

Clements, Ronald E. *One Hundred Years of Old Testament Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975. viii + 152 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

Professor Clements of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, England, provides a lucid and readable sketch of the history of the interpretation of the OT from the 1870s to the 1970s, geared to the student and general reader. He treats "the main lines of interpretation which have affected the study of the Old Testament, with a particular emphasis upon questions of methodology" (p. vii).

In view of this stated aim it would be unfair to compare this presentation with the authoritative and detailed treatment by H.-J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments*, 2d ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969). Kraus's tome remains a must for the serious student. Clements places more emphasis on recent Anglo-American scholars. It may be considered as a supplement to H. F. Hahn, *The Old Testament in Modern Research With a Survey of Recent Literature*, ed. H. D. Hummel, 2d ed. (Philadelphia, 1966).

The sequence of chapters depends on the informative and scholarly collection of essays published under the title *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. H. H. Rowley (London, 1951) with the exception that Clements does not deal with (1) the text and language of the OT, an area in which the Qumran materials have brought about an explosion of knowledge, and (2) the archaeology of Palestine and the ancient Near East. The impact of archaeology on OT studies has been so profound that the lack of a treatment of this topic is a most serious shortcoming in Clements's presentation.

The first main chapter deals with "Interpreting the Pentateuch" (pp. 7-30) and leads in rapid steps from J. Wellhausen to the present, with a survey of the contributions of such figures as Gunkel, Gressmann, Alt, Welch, Bentzen, Pedersen, von Rad, Mowinckel, Noth, and Engnell. This survey follows on the whole the traditional lines of critical analyses of the Pentateuch by German and Scandinavian scholars. No mention is made of the recent denials of the existence of an E stratum by Mowinckel and of the J stratum by Rendtorff, not to mention such opponents to the documentary hypothesis as U. Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis* (Jerusalem, 1961); M. H. Segal, *The Pentateuch* (Jerusalem, 1967); G. L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago, 1964); R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1969); and K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (London, 1966). One should expect at least a passing mention that not all OT scholars of the last 100 years have followed the mainline position of critical scholarship.

The chapters on the interpretation of the historical books (pp. 31-50) and the prophetic literature (pp. 51-75) particularly delineate traditional approaches. One of the best studies on this method is that of D. A. Knight, *The Traditions of Israel* (Missoula, Mont., 1973), who is not mentioned. It is surprising that no account is given of the significant study of J. Lindblom on ancient Israelite prophecy. Much is said about the commentaries of some prophetic books by H. W. Wolff but nothing is said about the equally significant commentaries by W. Rudolph and J. L. Mays.

The interpretation of the Psalms (pp. 76-98) is traced from Duhm via

Gunkel to Mowinckel. Some attention is given to the studies of Beyerlin and Delekat regarding the identification of the enemies of the worshippers. The various festivals as proposed by some scholars are touched on briefly. The most significant three-volume contribution to Psalms studies (1965-1970) by M. Dahood finds no treatment at all.

The brief chapter on "Interpreting the Wisdom Literature" (pp. 99-117) reflects an appreciation of wisdom in the ancient Near East. The contributions of Gunkel, Gressmann, Fichtner, Rylaarsdam, Ranston, McKane, and von Rad are surveyed. It is annoying to find that the major recent studies on OT wisdom by Schmid (1966), Hermisson (1968), Bauer-Kayatz (1969), Marböck (1971), Scott (1971), Skehan (1971), Whybray (1974) and Crenshaw (1975) are not even referred to in footnotes.

This reviewer turned in his reading of this volume first to the chapter on "Interpreting Old Testament Theology" (pp. 118-140). Although the chapter begins with Wellhausen and reference is made to A. B. Davidson and K. Marti, the reader will not discern that these OT theologies were really following the history-of-religion approach which led to the virtual death of the discipline of OT theology. That a revival of OT theology took place in the 1920s and that its golden age followed are, at best, only hinted at. A very one-sided picture is communicated by the suggestion that Th. C. Vriezen stands rather alone in maintaining "that the proper starting point for a theology of the Old Testament is to be found in an awareness that the true goal of the Old Testament lies in the New Testament" (p. 127). G. von Rad has the same emphasis and Eichrodt speaks of an "historical movement from the Old Testament to the New [but in addition] there is a current of life flowing in reverse direction from the New Testament to the Old. This reverse relationship also elucidates the full significance of the realm of OT thought" (*Theology of the Old Testament* [Philadelphia, 1965], 1: 26). Again, one is surprised that no reference is made to studies dealing with method in OT theology (Dentan, Kraus, Spriggs, et al.) and that nothing is said about significant recent OT theologies (Knight, Van Imschoot, Deissler, McKenzie).

Clements concludes that "while there are today signs of a great deal of fresh theological questioning about the proper scope, and inherent limitations, of historico-critical method," such historico-critical methods of research as "literary criticism, form criticism, tradition-history and redaction criticism all show a degree of interdependence which means that no one of them can be upheld without due regard for the others" (pp. 148-149). No consideration is given to structuralism as a method of research for the OT.

This book is a beginner's survey of major trends in the last hundred years of historical-critical study of the OT. We have seen repeatedly that its weakness is in the lack of discussion of most recent trends and in its selectivity. For a well-rounded understanding of the trends and issues in OT interpretation, the serious student needs to supplement this volume with such standard works as those indicated above.