

critically assessed, rather than an alternative political theory with a distinctive content; a filter rather than a substance. Indeed, Part II reinforces this appearance, for in it Mott proceeds by expounding the content of alternative ideologies, and then offers selective evaluative comments on certain aspects of them. However, what he elaborates in Part I often seems to aspire to be a political theory with a distinctive substance, rather than a mere filter; this is what makes the book interesting. Merely to stipulate that, whatever political theory we adopt, it must be compatible with a series of Christian ethical principles not themselves of a distinctively political character (such as love, equality, community, etc.), is of limited help to someone wrestling with the concrete particulars of politics. What such a person needs is not generalised principles of ethics, but institutionally particularised principles, principles of *political* ethics, concerning the nature, source and limits of political authority, the legitimacy of democracy, the purposes of the state, the nature of law, justice and rights, the political implications of liberty, equality, property, welfare, class, and so forth. Mott certainly goes some way towards providing such principles, but his apparatus of social and political concepts is insufficiently developed, making for ambiguity or lacunae at certain points, and for an uncritical appropriation of elements of secular ideologies at others. For example, he endorses an egalitarian, needs-based theory of distributive justice without testing it rigorously enough; and confusion is created when he asserts not only that politics is 'about theology', but also 'about power' and 'about justice'.

Mott could have avoided such problems had he drawn more fully on longstanding traditions of systematic Christian political theory, such as are found in Catholicism (still routinely neglected by most evangelicals, to their loss), or Neo-Calvinism (which is cited but insufficiently utilised). Here can be found Christian scholars deeply immersed in social and political theory and operating with sophisticated theoretical frameworks. By contrast, Niebuhr and Tillich wrote primarily with theological concerns in mind. Mott's book will serve as an invaluable theological source for those seeking a Christian perspective on politics. His contribution invites further elaboration through an intensive encounter with

these and other traditions of Christian political theorizing.

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EuroJTh (1996) 5:1, 73-75

0960-2720

***The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction***

**H. G. M. Williamson**

Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1994, xvi + 306 pp., £35. hb, ISBN 0-19-826360-0

**RÉSUMÉ**

*Comme son titre l'indique, cet ouvrage traite de l'unité du livre d'Esaïe. Il faut préciser que ce n'est pas une unité d'auteur qui est envisagée, mais une unité comme la conçoit la critique radicale: l'unité d'une oeuvre qui est l'aboutissement de tout un processus de transmission et de rédaction (comme l'indique le sous-titre). Il y a une tentative pour concilier l'étude diachronique et l'étude synchronique de l'Ancien Testament. L'interprétation synchronique n'est pas considérée comme une lecture contradictoire avec l'approche diachronique, mais comme lui étant complémentaire. Dans le présent cas, l'analyse du livre considère que le 'Deutéro-Esaïe' aurait rédigé un nouvel ouvrage en utilisant à la fois des matériaux empruntés au prophète de Jérusalem, et son oeuvre propre, et cela à la fin de l'exil babylonien. Ce nouvel ouvrage comprendrait en gros les chapitres 2 à 55. Le 'Trito-Esaïe' est considéré comme plus tardif et n'est pas pris en considération.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Williamsons Buch thematisiert, wie der Titel zeigt, die Einheit Jesajas. Doch mit Einheit ist nicht eine einheitliche Verfasserschaft im konservativen Sinne gemeint, sondern eine Einheit, wie sie neuerdings in der modernen kritischen Forschung zu Jesaja (wie auch zu anderen Büchern des Alten Testaments) vertreten wird, d.h. eine Einheit, die das Ergebnis eines Überlieferungs- und Redaktionsprozesses ist (vgl. den Untertitel des Buches). Folglich geht es darum, diachronische und synchronische Forschung zu den Büchern des Alten Testaments zu kombinieren. Synchronische*



*Ansätze werden nicht als Alternative zu diachronischer Arbeit verstanden, wie es bei einigen modernen literarischen Ansätzen zum AT der Fall ist, sondern als ein komplementäres Anliegen. Die vorliegende Studie bietet somit eine Art Querschnitt der Entwicklung des Jesajabuches zu dem Zeitpunkt, als Deutero-Jesaja, nach der hier dargelegten These aus bereits existierendem Material, übernommen von Jesaja von Jerusalem, sowie eigenem Material aus den späteren Jahren des babylonischen Exils, ein neues Buch erstellte. Dieses neue Werk umfaßt annähernd Jesaja 2–55. Trito-Jesaja wird als noch später angesehen und in die Untersuchung nicht mit einbezogen.*

This is a book about the unity of Isaiah, as its title shows. By unity is meant, however, not unity of authorship in the conservative sense, but the unity that is now the common coin of modern critical thinking about Isaiah (as indeed about other books of the Old Testament [OT]), that, is a unity after a process of transmission and redaction (as the sub-title shows). There is, indeed, an attempt here to reconcile the claims of diachronic and synchronic study of OT books. Synchronic study is conceived, not as an alternative to diachronic study in the manner of some modern literary approaches to the OT, but as complementary to it. In this case, it amounts to a kind of cross-section of the development of the Book of Isaiah, at the point at which, according to the thesis offered, Deutero-Isaiah composed a new book out of already existing material inherited from Isaiah of Jerusalem and work of his own, in the latter years of the Babylonian exile. This new work comprises, broadly, Isaiah 2–55, 'Trito-Isaiah' being considered later still and left out of account here.

