

by bringing to the subject his own vast knowledge of Reformation history and European history of that time.

There is something for the more astute and mature reader, too, as the author's stated intention is to share what, in his opinion, is Luther's legacy. One reads on with intense interest to discover just what it might be, and is not disappointed.

Luther's legacy, as pointed out by Forell, falls into several categories: (1) Luther has taught us that reformation "must be a permanent element in the life of the Christian church. . . . Only a church that is willing to be reformed today can honestly claim Luther as its reformer" (p. 76). (2) Luther took theology into the home, the street, and the places of business and government. "When the church makes theology a secret science understandable only to an intellectual elite, it has betrayed the heritage of Luther" (ibid.). (3) Reformation comes not by way of a person, but by way of The Person, the Word of God incarnate—Jesus Christ the Lord. "We could not celebrate Luther's birthday better than by beginning a serious study of the Bible in all our churches" (p. 78). (4) Luther taught us that salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. Therefore, "a church that is socially, radically, intellectually, or even morally exclusive does not take Luther very seriously" (ibid.). Indeed, the "legacy of Luther lives most faithfully wherever God's Word is proclaimed regardless of race or social class, nationality or sex" (p. 79).

As far as this reviewer is concerned, the heart of the book is to be found in Forell's comment concerning Luther's performance at the Diet of Worms (April 17-18, 1521): "The strength of Luther's position resided in his unwillingness to play politics. In a very political meeting, he caught everybody off guard by talking about loyalty to the Word of God" (pp. 53, 55). Luther's example in this regard needs to be emulated today if the Church is to experience continual reformation and renewal, and if the world is to be impressed and attracted by the Church's witness.

As I read, my mind conjured up images of a more youthful Forell, who back in the late 1950s and early 1960s lectured to us students in Systematic Theology I, II, and III, at the old Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary in Maywood, Illinois. The passion for his subject still burns.

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C. RAYMOND HOLMES

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983. xiv + 345 pp. \$14.95.

The author is Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. This treatment of OT ethics stands side by side with his "toward"

volumes on OT theology (first published in 1978) and OT interpretation (first published in 1981 by Baker).

Kaiser tackles in this present tome a sensitive and difficult topic. Fewer than a half dozen scholars in the past 100 years have published volumes on the subject before us (W. A. Yarrel in 1883, W. S. Bruce in 1895 [2d ed. 1912], J. M. Powis Smith in 1923, Johannes Hempel in 1938 [rev. ed. in 1964], and H. van Oyen in 1967). The author in no way hides the fact that he is most profoundly influenced by the approach of W. S. Bruce.

Kaiser opens his volume with an extensive review of issues on the method and design of OT ethics (pp. 1-78). After he describes the development of this discipline and sketches concisely such major systems to OT ethics as those designated the sociological approach (cf. J. Hempel), the moral-theology approach (L. Hodgson), the synchronic approach (Th. C. Vriezen), the diachronic approach (H. Mitchell, W. Eichrodt), and the central-theme approach (J. Muilenburg, W. Kornfeld), he proposes and follows the "combination approach that includes elements of the synchronic, diachronic, central theme approach [sic] along with the exegetical studies of summarizing texts and apologetic analysis of key moral difficulties in the canon" (p. 21). This "combination approach" Kaiser labels the "comprehensive approach" (p. 22), which actually follows, by and large, the methodology propounded by W. S. Bruce in 1895. One wonders whether the combination/comprehensive approach can indeed include the methodological diversity and the resulting conclusions of the synchronic, diachronic, and central-theme approaches (with their respective uniquenesses) without a radical reinterpretation and readjustment of the respective methodological and presuppositional undergirdings.

It is best to allow Kaiser to define his own methodology. His "comprehensive approach" is diachronically organized along the biblical progress of revelation and also centrally unified by means of the theme of "holiness," which is essential to God. Those who recall that Kaiser treats his volume on OT theology by means of the theme of "promise/rest" may wonder why this central theme of the OT cannot function for OT ethics. Could it be that its centrality is challenged by the "holiness" theme? Or could it mean that it really is not as central as it was claimed to be? Or is there such a hiatus between theology and ethics that both need a respective unifying theme?

