seems that Miskotte's picture of "genuine" nihilism is too neat. The present writer is prepared to maintain with Miskotte that Sartre, Camus, and others direct themselves to a God that is misunderstood. These men could know better. But with their *ratio* they have not reached the goal. Without *metanoia* nobody can reach it! Thus, does not "genuine" nihilism itself bar man from an insight and understand-

ing that leads to God? Is nihilism structurally really more related to genuine faith than to religion, as Miskotte maintains? We should probably not say that this is never so, but to generalize with Miskotte is certainly too dangerous. What "genuine" nihilist has ever realized his supposed potential and turned to faith? Furthermore, Miskotte sees religion from a too one-sided (Barthian) perspective. To identify religion with godlessness as the other side of nihilism (p. 23) is too undifferentiated. It seems that one cannot and should not group together religion as the glorification of culture or even the National Socialism of the Third Reich with the level of the religious experience of the nature and culture of a child. The indiscriminate picturing of religion in utterly negative terms is an inadequate way of speaking of religion. This is not to deny that there is false religion and religiosity in Christianity, but there is also true religion. We must be more articulate in speaking of religion. As a result of these reflections this reviewer is less satisfied than Miskotte with a number of philosophers who seek God in all directions. We would very much like to hear the "I am Yahweh" not only as regards the meaning of its words but also as regards its ontological value where man comes into true being.

This significant book is worth living with for a long time and grows in stature with reading and rereading.

Andrews University

GERHARD F. HASEL

Orlinsky, Harry M., ed. *Notes on the New Translation of The Torah. A Systematic Account of the Labors and Reasoning of the Committee That Translated The Torah.* Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969. vi + 288 pp. \$ 6.00.

Since 1962 the Jewish Publication Society of America (JPS) has put the scholarly world in its debt for its extraordinary translations of *The Torah: The Five Books of Moses*, according to the traditional Hebrew text, and of *The Five Megilloth and Jonah*. It has done so again by making public in a systematic and thorough way the decisions, philosophies, and principles of translation which guided the committee that translated *The Torah*. Most of the existing notes that governed committees of Bible translators are fragmentary, old, or out-of-print, and those which are accessible in libraries (e.g., Max L. Margolis' anonymous article on the making of the 1917 semi-official translation of The Holy Scriptures by JPS entitled "The New English Translation of the Bible," and found in the *American Jewish Year Book*, XIX [1917/18], 164-193) are certainly not available in sufficient number to satisfy the needs of any but the smallest group of interested scholars. If only for this all-important reason, laymen and students alike will welcome this indispensable companion volume to the study of the New Jewish Version (NJV) Torah edited by Harry M. Orlinsky, Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion, New York, and editor-in-chief of *The Torah*.

The history of Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible into English