

may not be the final word on Finney, it most certainly in the future will be the starting point for the serious study of one of nineteenth-century America's most important figures.

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Kang, Sa-Moon. *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1989. Beiheft zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Band 177. 251 pp. \$71.75.

This study is an investigation of the motif of divine war in the ancient Near Eastern historical sources and of YHWH war in the historical battles of the Bible. This Korean scholar observes some specific parallels of the divine-war motif in the ancient Near East and in the preexilic era of the Bible.

Analyzing the war motifs in the rising period of the nations of Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Syro-Palestine, and Egypt, Kang notices that divine war in the historical Syro-Palestine sources is not found before the period of the Davidic kingdom. In Ugarit, a vassal state of the Hittite kingdom, divine war was a mythological battle, such as in the Baal myth.

In the ancient Near Eastern context, war was recognized as originating in a divine command. The duty of the king was to carry out the war as a divine mission. The Hittite and Mesopotamian kings appealed to God as their Judge, as well as their Warrior, who was fighting against the enemy. The war started with a religious consultation to seek the divine will through omens, oracles, or priests. The war began after the discernment of the divine favor. The divine warriors themselves participated on the battlefield to destroy the enemies. The visible symbols of divine participation in battle were the divine standards or statues. The idea of total destruction is found only in the Anatolian context. The victory was ultimately a divine victory. The ancient Near Eastern kings used to erect steles or monuments or build temples to commemorate the victory of the divine warriors.

The ideology of the divine war was perpetuated in the cultic event in which the battle drama was reactualized. Thus, the actual wars and the cultic event formed two poles in the formation of divine war.

Part Two examines the motifs of Yahweh war in the historical battles of the OT, particularly Israel's victory in Exodus 14-15 under Moses and the major wars during the Davidic kingdom. The biblical war motifs in the exilic and postexilic periods reveal, however, solely an eschatological and apocalyptic dimension.

Kang concludes that the divine war as an historical reality of battle can be seen for the first time in the battles of David. In the Reed Sea event of Exodus 14-15 the human soldiers played no role. The epic character of

the prose account of Exodus 14 will not permit readers, according to Kang, to discover "what really happened" (p. 117). "We can only trace how the Israelites perceived the Sea event after they had settled in the literary form" (p. 117).

When Miriam sang: "Sing to the LORD. . . . The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!" (Exod. 15:21), that song does not show that a certain battle took place. It is "only a simple mythopoetic description in which YHWH destroyed a certain enemy, a horse and chariotry" (p. 117). Thus Exodus 14 and 15 do not describe a military conflict between two armies.

Kang even sees in these chapters of Exodus a "mythologization of history" (p. 124), because "the mythological battle of the Canaanite epic was used by Israel to express her historical war experience. . . . It is just a symbolic expression of Israel's redemption by YHWH alone" (p. 124). Kang considers the Sea account in Exodus 14-15, therefore, as representing a tension between an actual historical event in the Egyptian delta and a mythological framework that gives it a transcendent meaning. But the battle at the Sea "cannot be considered as an event of YHWH war in which YHWH intervened in the historical context. Rather, it is a theological understanding of the redemptive history which has developed in the history of tradition" (p. 125).

The same procedure is applied to Moses' war against the Amalekites in Exodus 17:8-16: "There was no intervention by YHWH in the historical battle of Israel and Amalek in the period of the wilderness. It is a *post-battle* interpretation which emphasizes the role of Moses alone in the battle" (p. 127). These are only examples of several presented by Kang in his methodology of measuring the biblical accounts by the verification principles of historical science.

Kang constantly tries to determine whether or not the motifs of YHWH war are found in the historical battles of the OT. With the help of the historical and form critical methods and of later redactor reinterpretation, Kang concludes that the two descriptions of the Yahweh war in Judges 4 and 5 are conflicting and that Deborah's song must be considered as a "poetic hyperbole" intended to give a theological twist to the original song, and was added only centuries later, in the time of the Davidic monarchy (p. 186).

As a rule, Kang sides with the negative critical scholars who often reject the historical reliability of the biblical record and accept it only as "a theological narrative" that is partly influenced by the common ancient Near Eastern mythology. A valuable section is the analysis of David's conduct of Yahweh war (pp. 215-222).

Kang finally concludes that the motifs of Yahweh war are *not* found in Israel's historical battles under Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and Saul; they appear for the first time in David's battles. The present traditions of battles

as a later theological reflection were added by a redactor. Kang observes exact parallels of Yahweh war in the ancient Near Eastern concept of divine war, including the participation of the ark of the Lord and the cultic praise of the divine warrior after battle.

The book has an excellent bibliography (pp. 225-235) and helpful indices. This scholarly study expands the horizon of the biblical theologian by placing the Bible narratives in their larger historical context of the warfare of the ancient Near East. While surprisingly common motifs are discovered, it is the necessary task of the Christian scholar to identify also the unique distinctives of the biblical record and of Israel's religious concepts.

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Leith, John H. *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989. 230 pp. \$16.95.

John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life covers much more than the reformer's ethics or spirituality. In this work the author tries to interpret the whole of Calvin's theology from the standpoint of the life of the Christian. Leith is convinced that the key to the understanding of this man's thought is not some doctrine, such as the sovereignty of God or predestination, but his practical concern to explain how God goes about recreating his image in human beings—a position fully justified in the light of Calvin's career at Geneva. Besides providing a new approach to Calvin's theology, the book has a refreshing tone because of the author's willingness to acknowledge inconsistencies and contradictions in a theology which is usually presented as a masterpiece of rigorous logic.

Leith's central thesis is that for Calvin the Christian life involves much more than a code of morals or a pattern of conduct. It is really "a personal response to the gracious and personal activity of God in their lives" (p. 25). This concept also becomes the norm by which he judges Calvin's ideas. It brings to mind a key theme of Encounter Theology, which had much influence at the time when the work was first produced as a dissertation in 1949.

One is amazed at how much Leith can pack into 224 pages. For instance, in his first chapter he manages to include brief but enlightening discussions of Calvin's ideas on the glory of God, his law, scriptural inspiration and authority, repentance, mortification, vivification, and eschatology. In fact, the reader at times feels a little out of mental breath by the pace of the material covered.

Although Leith shows an excellent command of all aspects of the debates about Calvin, he depends largely on primary material and quotes