

over the "higher criticism" of the gospels had been contained within acceptable limits, and was perceived as a healthy exercise for the religious mind. In contrast, the fundamental structural criticism of OT texts, especially following Julius Wellhausen's work on the Pentateuch, entailed giving up too much too soon, and was shut out from comparable public interest. When an increasingly skeptical generation of NT scholars began denying the possibility of reconstructing any historically tenable biography out of the Gospel sources, the whole problem of integrating new textual studies into popular religious conceptions faded from public interest.

In Albert Schweitzer's classic 1906 study of gospel scholarship in Germany in the nineteenth century (where the backwater of the British "Lives" requires little attention), the manifold historical problems come to seem almost irrelevant to modern religious ideas. History by itself can provide only the barest sketch of a Jesus who "will be to our time a stranger and an enigma." Leading British scholars, characterized by Pals as more "gentlemanly" in their greater concern with the popular implications of their work, found it difficult to go so far, and the interest in their writings which Pals generates seems to rest finally in their contribution to Victorian sociology and popular culture, rather than to theoretical progress.

The Victorians and their conception of Jesus are inseparable, and we know them both better as the result of this work by Pals.

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Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1-11*. Translated by J. J. Scullion. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984. xii + 636 pp. \$29.95.

This publication is a commentary which rivals in volume and scope some of the more massive tomes on biblical subjects produced in the nineteenth century. Its 600 pages cover only the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

Although Westermann is well known as a prolific contributor to OT studies, his commentary on Genesis surely ranks as his *magnum opus*. This is the first volume to be translated into English from his three volumes on Genesis originally published in German in the *Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament* series from 1974 to 1982. The other two volumes cover Gen 12-36 and 37-50, respectively.

A rather standard literary critical approach to the biblical text has been adopted here by Westermann, but the details of his presuppositions are found in a rather curious location. The history of the development of the literary criticism of Genesis (and of the rest of the Pentateuch) and the presently modified treatment of this type of criticism are described only at

the end of the volume. Since this information is presupposed all of the way through the volume, it would have been more logical to locate this material within the introduction at the beginning. Since another volume on Genesis is to follow, this material will become sandwiched between Gen 11 and 12. What one finds in the introduction, instead of this material, is an extensive comparative history-of-religions discussion of creation and flood stories.

While Westermann allows for some modifications of the documentary hypothesis (pp. 574-575), these remain minor. His adherence to the standard literary critical format is particularly disappointing when he comes to the Flood story of Gen 6-9 (pp. 395-398). Here he gives no recognition whatever to U. Cassuto's brilliant insights into the unified literary structure of this passage, now seconded by B. Anderson and G. Wenham. This omission is not for a lack of knowledge about Cassuto's work, for Cassuto's commentary is cited extensively elsewhere in Westermann's volume (cf., e.g., p. 353).

Inasmuch as Westermann is a noted form critic, it is natural that his work involves an extended treatment of the text of Genesis from that point of view, revealed in each of the successive sections of the text. The elements treated in those sections are: (1) bibliography, (2) translation, (3) translational notes, (4) history of exegesis, (5) literary form, (6) setting in life, and (7) commentary. That elements nos. 5 and 6 receive separate treatments in these sections reveals Westermann's interest in the text as a form critic.

The particular fault in this type of work, it seems to me, is one of omission. The form critic is interested only in small units of the text, not large ones. What is missing here is a discussion of literary structure on the larger scale, of rhetorical criticism, and of canonical criticism. Numerous observations and outlines of individual elements in various passages are presented at different points in the commentary, but the passages as a whole are seldom integrated into a unified whole, even if one views that whole as an end-stage in the canonizing process.

From the standpoint of form criticism, one might have expected to see some attention to the poetic passages in the first eleven chapters of Genesis; but these passages are dismissed, by and large, in one brief paragraph (p. 91). By way of contrast here, an extensive amount of attention is paid to the subject of the "image of God" in man, in Gen 1:26-27; but it is never noted that this statement about man's creation was composed in a very evenly balanced tricolon, as has been pointed out in E. A. Speiser's translation of this verse in the Anchor-Bible volume on *Genesis* (p. 4):

And God created man in his image,
in the divine image created he him,
Male and female created he them.

As far as the "Setting in Life" is concerned, this is particularly difficult

to determine for these chapters of Genesis. Gen 1 is interpreted here as deriving from a "cultic" setting (p. 92). The basis for that judgment is the praise of God that is found in this passage. If that is the case, then much of the Bible derives from a similar setting, so that this kind of distinction loses its significance. (The approach here is somewhat like that of an archaeologist who designates as "cultic" all those objects of undetermined function which he excavates.)