The OT has a foundational basis, claims Kaiser, "for formulating New Testament ethics or any kind of Christian ethics" (p. 33). Those writers who argue that the NT alone provides an adequate basis for moral theory and action are declared to be "certainly mistaken." OT ethics is not "an optional luxury" to be discussed but the proper foundation for all biblical, theological, or Christian ethical theory. This does not mean that the OT is the final voice. Four limitations are placed on OT ethics:

(a) "National limitations" pertain to certain laws that involve the nation of Israel; (b) "historical limitations" pertain to permitted things such as slavery, polygamy, and a low view of women; (c) "legalistic limitations" pertain to Israel's own failure of recognizing the spiritual value of the law, and (d) "materialistic limitations" relate to the sense of material prosperity.

The question of the validity of the law in its various forms and applications comes into the discussion. Kaiser speaks of the "threefold division of the law" as the distinction between "the civil, ceremonial, and moral law of God" in the OT (p. 44). He sees this division in relation to the "heavy" and "lighter" or "lesser laws" of the NT, the latter being the "civil and ceremonial" laws from which the Lawgiver himself releases us.

Against the various positions of contemporary ethicists who propose limited and non-normative usages of the Bible for today's ethical issues, Kaiser proposes that "ethics and the Bible go together" (p. 57) and points to "the organic perfection and truthfulness of God in each and every revelatory event and disclosure of his Word" (p. 63), despite the Bible's time-relatedness being foundational for today's ethical systems. Thus, the dichotomy between law and grace is abolished. Even in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, requirements were laid down and were not unconditional as far as the human partners are concerned. OT ethics is deontological because the appeal to obedience is not placed on the human subject, but upon the will of a holy God who issued commands. In this sense, the rightness or wrongness of a rule or an action is not contingent upon its results, but on the will of a God who is holy. The central organizing tenet of OT ethics is based in the holiness of the character of God.

The second major part of this publication is entitled, "Summarizing Moral Texts in Old Testament Ethics" (pp. 79-137). The Decalogue receives attention first (pp. 80-95). But this reviewer is quite disappointed with the author's treatment of the Ten Commandments. Kaiser is not in touch with the great expositions of the last 100 years on the meaning and applicability of the Ten Commandments for today, while he affirms that the Decalogue is still valid for today.

For Kaiser, the Sabbath commandment is of a mixed order, having a ceremonial aspect in that it is fixed to the seventh day (one could suppose from his argumentation that any day of the week is acceptable for today's believer) and a moral aspect that refers to restoration, creation, and rest. One wonders on what internal basis the ceremonial aspect can be found, when Creation—which is assigned to the moral aspect—is the rationale for rest on the seventh day because God at first rested on that day himself!

The second passage treated in this part of the volume is the "Book of the Covenant" (Exod 20:22-23:33). The others that follow are "the Law of Holiness" (Lev 18-20) and the laws of Deuteronomy (Deut 12-25). The

latter are parallel to the laws of the Decalogue, as W. Schultz, Hermann Schulz, and recently Stephen Kaufman have argued.

Part III deals with the "Content of Old Testament Ethics" (pp. 139-244) and is divided into sections such as "holiness as a way of life" (in which it is affirmed that "holiness" is the central organizing feature of OT ethics), "holiness in the family and society," "holiness in regard for life," "holiness in marriage and sex," "holiness in wealth and possessions," "holiness in obtaining and using truth," and "holiness in motive and heart."

