

Hanson, Paul D. *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish Apocalyptic Eschatology*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975. xii + 426 pp. \$14.95.

Hanson's work represents a fascinating attempt to establish the roots of apocalyptic eschatology within the native Israelite prophetic tradition. Instead of viewing apocalyptic as a second-century foreign intruder, Hanson sees it as part of a continuum which begins with prophetic eschatology and develops into apocalyptic eschatology. The essential nature of apocalyptic is "found in the abandonment of the prophetic task of translating the vision of the divine council into historical terms" (p. 29). The historical and sociological matrix of apocalyptic is said to be found in the struggle between hierocrats and visionaries within the postexilic community.

The key to Hanson's interpretation is what he calls the "contextual-typological" method. The "context" is the hierocratic-visionary struggle which Hanson postulates, and to buttress his arguments he uses the typologies of poetic structure and meter, of prophetic oracle genres, and of the prophetic eschatology-apocalyptic eschatology continuum (p. 29).

The work of Weber, Mannheim, and Troeltsch in the area of sociology of religion forms the basis for outlining the sociological struggle within the postexilic community, though, surprisingly, the central role of these sociological studies is specifically delineated rather tardily (not beginning until p. 211). As Hanson reconstructs the scene, the Zadokite priesthood is seen as controlling the "official" religious life of the community, both during the exile and after. Ezek 40-48 is the restoration plan of the hierocrats with Haggai and Zech 1-8 containing hierocratic polemic against the visionaries who are the disciples of Second Isaiah and include disenfranchised non-Zadokite members of the community. The visionaries hold Isa 60-62 as a revival restoration plan, insisting that all the people, not just the Zadokites, should be priests (cf. Isa 60:21; 61:5-6). The polemic of these visionary democrats against the ruling hierarchy is to be found in the oracles of Third Isaiah and Zech 9-14, and it is here that apocalyptic eschatology develops, pointing increasingly to the cosmic instead of the historical as the realm of Yahweh's action as hopes fade for vindication and fulfillment in the present age.

For those who relish "ground-breaking" approaches to old problems, Hanson has provided a fascinating study. He argues his case thoroughly, even passionately, and the result is quite readable unless one gets bogged down in his structural-metrical analyses. Whether or not Hanson has proved his case, however, is another matter. One of the reasons why an innovative study such as Hanson's is possible is the paucity of material relating to the post-exilic era, and what little there is remains open to widely variant interpretations. Although Hanson wishes to avoid "extremely cautious" reconstructions (such as Ackroyd's *Exile and Restoration*), as well as "speculative" ones which go far beyond the evidence, he has probably erred on the side of speculation. But this is a readily excusable fault if the ensuing discussion proves productive.

One of the major questions that must be faced in evaluating this study is the viability of the "contextual-typological" method. The sociological context seems to have been established largely from the studies of Weber

and Mannheim rather than from firm, datable evidence in the documents themselves. Hanson clearly intends for the "typologies" of poetic meter and prophetic genres to corroborate his reconstruction, but here again the lack of clear historical allusions in the oracles and the absence of analogous dated models weaken the force of his argument. Furthermore, the dominant impression gained from the biblical documents interpreting the postexilic era is that there was hardly enough life in Yahwism to support cultic life at all, much less two rival groups. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Ezra and Nehemiah all depict the cult in need of major revival; yet Hanson projects two rival groups, each with a plan for restoration and each vying with the other for domination.

A tantalizing aspect of this study is the relationship of Hanson's theological stance to his treatment of the biblical text. The issue is raised explicitly on pp. 259-260 where he draws a parallel between the strife-torn community of Israel and the modern religious person's experience. He concludes that "the religious life . . . involves struggle, and can even be characterized as a dialectic of faith" (p. 260). The final chapter (V) develops these implications more completely as an appeal is made to maintain the dialectic of faith. The extremes to be avoided are "a flat theology of expediency" on the one hand, and a "utopian theology of escape" on the other. Hanson sees the prophet Isaiah as approaching the ideal: vision is integrated into politics without losing its normative character (p. 410). This preference for the classical prophetic tradition is evident in numerous passages throughout the study, as is Hanson's negative posture towards "hierocrats." The apocalyptic visionaries, however, are depicted more as tragic figures who are mercilessly alienated from the community by a heavy-handed hierocratic establishment.

In short, this reviewer is intrigued by *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, but suspects that the influence of Weber-Mannheim-Troeltsch and Hanson's distinct preference for the classical prophets over oppressive hierocrats and escapist visionaries have perhaps unduly colored both his treatment of the text and his reconstruction of the postexilic era. Given the author's starting point, the work is brilliantly done, but its enduring worth remains to be established.

Walla Walla College
College Place, Wash.

ALDEN THOMPSON

Kelsey, David H. *The Use of Scripture in Recent Theology*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975. x + 227 pp. \$11.95.

The author is best known through his *The Fabric of Paul Tillich's Theology* (1967) and serves as Professor of Theology at Yale University. The volume under review is "a descriptive study of some of the methods some theologians employ in doing theology" (p. 4). In contrast to Langdon Gilkey's *Naming the Whirlwind: The Renewal of God-Language* (1969), which treats the "problem of method" of theology as the problem about the "sources, content, and criteria of theology as a form of thought" (p. 121), Kelsey's monograph is confined to seven case studies of what theologians have *said* about the authority of scripture compared with what they *do* with scripture