This is a particular concept of the way in which the two parts of the book relate to each other, distinct from other modern approaches which have sought to explain the often observed echoes and similarities between them. For example, a number of studies have focussed much more on redactional history as a way of accounting for the Book of Isaiah, and allowed less to the compositional work of Deutero-Isaiah than Williamson does. One of his postulates, indeed, is the attribution of Isaiah 40–55 more or less entirely to Deutero-Isaiah, a view that cannot always be assumed in modern study of the book, and one which the author gives some attention to justifying. Williamson's particular question, however, is how far Deutero-Isaiah wrote in conscious dependence upon the work of Isaiah of

Jerusalem.

His understanding of the relationship between the two has a central rationale. It derives from the fact that Isaiah of Jerusalem predicted that judgment would come about for Judah, and the rejection of his message in his time (perhaps on the occasion of the Syro-Ephraimite war; Isaiah 7). The special interest of Deutero-Isaiah in that message focuses on the writing activity of Isaiah. Three passages in Isaiah 1–39 report that the prophet wrote, namely 8:1–4, 8:16 and 30:8. The most important is the second, 8:16, which testifies to a formal and public legal action to secure a scroll against alteration, and reserve it for opening only by one who is legally entitled to do so (p. 100). This constitutes Isaiah's response to the rejection of his preaching, namely to record the content of it (though we do not know exactly what he wrote), and wait for the time when it would be shown to be true. The waiting time, according to this passage, seems to be open-ended. However, both the first and the third passages suggest that Isaiah did not expect the vindication of his words in his own generation.

It fell to Deutero-Isaiah to 'open' the scroll and proclaim the former world fulfilled. The clearest evidence that this is how the Babylonian prophet conceived his task is 50:4–9. This passage, traditionally one of the 'Servant Songs', is seen by Williamson as referring to the prophet himself, who is thereby cast in the role of the one who is 'taught', the same expression found in 8:16 (where it is often translated 'disciples'). Deutero-Isaiah thus counts himself among those 'disciples', and qualified to proclaim the word fulfilled (107–09).

He goes further, however, for he is concerned now to ground his own message of salvation in the fulfilment of the former prophecy. If the former word proved true, then his own present message, now of salvation, should be believed by the community in exile. This understanding of the mind of Deutero-Isaiah is illustrated in Isaiah 41, for example, where the allusions to the advance of Cyrus are understood as demonstrations of the power of Yahweh to do what he has said he would do. The polemical dimension of the chapter is then to be understood in this light. This logic, however, is not confined to the prophet's preaching within 40–55 but may also now be found within 1–39, as a result of Deutero-Isaiah's reworking of the material there, which included even supplying new material of his own composition, such as 11:11–16



(134–35). This composition was part of a restructuring of the material he found in 2–12, to yield a result which demonstrated a transition from a time of judgment to a time of salvation.

The argument involves the detailed comparison of many words and expressions and their contexts in order to trace the hand of the Babylonian prophet, and it is pursued with the author's accustomed lucidity and persuasiveness. The argument is cumulative, and many cases discussed entail debate with others who have read them differently. Readers will find some arguments more convincing than others, as indeed the author would expect.

There are important general issues, however. Clearly the extent to which the thesis presented here will be found convincing will depend in large measure on the acceptance or otherwise of certain basic postulates about interpreting the Old Testament, which will have become evident from the foregoing. Readers who are convinced that Isaiah is the entirely the work of Isaiah of Jerusalem may feel out of sympathy with the enterprise. Others, broadly sympathetic, may question the particular thesis. One question might concern the relationship between the product of Deutero-Isaiah's work that is postulated here and the similar structures of other prophetic books (*i.e.* a movement from judgement to salvation that now seems embedded in the form; Hosea and Jeremiah are cases in point). This question needs an answer in relation to the common belief that the prophetic books have received their shape from the all-embracing activity of the Deuteronomists. Williamson seems unwilling to accept this kind of account of the composition of Isaiah. But was Deutero-Isaiah, alternatively, conforming to a known pattern of activity in producing his specific work, and if so was it to be found in already existing prophetic books?

Behind this kind of question lies another controversial matter. In the concept of a given tradition of belief available to and taken up by a new generation, there is an important theological affirmation. This consists in a belief in the vitality of the theological ideas that underlie the process described, and even a correspondence between faith and event. It is a view which is characteristic of those critical approaches to the OT which have not sought ultimately to separate the critical and the theological endeavours. In this important respect it differs from a certain new breed of discourse in OT studies which has chastised

older critical scholarship for being too much in the pocket of Theology. It is encouraging to find a work of criticism from the hand of a leading OT scholar which is informed by a belief in the vitality of the word of God as formative of Israel's religious experience.

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EuroJTh (1996) 5:1, 75–76

0960–2720

### ***Reclaiming the Ground: Christianity and Socialism***

**John Smith and Others**

edited by Christopher Bryant

London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993

142 pp. £5.99

### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Nous avons là une série d'articles de John Smith, jadis chef de l'opposition au Parlement britannique, ainsi que d'autres auteurs, sur le christianisme et le socialisme. L'essai sur la logique de la communauté par Hilary Armstrong est de loin le meilleur et le plus utile.*

### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Eine Essaysammlung von John Smith (herausgegeben zu seiner Zeit als Oppositionsführer im britischen Parlament) und anderen zum Thema „Christentum und Sozialismus“. Der mit Abstand beste und am stärksten praxisorientierte Essay ist „The Logic of Community“ von Hilary Armstrong, MP.*

John Smith led the Labour party in opposition to government in the U.K. and died not long after the publication of this volume.

By far the best chapter in it is by the only woman contributor, Hilary Armstrong MP, PPS to John Smith on 'The Logic of Community'. She examines the roots of the Labour Party in Methodism and notes that for them 'there was no opposition at all between the hard work of self-improvement and the gift of skill and self to neighbours and the community. It was easier to learn and improve yourself because it was done in the context of others and the community . . . you need to be self-developed in order to work for social development. This relationship has been absent from our policies and politics for some