Part IV treats "Moral Difficulties in the Old Testament" (pp. 247-304). The key moral difficulties discussed here involve the divine repentance, jealousy, and hate; the hardening of man's heart; the wrath of God; charges against acts required by God, such as Abraham's sacrificing of Isaac; and the extermination of the men, women, and children inhabiting Canaan. Kaiser concludes, "God's character and the acts he requires are fully consistent with everything that both testaments would lead us to expect in our God. The problem usually centers in a deficiency in our view of things and our inability to properly define terms or grasp the whole of the subject" (p. 269).

The OT also holds up men and women whose lives were not in every respect exemplary. Kaiser notes incisively that divine approval of an individual in one aspect or area of life does not mean that God approved all aspects of that person's life and conduct.

The concluding section of this fourth part of the volume treats the allegedly deficient OT view of women and of slaves, and of favoritism for the nation of Israel, as well as the severity of such sanctions as Psalms of cursing (the so-called imprecatory psalms), the death penalty, and the law of "an eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth" (*lex talionis*).

Part V explores the relationship of OT ethics and NT applications (pp. 307-314). It takes the form of a conclusion. The question of the validity of the law is raised and answered by reference to Paul's view of the law, wherein the law is affirmed *but* legalism is denied. "There is no contrast between what the Old Testament law required and what the New Testament enjoined" (p. 311). For Kaiser, the "moral law" continues to function and to provide the standard of human conduct and is a coercive force helping the redeemed. "The Ten Commandments are not what has been done away with (2 Cor 3:11)" (p. 313). Only Christ can release the church from the laws no longer in force, namely the "civil and ceremonial" laws, which are the lesser commandments (p. 312). Kaiser concludes his stimulating book as follows: "Only the 'obedience of faith' can show the real purposes of the law in the life of the believers and thus allow them to appreciate the gift of Old Testament ethics" (p. 314).

This review is perhaps somewhat longer than usual, but this is on account of the rarity of publications on the topic of OT ethics. Also, I would state that although in the foregoing paragraphs I have raised some basic issues relating to Kaiser's volume, his work is a serious attempt to come to grips with OT ethics in a refreshing way. The cheap law/gospel and simplistic OT/NT or old-covenant/new-covenant dichotomies are avoided, and the Bible is set forth so as to be seen as a whole, without denying the varieties of emphasis it contains.

The indexes of texts, names, subjects, and Hebrew words enhance the usefulness of this tome. I would urge that in any future printing all Hebrew terms be transliterated, so that the person without a knowledge of the Hebrew alphabet can use this volume with maximum benefit. It indeed deserves that broad a readership.

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GERHARD F. HASEL

LaRondelle, Hans K. *The Israel of God in Prophecy*. Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1983. 226 pp. \$14.95/\$9.95.

Hans K. LaRondelle studied under G. C. Berkouwer at the Free University of Amsterdam. He seems to have inherited the latter's ability to combine rigorous exegesis with a worshipful faith in the God of Scripture.

Known among his students as a dynamic and seminal lecturer, LaRondelle, in *The Israel of God in Prophecy*, attempts to lay the groundwork for a biblical hermeneutic with respect to the interpretation of prophecy. This attempt is carried forward in continual dialogue with Dispensationalism.

LaRondelle's basic presupposition is that Scripture is the Word of God and, as a result, is to be understood as a spiritual unity (pp. 3, 8). This presupposition leads him to the following basic approach: (1) Texts are to be interpreted in the form in which we find them in the canonical text (p. 3). (2) The "analogy-of-Scripture" principle, whereby related passages unlock each other's meanings, is valid (p. 3). (3) Unfulfilled prophecies must be studied in the light of NT fulfillments. Thus the NT becomes the ultimate norm for the interpretation of the unfulfilled prophecies of the OT pertaining to Israel (p. 8). (4) All prophetic interpretation must be related to the nature and work of Christ (pp. 4-8).

The third point is elaborated in the second chapter as *the* crucial issue in prophetic interpretation (pp. 10-20). LaRondelle accuses Dispensationalism of treating the OT essentially as a closed canon with respect to prophecy. However, the OT, by itself, cries out for completion; it looks