

Doukhan, Jacques. *Le Soupir de la Terre*. Dammarie les Lys, France: Vie et Santé, 1993. 318 pp. \$

Professor Jacques Doukhan is already known to English-speaking scholars on Danielic studies by two publications: the book *Daniel: The Vision of the End* (Andrews University Press, 1987) and an article on Daniel 9 which appeared in *AUSS* (17 [1979]: 1-22).

The present book, *Le Soupir de la Terre*, reads like a popular commentary on all twelve chapters of Daniel. Each chapter division contains a descriptive commentary on the content of the chapter in Daniel, an outline of the major themes, and an interpretation and application of the text. The chapter divisions close with lists of questions and very useful presentations of the plans of the chapters.

The book's main target is a general audience without specialized knowledge of the field. But this fact does not prevent the author from presenting a veritable gold mine of data invaluable for a better appreciation of Daniel's message. For example, in order to enhance the traditional interpretation of the world empires which are behind the various metals of the statue in chapter 2, Doukhan lucidly introduces the historical evidence which ties these metals to the corresponding empires (42-46).

The notes at the end of the book are of help to the more specialized readers. They can complement their bibliographies of the publications in English by the works published in French. In keeping with his established practice, the author quotes generously the works from Judaica. This is appropriate in a book on Daniel, given the fact that this prophetic book has been highly esteemed by Jewish expositors.

Rather than dealing with the critical introductory issues in the beginning, Doukhan adds an appendix on this subject at the end of the book and entitles it "Daniel and its Criticism." The author's approach to Daniel is a balanced combination of historical, linguistic, literary, thematic, theological, and textual/exegetical approaches. This mixture makes the reading easy and interesting. The author's French is rich in vocabulary and at times almost poetic.

The interpretation of the prophecy is consistently historicist. One should take note, however, of Doukhan's own corrective of this approach which was stated in the introduction to the first book and clearly applied in this one. For this reason I would call this type of interpretation biblical-historicist. This simply means that rather than rushing from the text into historical events, the author, who is faithful to the *Sola Scriptura* principle, lets the Scripture interpret itself first and only then proceeds to its historical fulfillments. This is most evident in Doukhan's dealing with Daniel 11, where he first compares this chapter to its counterpart, chapter 8, and only then applies it in history. While not all historicist scholars will

agree with Doukhan's explanation of the chapter and its symbols, the biblical approach espoused there can only be commended.

Translated into English, the book could serve well as a beginning-level college textbook. I would suggest a few minor changes before this is done: (1) The plans of the chapters would be more useful if placed at the beginnings of the chapter divisions. (2) At least a short bibliography would be of great help. (3) The dates assigned to chapters 7 and 8 respectively should be reexamined and brought into line with W. H. Shea's and G. F. Hasel's work on these chapters. (4) I suggest a second look at the popular view of a "rêve oublié" (chap. 2:5). This was based on older translations like L. Segond's rendering of the Aramaic 'azdā as "la chose échappé," which La Bible de Jérusalem translates more correctly, "que mon propos vous soit connu."

These minor improvements can make the book even more commendable for its translation into other languages such as English. In any case, Professor Doukhan deserves a high score for this excellent tool in the field of Danielic studies.

Adventist International Institute
of Advanced Studies
Silang, Cavite, Philippines

ZDRAVKO STEFANOVIC

Ferguson, Everett., ed. *Christian Life: Ethics, Morality, and Discipline in the Early Church*. Studies in Early Christianity, vol. 16. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993. 376 pp. Cloth, \$60.00.

The present work is volume 16 of an 18-volume series devoted to interpreting the beliefs and practices of early Christianity. The series is arranged topically and covers biography, literature, doctrines, practices, institutions, worship, missions, and daily life in early Christianity. The series confines itself to the formative first six hundred years after the birth of Jesus. The premise behind the series is that no one can really understand today's Western civilization, much less religious history, without some understanding of the early history of Christianity. In covering such a broad range of topics, both early Christian documents and secondary sources were evaluated, with preference given to English articles.

The volume, introduced and edited by Everett Ferguson, evaluates the claim that Christianity offered not only a higher standard of life and motives, but that this higher standard was achievable by ordinary people, not just the philosophically trained. While much of the moral teaching of Christianity can be duplicated in the moralistic literature of Hellenism, Christianity offered a distinctive theological motivation as well as spiritual power to live above the standards of the world. Still, some of the most