
Pro Rege

Volume 6 | Number 4

Article 9

June 1978

Stones and the Scriptures (Book Review)

Wayne A. Kobes

Dordt College, wayne.kobes@dordt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege

Recommended Citation

Kobes, Wayne A. (1978) "Stones and the Scriptures (Book Review)," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 6: No. 4, 27 - 28.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol6/iss4/9

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

tary theories are probably best known from the physical explanations of light, where both the wave and the particle characteristics are required for an adequate description of the properties of light. But unlike these two theories of light—which both operate on the physical, that is, the same, level—the complementarity of science and faith is suggested by MacKay to be hierarchical. Thus they are not competitive; they are two *levels* of explanation, two ways of looking at reality. Because there is always a danger of using this kind of reasoning to avoid conflicts between mutually exclusive theories, MacKay warns the reader not to decide lightly that two explanations are complementary or that the complementarity of two explanations is hierarchical (pp. 91-92).

It is possible, it seems to me, to have chemical, physiological and psychological theories for example, about the function of the human brain; and several Christian philosophers have recognized this. Complementarity theories have probably been formulated for the same reason. When one is dealing with the relationship between faith and science, I feel that the danger to be avoided when using the complementarity argument is the idea that the two complementary theories are *needed* to *complete* one another. Although there may be other pitfalls in the idea of complementarity, MacKay has articulated a view of the relationship between faith and science that is more helpful than the competitive one mentioned above. MacKay has stated these views in a form that is readable for people engaged in the natural sciences. Students struggling with these problems would benefit from this book.

In his dealing with the topics of science and the Christian faith, MacKay's description of what the Christian religion says about man, his need for salvation, and the work of Jesus Christ are, in my opinion, Biblical, accurate, and refreshing. I *do* have a problem, however, with MacKay's seeming acceptance of the scientific enterprise as it is usually represented. Although it is not a major theme of the book, it seems that a positivistic view of science, with its ideals of methodological autonomy, objectivity, and progress, are accepted without challenge. Furthermore, many Christians will not share MacKay's acceptance of organic evolution (p. 51).

I would also question MacKay's use of the word *mechanistic*. He uses it without the reductionistic connotation that is usually attached to it in the literature. Thus, *mechanistic* becomes synonymous with scientific, chemical, and other similar terms. For reductionistic views, MacKay has coined the term "nothing-buttery" ("life is nothing but. . ."). I feel that

this usage has tended to bring confusion into a topic that is complicated enough as it is.

When we challenge MacKay on these two points, we should remember that his book is popularly written, and that it is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the Christian view of the philosophy of science. MacKay's book is, therefore, recommended.

The Stones and the Scriptures, by Edwin Yamauchi. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1972, 207 pages, paperback, \$3.95. Reviewed by Wayne Kobes, Instructor in Theology.

Of what significance are the findings of archeological science for a study of Scripture? Every Christian is faced with this question as he undertakes a study of the Bible, using the resource materials available today. And yet the question raised is not easily answered! Do the findings of the archeologists confirm the teachings of Scripture as some contend, or do they show the Bible to be an unreliable record of the past as others maintain? Can the average Christian benefit from the findings of Biblical archeology, or is it advisable for him to keep his distance from such studies?

Dr. Edwin Yamauchi, assistant professor of history at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, provides clear and responsible answers to the preceding questions in *The Stones and the Scriptures*. In this introduction to Biblical archeology, Dr. Yamauchi makes his reader aware of the history of his subject as well as the contributions and limitations of this recently developed science. Dr. Yamauchi refuses to gloss over the difficulties that face the Christian as he attempts to reconcile archeological discoveries with Biblical teachings. Yet he is convinced that the findings of archeology have overwhelmingly confirmed the reliability of Scripture. The author shows himself to be fully informed, balanced, and current in his understanding of this science which can be very helpful for Biblical studies.

The scope of Dr. Yamauchi's book is best illustrated by noting the chapter headings: "Mari, Nuzi, and Alalakh: *The Illumination of the Old Testament*;" "Ramsay Vs. The Tubingen School: *The Confirmation of the New Testament*;" "Qumran and the Essenes: *The Dead Sea Scrolls*;" "Fragments and Circles: *The Nature of the Evidence*."

