

meaninglessness, Keen invokes wonder again. "Our judgment must be that the basic attitudes a person adopts toward the world are a more significant indication of psychological spiritual health than the specific symbols he uses to express these attitudes. Whether we continue to talk about God is not so important as whether we retain the sense of wonder which keeps us aware that ours is a holy place" (p. 211). In the end Keen returns to his original purpose, to show how modern man can find meaning by standing in awe before creation. Keen's dalliance in the groves of Grecian gods has simply confused the issue.

It remains only to mention what must be regarded as Keen's greatest contribution, apart from structure and style. Keen has tried nothing less than to relate the experience of grace, not to the doctrine of redemption, but to the doctrine of creation. If we were to describe the theologian as dancer (one of Keen's favorite symbols for *homo tempestivus*) we would have to say that Keen stumbles in executing a central *pas de deux*, but impresses us mightily with his overall performance.

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McKane, William. *Proverbs: A New Approach*. "Old Testament Library." Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970. xxii + 670 pp. \$ 12.50.

The author has placed in our hands the first major commentary in English on the book of Proverbs since 1899, when Toy's commentary appeared in the "International Critical Commentary" series. The "new approach," as the subtitle indicates, pertains to a thoroughgoing form-critical analysis of Pr 1-9; 22:17-24:22; and 31:1-9 in the light of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian wisdom literature. The author's threefold aim is (1) to show that these passages belong to a different literary genre than the wisdom "sentences" in Pr 10:1-22:16 and 24:23-29:27; (2) to reinvestigate the argument which maintains that the history of Israelite wisdom tradition and the tendency of its development is reflected in Pr; and (3) to analyze basic characteristics of Biblical "proverbs."

A highly significant introduction (pp. 1-47) contains four essays which set forth McKane's conclusions on Pr 1-9, on the "sentence literature" in Pr, on the meaning of *māšāl*, and on a detailed comparison of the text of the Septuagint with the Masoretic text.

Part I (pp. 51-208) deals with a study of international wisdom, namely the Egyptian instruction as found in Ptahhotep, Kagemni, Merikare, Amenemhet, Duauf, Ani, Amenemope, and Onchsheshonqy. This is followed by the Babylonian-Assyrian instruction as represented by the "Counsels of Wisdom" from the Kassite period (1500-1200) and by Ahikar from the 5th or 4th century. The final section in Part I deals with Babylonian and Assyrian proverbs.

Part II (pp. 211-670) is devoted to the book of Proverbs and opens with a continuous translation of the OT text. The three chapters following the translation are made up of the exegesis of the book of Proverbs in the following groupings: (1) the "instruction" genre includes chs. 1-9; 22:17-24; 31:1-9; (2) the "sentence" literature comprises chs. 10:1-22:16; 24:23-34; 25:1-29:27; and (3) "poems" and "numerical sayings" are found in chs. 30:1-33; 31:10-31.

The main conclusions reached by this "new approach" are of considerable importance. The author maintains that there is a basic distinction between the genres of "instruction" and wisdom "sentence." The imperative is proper to the "instruction" genre and its aim is to command and persuade (p. 3). The formal structure of the "instruction" genre can be described and its life setting defined (pp. 5, 6). The genre of wisdom "sentence," on the other hand, contains the indicative and gives "an observation in an impersonal form which states a truth but neither exhorts nor persuades" (p. 3), nor is there any context. The "individual wisdom sentence is a complete entity" (p. 10). In this connection there is another conclusion which has its bearing on form-critical analysis. The "instruction" genre is not a development from the simple admonition (*Mahnspruch*) (versus J. Schmidt, *Studien zur Stilistik der alttestamentlichen Spruchliteratur* [1936]) nor from prohibition such as the apodictic laws (versus E. Gerstenberger, *Wesen und Herkunft des "apodiktischen Rechts"* [1965]; W. Richter, *Recht und Ethos* [1966]), but is derived from "an international genre of which the Israelite wisdom teacher made use" (p. 5).

The "instruction" genre, argues the author, probably first appeared in Israel in connection with the training of men for civil service, during the reign of Solomon, but its influence as seen in chs. 1-9; 22:17-24:22; and 31:1-9 is that of a later stage when it had become instruction for a way of life in the community and for its young men. This is a very different starting-place from that allocated to the "instruction" by those who describe it formally as a stringing together of wisdom "sentences." McKane believes that the extant examples of "instruction" in Pr 1-9 "do not have the character of career advice for officials" (p. 9), which leads him to hypothesize that the introduction of the "instruction" genre in Israel in the time of Solomon involves a process of extrapolation which make the pieces in Pr 1-9 representative of later stages in the history of tradition.

This type of argumentation has its serious problems. Basic for its cogency is the supposition that the origin of "instruction" was uniquely connected with Solomon's creation of civil service and its vocational instruction (perhaps on an Egyptian model). But such a hypothesis is hardly convincing. On the basis of ancient Near Eastern parallels it seems that the broadly based instruction for the community and for the young men of the community was original from the viewpoint of the history-of-tradition and organizational patterns.

The two following studies on the crux of Pr 8 should be added: M. Dahood, "Proverbs 8, 22-31," *CBQ*, XXX (1958), 512-521; and J. de

Savignac, "Interprétation de Proverbes VIII 22-32," *SVT*, XVII (1969), 196-203.

McKane has plowed new furrows and overthrown firmly established views as a result of painstaking research. No scholar or serious student of Pr can afford to neglect this commentary. Many of the conclusions will have to be reckoned with. This work is indispensable.

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Miller, David L. *Gods and Games: Toward a Theology of Play*. New York: World Publishing Co., 1970. xiii + 209 pp. \$ 5.95.

David Miller frolics through this book insisting that play is serious, but theologians saying so are playing. Five sentences from three successive paragraphs in the last chapter illustrate this: "If a book purports to witness to life lived *sub specie ludi*, perhaps then there should not be a serious word in the whole book. . . . I seriously hope there is not one serious sentence in the whole of this book. Including this last one. . . . The danger with a book like this one is that someone might take it seriously. Or that the author might take the preceding sentence seriously" (pp. 170, 171). Frankly, it is a little difficult to take David Miller seriously, and I mean it.

Somehow Miller got diverted into spending well over half his book on introduction; not a typology of previous comments on play, or a searching analysis of their work, but an annotated bibliography on everyone who has mentioned play from Wittengenstein to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern—46 authors in seven widely diverse fields (including mathematics). Still, it may be the most useful part of the book. At least none of the authors writing on theology of play do the same thing. In the last half of his book, Miller surveys what anthropologists and psychologists write about play being a central characteristic of man, and even defining what phenomenologists and theologians say about religion as play. The topic has been discussed in greater depth by Robert Neale and Sam Keen.

The point that Miller stresses more than Neale, Keen, or even Harvey Cox is that theology of play should be playful. "A theology of play, *by* play, and *for* play," is the formula he propounds. Why? Why should a theology of play be any more playful than other theologies, especially if play is as significant as Miller proposes? Should theologies of faith be pious, theologies of hope ecstatic, and theologies of love erotic? Theology by definition is reflection. Its purpose is to clarify feelings, actions, thoughts. If a religious person wishes to reproduce in others a quality of his experience, he will probably break into poetry or song. Instead of theology he will involve himself in devotional literature and liturgical practice. Theology and liturgy are both needed, sometimes they can even overlap, but to demand that a theology of play *must* hop, skip, and jump means that careful reflection may well be sacrificed to a forced ebullience.