

Calvin was not the dictator of Geneva. While in no way approving the burning of Servetus, he wonders why this one execution has been singled out for attention rather than the countless others of the time. If Calvin cannot be excused in this manner, he may and must be contextualized, in an era which, lacking many of the sensitivities of twentieth-century liberal thought, regarded the execution of heretics as routine, (p. 117). The author also attacks the repeated, but unfounded, assertion that Calvin opposed Copernicus by name (p. xiv).

The author is commendably concerned to refute some of the anti-Calvin legends. But there is an alternative Calvin legend that is as much in need of refutation – the picture of a Calvin who was all but faultless and verged on infallibility. The author does not himself fall into this trap, but it might have been better if he had devoted more attention to this other danger in the interpretation of Calvin.

A book that is so general in scope is unlikely to break much new ground. The point where this most clearly happens is in the chapter on Calvin's Paris years, where the author questions the received opinion that Calvin studied at the Collège de La Marche.

How does this book compare with William J. Bouwsma's *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (Oxford, 1988), which has aroused such interest? It is less exciting and less iconoclastic than Bouwsma's book. At the same time it is a more solid book, with a secure theological underpinning, while Bouwsma is weak in this area. It is less speculative than Bouwsma's book and does not attempt to psychologise Calvin. At the same time, it is as much a 'sixteenth-century portrait' as is Bouwsma's, placing Calvin's life, thought and influence in a firmly sixteenth-century context.

On the dust cover there is a commendation from Francis Higman, a leading Calvin scholar, who states that it is 'an excellent book, remarkable in its scope, and interesting to read'. The interest is sustained by occasional flashes of humour, of which my favourite was the following: In 1532 the Paris theology faculty condemned a series of doctrines, 'including the radical suggestion that "now that God has willed that the Bible should be in French, women will take over the office of bishops and bishops the office of women. Women will preach the gospel, while bishops will gossip with young girls"'. The faculty found this too advanced for their understanding of orthodoxy' (p. 63).

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## **Le Livre de Michée**

**Daniel Schibler**

Vaux-sur-Seine: Édifac, 1989, 152 pp., 97 FrF. ISBN 2-904407-10-3

### **SUMMARY**

*The aim of this commentary is to steer a middle course between the great detail of some modern commentaries and superficial, popular treatments. In Micah, apparently conflicting viewpoints can be explained in terms of different audiences. The reign of Hezekiah is the background to Micah's prophetic hopes. The commentary is learned, clear and theologically well-grounded.*

### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Le CEB, Commentaire Evangélique de la Bible, suit une voie moyenne entre le détail extrême de certains commentaires modernes et le traitement superficiel d'ouvrages populaires. D. Schibler étudie le livre de Michée, et résout par la référence à des auditoires différents les apparences de divergences internes. Il voit dans le règne d'Ezéchias l'arrière-plan de l'espérance prophétique de Michée. Le commentaire est érudit, clair, et bien fondé théologiquement.*

### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Das Ziel dieses Kommentars ist, einen Mittweg zu finden zwischen der Ausführlichkeit einiger moderner Kommentare und der Oberflächlichkeit von populärwissenschaftlichen Abhandlungen. Scheinbar widersprüchliche Aussagen werden durch unterschiedliche Adressaten erklärt. Die Herrschaft Hiskias bildet den Hintergrund für Michas messianische Hoffnungen. Der Kommentar ist wissenschaftlich, klar und theologisch fundiert.*

This is the first book in a language other than English that I have been asked to review, and it has been a pleasure to sample a publication from the Faculty of Evangelical Theology at Vaux-sur-Seine. Micah is the eleventh to appear in a series planned to cover the whole Bible. The stated aim is to follow a middle course between the massive detail of specialist tomes and the superficiality of some popular publications that short-circuit the task of establishing the meaning in order to arrive at an application. The commentaries are based on the original languages, but do not presuppose a knowledge of Hebrew or Greek, and make use of the principal versions of the Bible, especially those of the last decade. Readers of this



journal will welcome the stated theological stance: confidence in the truth of the inspired text, respect for its authority, interpretation according to the analogy of faith. The Micah commentary was published simultaneously in German.

In twenty-four pages of introduction Schibler covers the prophet and his times, his book and its theology. He traces the history of critical study of Micah, assesses the arguments, and adopts the 'synchronic' approach, which enables him to interpret the book whole, rather than dissected into a multitude of small, unconnected sections. Schibler believes these can be accounted for by different situations and audiences, and he would date the prophecies in the eighth century. The reign of Hezekiah provided Micah with his messianic hopes, while his invitation to northerners to take part in the Jerusalem passover (2 Chr. 30:6) depicted for Micah a 'remnant' (2:12, 13).

The commentary on the text is rigorous. The Hebrew is transliterated when reference to it is necessary, and variants are noted and assessed. Literary devices are pointed out as an aid to exegesis; e.g. the symmetry and parallelism between 5:7 and 5:8, where the conflict between the comparison 'dew from the Lord' and 'like a lion' is resolved in the light of 2 Samuel 7 and 8. In one David was a source of blessing, in the other a conqueror. Throughout the commentary the views of other commentators are taken fully into account. Only after due consideration of these does Schibler explain his own preference or his personal interpretation.

The result is an instructive and straightforward exposition of a difficult little prophecy. Schibler writes clearly and simply, carrying along with him even this foreigner whose French is rusty, and convincing me of the appropriateness of an eighth century background for an adequate understanding of Micah's prophecy. Moreover Schibler's interpretation is enlightening theologically. The author's learning has in no way diminished his faith, rather the contrary; he deals faithfully with both human treachery that results in ruin and with God's truth and mercy (7:20), that are to be fully revealed in Jesus Christ. This scholarly but positive approach interprets Micah for today.

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**Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels**  
**Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (eds.)**

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**SUMMARY**

*This is the first of an intended library of reference volumes on the New Testament literature. It contains 200 articles (a number by eminent scholars), and Scripture and subject indexes. The important topics are generally well treated; some minor articles are less useful.*

**RÉSUMÉ**

*Le dictionnaire réalisé sous la direction de J. B. Green, S. McKnight, I. H. Marshall, est le premier d'une collection d'ouvrages de référence sur le Nouveau Testament en projet. Il contient deux cents articles (nombre d'entre eux par d'éminents spécialistes) avec des index des textes bibliques et des sujets abordés. La perspective est 'évangélique' au sens large. Les sujets importants sont, en général, fort bien traités; quelques articles, de moindre importance, n'ont pas la même utilité.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Dies ist der erste Band einer geplanten Sammlung von Nachschlagewerken zur neutestamentlichen Literatur. Er enthält 200 Beiträge (einige von hochangesehenen Wissenschaftlern) und ein Stichwort- und Bibelstellen-register. Wichtige Themen werden im allgemeinen gut bearbeitet; einige kleinere Beiträge sind weniger nützlich.*

The dust jacket of this huge volume heralds the work as 'A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship'. If one were to add the word 'evangelical' to that designation, one would be just about right. This volume is part of a welcome effort by InterVarsity Press to create a library of reference volumes for research into various aspects of the New Testament literature, giving expression to the best of evangelical thinking (it must be said that 'evangelical' is taken in an extended sense!). This is the volume on the Gospels, to be followed by one on Paul.

It is difficult to know where to start with such a book. The articles are arranged alphabetically, and vary in length from two columns to several over 15 pages. There are about 200 articles,