As indicated above, *The Stones and the*

Scriptures deals with the central issues that confront the average Christian in his study of Scripture in relation to archeological findings.

Especially significant is Dr. Yamauchi's discussion of the conflicts that have arisen between the views of the higher critical approach and those of the emerging archeological science. It is with considerable frustration that Dr. Yamauchi notes that few of those who have accepted the views of higher criticism have chosen to make use of the new data made available by archeological discoveries. Locked in by their rationalistic presuppositions and the resulting misreconstructions of ancient history, these higher critics have persisted in ignoring mounting archeological evidence that clearly demands a radical reformulation of their views. In fact, notes the author, the findings of respectable archeologists have often been harshly labeled as "poorly informed fundamentalism" by those of the German school. Yet, the findings of archeology are gradually having their corrective effect in support of Scripture.

As an introduction to Biblical archeology, *The Stones and the Scriptures* is excellent! Dr. Yamauchi writes in a clear and interesting style. He has chosen and structured his material effectively. This book will be especially useful to pastors and to those who teach theology. The Christian community owes their thanks to Dr. Yamauchi for making available such a competent and timely study.

Captured, by Carolyn Paine Miller, Christian Herald Books, Chappaqua, New York, 288 pages, \$3.95. Reviewed by Jack Vanden Berg, Associate Professor of English.

This narrative is the account of Carolyn Miller's experiences in Vietnam during 1975. She, her husband John, and their five-year-old daughter Luanne were caught in the crossfire of the North and South Vietnamese armies, were captured, and endured an eight-month internment under the Viet Cong and their officers. She and her family were a part of the "Banmethuot 14"—a group composed of a U.S. State Dept. representative, an Australian radio official, a Filipino agricultural expert, a former Peace Corp member and ten Wycliffe translators and Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries.

The story is extremely interesting because of the vividness of Carolyn Miller's account, her reactions to the experiences, and the view it

presents of the Viet Cong. Generally, the Viet Cong treated her group with courtesy and surprising gentleness. They were bound only once; they could refuse work assignments; and they were forced to listen to only a few indoctrination lectures. Their greatest problems were a lack of medicine, dietary deficiencies, and boredom. At first their Viet Cong captors were as uneasy with them as they were with their captors. Gradually, the Banmethuot 14 realized that their captors were aggressive only when they felt inferior.

But more important than these insights were the lessons Carolyn learned during their odyssey from Banmethuot to Hanoi and then finally home to Houghton, New York. Captivity, she discovered, led to defensive self-protectiveness and then to selfishness; it produced a sense of complete isolation from the world and a cessation of any feeling of responsibility for anyone not of her family, and finally, it led to lethargy.

But on the positive side, she discovered, paradoxically, that her real captivity and real freedom had begun simultaneously when she had been captured by Christ. "Compared with that event, our recent experience was merely an incident." Even more significant was her discovery that despite her dedication to serving the Vietnamese as a Wycliffe translator, she had not been an effective witness to the Bru tribe because she had unconsciously assumed cultural superiority. To be effective, she says, one must truly become a servant.

I began reading this book with some scepticism, expecting the usual mediocre "captivity" folderol, but the book caught my attention at once because of the immediacy of the narration and the vivid scenes. Carolyn Miller shows promise as a writer. She manages to depict the visual, aural, and emotional experience of cowering under rocket and artillery bombardment; she paints vivid pictures of prison compounds such as the Rose Garden with its stench of human excrement, Camp Wilderness with its primitive housing, Fat City with its Russian beef and increased rations. She characterizes the camp officials through their individual behavioral patterns tersely and effectively.

Captured can be read pleurably and profitably by anyone, young or old, who is interested in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and its effect on those caught in its vortex. The reader will gain a greater appreciation of the dedication of translators and missionaries; he will understand more fully the problem of witnessing to other ethnic and cultural groups. And he will see a different view of the Viet Cong than that portrayed by our media.