

Hess, Richard S, and Gordon J. Wenham, eds. *Make the Old Testament Live: From Curriculum to Classroom*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1998), x + 218 pp. Paper, \$15.00.

To most moderns, the phrase "Old Testament" evokes little more than an awe of the Bible's antiquity and a conviction of its irrelevance. And to judge by their title, editors Hess and Wenham recognize that to establish meaningful connections between today's student and the Bible's Old Testament requires something out of the ordinary. Their effort to make the OT live grapples with two crucial aspects of this potential miracle—how to integrate OT material into the curriculum, and further, how to make it attractive enough to individuals of varying degrees of interest and motivation, as well as a wide variety of perspectives.

Several of the book's chapters were first presented by an international team of scholars at a Tyndale Fellowship OT study group in Cambridge. The editors have divided the volume into three uneven sections, including three chapters on the content, eight on the context, and two on the communication of OT teaching.

Editor Hess's chapter on the first of these aspects, content, emphasizes that both "academic and practical aspects of training are fundamentally acts of spiritual worship" (7). For him, neither academe nor practical ministry is any more or any less spiritual. He thus estimates the value of OT study in terms of its application to practical, contemporary concerns.

Craig Bartholomew exhibits similar thinking in the second chapter when he states that however much OT lecturing may differ from Bible study, its emphasis on theory and critical accuracy remains "secondary" to Scripture's primary purpose of "listening" to God through His Word (34). As much as anything, the first half of this chapter is a celebration of Plantinga's "Advice to Christian Philosophers," as Bartholomew strives to liberate evangelicalism from a reactive scholarship improperly subservient to modernity. With full regard for the advances made possible through secularized critical scholarship, the author contends that it is time for a proactive approach that is "reformational" (31) rather than merely defensive of positions attacked by 'liberal' biblical studies.

Section two, on context, comments on the challenge of making OT studies relevant and meaningful *inter alia*, to the American seminary, the British theological college, or the world of Islam, as well as the range of academic levels from undergraduate general studies through Ph.D. studies in OT. Paramount in all this contextualization must be the fact that the OT is a Christian book, part and parcel of God's Word, the Bible. Thus it is best taught in integration with the NT, and climactically so, in relation to Jesus Christ (Barker, Alexander). Increasingly, students arrive at American seminaries with limited knowledge of Scripture. But if the OT is correctly taught, they may be led to "fall in love with the God who gave it" (Hubbard, 92).

Evangelical conviction is not the only perspective among lecturers in biblical studies. In this context, clarification of the difference between fact and hypothesis in such areas as source, form, redaction, traditio-historical, and literary criticism (Alexander) would serve as a vital educative function.

In public universities, OT classes are available to a broader spectrum of society

than are any conventional theological classes. This is because the department of Religious Studies attracts students interested in all kinds of religion. OT teachers may take advantage of this, for not just religious studies students, but all humanities students, may be brought to read and enjoy OT once they can be helped to appreciate the centrality of the Bible to English culture (Wenham).

In section three, entitled "Communication," Baker recommends an inductive approach to learning Biblical Hebrew, and Lawless applies learning and teaching principles to some of the book's essays. Lawless responds to Hess's advocacy of the modular approach by suggesting that the key to maximization of biblical understanding would be to teach students choosing between optional modules how to make linkages between different units of study. The book concludes with twenty-eight pages of annotated bibliography covering lexicons, history, literary approaches, and commentaries on individual books.

Not everything in this book is new. Nor is it as pertinent to American theological training as it is to the English experience. Its emphasis on the transcendence of the Word over method or context is noteworthy. Articles such as those by McKeown, with his suspicions of systematic theology, Barker, who sees the NT as the OT's God-given horizon, and Lawless, who responds to several of the earlier papers, should engender much stimulating discussion. Glaser, on reaching Islam through the OT; and Carroll, on contrasts between an arrogant though stagnant West and a deferential yet dynamic two-thirds world, have much to teach. On the other hand, I remain somewhat dubious about the value for the book of the piece entitled "From Student to Scholar" (111-121), a personal reflection offering less instruction than Williamson's article on theological graduate study.

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Hill, Andrew E. *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible Series, vol. 25D. New York: Doubleday, 1998. xliii + 436 pp. Hardcover, \$37.95.

Andrew Hill's preface to this well-balanced commentary suggests something of an apology. Conceding LaSor's insight that all interpreters labor under *a priori* convictions, he signals from the outset his own scholarly position as one of "believing criticism." For him Scripture is both the work of many human authors, and of "one Author" (xii). In investigating the biblical material, he acknowledges or "substantiates," rather than proposes or "reconstructs" biblical history (xiii). He hews close to the MT, with appropriate citation of variants, rather than anachronistically explaining modern suggestions as though they were portions of the ancient text. However, occasional bracketed insertions in his translation of the MT occur as "amplification of a cryptic word or phrase," which partly suggests his own failure to grasp the text's full sense (11)! His work employs the various strategies of the historical-critical method as long as they do not of necessity vitiate "the basic tenets of 'orthodoxy'" (xiii). He expects that such candor on his part will enhance reader appreciation for, and understanding of, his approach to biblical scholarship (xii). Hill's clarification is not inappropriate, only less common than it might be.

After addressing a variety of basic considerations, including authorship,