

continuing development of that tradition does not seem to have had a significant impact upon the process of selection.

*Readings* is thereby rendered less noteworthy with the publication of the second edition. With a volume published in 1966 it is perhaps permissible to use supplementary materials so as to establish the comprehensiveness desired in a survey course. A volume published in 1990 cannot expect the same largesse from contemporary students or teachers. The Christian tradition of thought has always benefitted from the contributions of both men and women, both East and West. It would be wonderful to recommend *Readings* as a volume which takes these factors fully into account, but it does not. It may still occupy a place within curricula, but that may be more due to lack of competition in the field than to its own qualities.

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*Introducing the Old Testament.* By Richard Coggins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. ISBN 0-19-213255-5. Pp. v+165.

Richard Coggins' *Introducing the Old Testament* will appeal to anyone who wants a succinct survey of Old Testament scholarship and is interested in the many disciplines that have, and will continue, to influence its study. The Preface sets out clearly Coggins' objectives and plans: it is to be used as a guide to the various scholarly approaches and disciplines that have been used to study the Old Testament. While Coggins does not claim to be an expert in every one of these areas, he nevertheless suggests that it is both wise and appropriate to examine as wide a range of approaches as possible to build up a balanced picture of Old Testament scholarship. To his credit, he is sensitive not to evaluate one kind of approach over any other. He prefers to show something of the characteristic concerns and emphases that have led to different ways of understanding the Old Testament. Coggins' format establishes what questions can be legitimately and profitably put to the Old Testament.

Coggins divides his book into ten chapters: instead of titles, he poses ten investigative questions encompassing such areas as textual analysis, linguistics, history, archaeology, sociology, anthropology, women's studies,

literary criticism and theology. Each chapter introduces a different question, followed by a discussion of different responses to the question. Coggins does not claim that there is one fixed and absolute answer to each question, but prefers to provide a survey of possible approaches which suggests that each question is open to the possibility of further investigation. Herein lies the strength of Coggins' book.

In Chapter One, Coggins provides a framework for the study of the Old Testament by undertaking a sensitive discussion of the various names that have been applied to the text of the Old Testament. He then focuses on its contents and its transmission. Coggins further endeavours to find a balance between Jewish and Christian sensitivities to the arrangement of the books and the reasons why different arrangements exist. This investigation ends with by a brief historical survey of the aims and impetus of Old Testament scholarship in Medieval Judaism and seventeenth and eighteenth-century Protestantism.

Chapter Two examines the question of the composition, meaning and reliability of the text. He highlights two distinct but related issues: the text itself and the actual meaning of individual words. In his discussion of textual criticism, Coggins explores translation problems, text and linguistic comparisons of Hebrew language and idiom to that of Ugaritic, Arabic, and Akkadian, and the potential value of textual comparative analysis to the Qumran discoveries. Since the question of whether certain words in the text are those of the actual author is still open for discussion, textual criticism as a discipline, will continue "not least when we want to understand more fully the history of interpretation of a biblical book."

Chapters Three, Four and Five focus on socio-historical and archaeological perspectives. Coggins includes material on the current debate on the relationship between history and story. He recognizes that various parts of the Old Testament are not susceptible to historical questioning, and suggests that readers should be sensitive to the importance and value of story as a medium in and of itself without necessarily asking whether the narrative is an accurate historical account. Similarly, Coggins argues that the "new" archaeology has much to offer: instead of concentrating on new spectacular finds to support the biblical records, he points out that archaeology is becoming more interested in uncovering the social, political and economical relationships between ancient Israel and the surrounding cultures. Coggins suggests that this kind of enquiry can also be invaluable for understanding the literary dimensions of the text.

The last five chapters concentrate on current issues. In addition to a study of the religion of ancient Israel, and an examination of whether an Old Testament theological reading is possible, Coggins looks at the way the Old Testament can be read as liberation literature and the way it has been read by feminist interpreters. Coggins recognizes that much of the impetus for these studies has come from religious and theological reflection, but prefers not to offer a personal value judgement of their importance.

*Introducing the Old Testament* is a well-written and concise survey. Although the bibliography directs those who wish to a fuller study of specific areas, the addition of critical notes would also have been a source of potential help to readers. For those who come to the study of the Old Testament for the first time, this book provides a valuable background and direction for further scholarly study and research.

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*Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views.* By David M. Wulff. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1991. ISBN 0-471-50236-7. Pp. xxvi + 640.

A book is often worth reading when it breaks through one of our presuppositions about an important topic and offers a fresh perspective, one which explains an aspect of the problem hitherto ignored. Given this criterion, David Wulff's innovative *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary Views* is an exciting book as it breaks through so many of the hidden barriers and presuppositions of this field.

Traditionally, scholars in the psychology of religion have pursued one of two allegedly irreconcilable strategies. Either they claimed to measure religious behaviour in a scientific and value-free manner or they took a phenomenological approach to religion, hoping to give the reader an understanding of the religious participant's worldview. Observers have noted that the first approach tends to dominate psychology departments and the latter religious studies departments. While most textbooks favour one of these two approaches and ignore the other, Wulff manages to describe, appreciate and critique both of these strategies. His chapters on the biological explanations for religious behaviour (which include the be-