

child/servant, does this mean that this saying represents the first stage in faith development? Finally, the absence of Amos Wilder among the main protagonists in the modern debate about the relation of eschatology and ethics is most puzzling.

The value of the book is linked to its argument that the teaching of Jesus is performance, rather than its presentation of Jesus' teaching. For that point, *Jesus and the Ethics of the Kingdom* merits serious reading.

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Dumbrell, William J. *The Faith of Israel: Its Expression in the Books of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988. 286 pp. Paperback, \$12.95.

There are various types of texts through which the beginning college or seminary student can be introduced to the OT. There are surveys of the OT that mix in a lot of different types of material; technical introductions that treat especially the matters of date, author, and composition; and historical surveys that trace the course of Israel's development. *The Faith of Israel* fills a need by taking a distinctly religious approach to OT introduction. It treats the different theological themes of the OT books as they appear. Since the OT books are ultimately religious in their outlook, this is a natural and logical approach that has been neglected in previous introductions.

As far as format is concerned, there are no footnotes or endnotes, but the author does use in-text referencing. The book also contains a modest bibliography. There are no maps, illustrations, or photographic plates, but there is a brief outline of each book at the beginning of each chapter.

*The Faith of Israel* follows the order of the books in the Hebrew canon. This may cause something of a problem for the beginning reader in that he or she ends up reading about David and Solomon in the last chapter of the book. Since the beginning student most likely will be using an English Bible for parallel reading (and a considerable amount of that probably will be necessary), its more historical order might have been preferable.

Proportions of text allotted are generally in balance. Major prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are dealt with in about thirteen pages of text each, while most of the minor prophets are treated in about three pages. In an occasional case, however, there is an imbalance. The call of Abraham in Gen 12:1-3 takes up three pages, while the entire books of Joshua and Judges receive only three pages each. The call of the patriarchs

reflected in the experience of Abraham is a very important theological theme of the OT, but the gift of the land reflected in Joshua is also important. At least a modest disproportion seems to be involved here.

While it is necessary to pay attention to the theological themes that the ancient writers concentrated on, it is also of value to face the questions that modern readers have about those themes. As a particular example of this, the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings may be pointed out. One of the major issues for the modern reader in studying these books is the subject of war. Why did the people of God in ancient times engage in all of the wars that they recorded? While Yahweh as the leader in holy war is occasionally mentioned in Dumbrell's discussion of these books, a more thorough discussion of this background subject would have been helpful to the modern reader.

Because of the number and volume of the subjects that need to be covered in a short space, the text of this book is quite concentrated and the author's prose is condensed. Occasionally this leads to ambiguity in phraseology. Likewise, a few technical terms, such as "ontology" and "fideistic," have crept in without adequate explanation for beginning students. In general, however, the author's writing is clear and usually free of technical jargon.

A theological introduction to the OT is probably the most difficult type to write because it is more open to variation and choice in terms of the theological themes treated than is the case with the more technical and historical introductions. While there is always room for differences over topics, I would say that the author has done well in selecting themes. Beyond that, he has handled them judiciously from a conservative viewpoint.

While the tone of some of the above remarks may appear somewhat critical, these remarks are not intended to cast this book in a negative light. They have been offered simply to indicate some places where this reviewer feels that Dumbrell's volume could be improved. In teaching introductory courses on the OT to beginning seminary students, I did not find a text that was fully satisfactory in meeting the needs of my students. If I were still teaching that type of course, I would use this volume as a text. I appreciate its distinctly religious approach, the quality of the writing, the author's selection and treatment of theological themes, and his conservative approach. Like all introductory texts, however, this book encounters the problem of having too much to cover and too little space in which to do it. But the present volume has addressed that difficult task as well as most, and it has done so from a new, different, and particularly relevant point of view—the religious faith found in the OT.