At times, this commentary seems somewhat uneven. The genealogy of Gen 5, for example, receives twice as long a treatment (pp. 345-362) as does the genealogy of Gen 11 (pp. 558-566). Another contrast is that with regard to Gen 5, Westermann claims he does not want to get involved in the differences between the birth and death ages among the versions (p. 353), but does print a chart of such differences with respect to Gen 11 (p. 559). At times, he appears a bit dogmatic in his discussion of this subject, stating, for example, that "it is absurd to say that the life-span of the primeval Babylonian kings is an expression of their great vitality" (p. 353). I would think that if a man was remembered as living to a ripe old age of 72,000 years (Alalgar), that datum would provide quite a commentary on his vitality!

In general, the English translation is rather literal, and it eschews the more free dynamic equivalence-type of translation. I would question, however, whether Gen 1:2 should be translated in such a way as to refer to a "desert waste" (p. 76). Westermann takes the first line of Gen 1:1 as an independent statement, not a dependent clause, as has been popular in some recent commentaries (p. 97). He does not see much of the chaos myth present in Gen 1 (p. 105). He argues against Schmidt's view that the "evening-and-morning" formula of Gen 1 refers to 24-hour days, holding rather that the emphasis here is upon the 7-day week as a unit (p. 90). This may be a case where the exegete can "have his cake" and "eat it too," since these two views are not mutually exclusive.

The bibliographies presented in the successive sections of the book are extensive. A full page of fine-print bibliography has been collected, for example, on Gen 1:26-27 alone (p. 147).

In spite of negative points I have indicated above, there is no question but that Westermann's publication is an outstanding commentary on Genesis. It is a treasure-trove of information for the reader who is interested in studying these passages of Genesis in depth. Given its scope, the volume serves especially well as a research source. It is not necessarily the kind of commentary that one would use for browsing leisurely through its successive sections, but as a research tool it supersedes all previous commentaries on the biblical material covered. Even for the more conservative scholar who may not share all of Westermann's literary and form-critical presuppositions, his publication should be an invaluable aid toward detailed

study of Genesis. Our thanks and congratulations are due the translator and the publishing house for bringing this notable work to the English-reading public.

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Wiklander, Bertil. *Prophecy as Literature: A Text-Linguistic and Rhetorical Approach to Isaiah 2-4*. Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament Series, 22. Malmö, Sweden: Gleerup/Liber, 1984. xiii + 278 pp. Paperback, Swedish Crowns 150.00.

This book, a revision of Wiklander's 1983 Uppsala doctoral thesis, proposes "that Isaiah 2-4 is a structured and functional unit of discourse" (p. 248; cf. p. ix). Hereby, Wiklander distances himself from much recent scholarship which has generally found a collection of originally independent prophetic oracles in Isa 2-4.

To demonstrate this thesis, Wiklander undertakes a linguistic and rhetorical analysis, among whose characteristics the following receive special attention: reduction (looking at the text anew, without regard to previous interpretations); text-orientation (focusing upon the text from a variety of viewpoints); holistic approach (examining the parts of the text in light of the whole passage); synchronic analysis (viewing the text from a given point in time); and historical analysis (placing the text within a text-historical process of the literary work of Isaiah). By these approaches, he seeks to retrieve the "true" meaning of the text. "I shall try to grasp the *capacity of meaning* as it emerges in a distinct communicative setting. Thus, I shall proceed on the assumption—currently gaining ground in text linguistic research—that 'textual meaning' is a dynamic phenomenon and that 'texts' should be conceived as deriving their life from being integrated by the interpreter with dynamic socio-cultural and interactional processes" (p. 32).

How does such an analysis proceed, and what results does it yield when applied to Isa 2-4?

(1) Assuming this passage to be part of an anthology of Isaiah materials and to have made its first appearance in the period from 450-400 B.C., Wiklander examines its linguistic and rhetorical characteristics and looks for contemporary socio-cultural data from Israelite history having a bearing on the meaning of the text.

(2) Identifying certain "markers" (e.g., 2¹, 2⁵, 3^{1ff.}) in the text, recognized by both its author and its recipients, enables Wiklander to outline the larger sections in Isa 2-4. When viewed in the context of Isa 1-5, syntactic links between its various sections, either anaphoric (looking back