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# Pro Rege

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Volume 4 | Number 4

Article 5

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June 1976

## Book of Isaiah from the New International Version (Book Review)

Richard G. Hodgson

*Dordt College*

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### Recommended Citation

Hodgson, Richard G. (1976) "Book of Isaiah from the New International Version (Book Review)," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 4: No. 4, 27 - 28.

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activity ought to be subsumed under the historical, rather than that the historical merely "anticipates" such activity (cf. my "Dooyeweerd's 'History' and the Historian," Pro Rege, December, 1973).

Furthermore, I think that it can be argued cogently that Dooyeweerd's method of transcendental critique proceeds more along the lines of Thomas Aquinas than St. Augustine and John Calvin with reference to the place of the Transcendent. For an elaboration on this and other points of dispute concerning the Cosmogenic System, however, one can turn to the extended bibliography which this volume furnishes.

Books come high these days, but the price of ignorance is higher. This volume includes a biography of Dooyeweerd and an extended bibliography of writings concerning the Cosmogenic System, pro arte con, a glossary of terms, and an index of names, as well as an index of subjects. The purchase price is an economical way of buying yourself independence from third-hand commentaries on Dooyeweerd, some wise and some decidedly otherwise.

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**The Book of Isaiah From the New International Version.** Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1975. 162 pages. \$1.95. Reviewed by Richard G. Hodgson, Th.M., Assistant Professor of Astronomy.

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The latest and perhaps the best in the recent flood of Bible translations and paraphrases in the English language is The New International Version (NIV). The Book of Isaiah From the New International Version, here reviewed, represents the first portion of the Old Testament in that version to appear; the New Testament appeared in 1973. (For a detailed review of the latter see The Westminster Theological Journal XXXVII, No. 2 (Winter, 1975), pp. 256-265.)

The preface to the translation of Isaiah states the principles involved as follows:

The New International Version is neither a paraphrase nor a revision of any previous translation, but a new translation made directly from the original languages. In the Old Testament the Masoretic Text (the traditional Hebrew text) has generally been followed, except where the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint and other ancient versions...have led to corrections in the Masoretic text.

The method of translation falls between the rather close type of rendering characteristic of the King James (KJV), the English Revised (ERV), the American Standard (ASV), and the New American Standard (NASB) versions, on the one hand, and the very free type found in the New English Bible (NEB) and Today's English Version (TEV). The result is a translation that is reasonably accurate and quite readable, a commendable combination which is rarely achieved.

It is difficult to write a brief review of this translation of Isaiah. One is tempted to discuss it chapter by chapter, if not line by line. On many points the NIV translation speaks far more clearly than the older versions (such as the KJV, ERV and ASV). The poetry of Isaiah's message is ably captured, and a powerful message from God it is indeed! Of the many passages which might be cited to illustrate the well-chosen vocabulary of the NIV, the following, taken from Isaiah 1:10 ff., is typical:

Hear the word of the LORD, / you rulers of Sodom; / listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! / "The multitude of your sacrifices— / what are they to me?" says the LORD. / "I have more than enough of burnt offerings, / of rams and fattened animals; / I have no pleasure / in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. / When you come to meet with me, / who has asked this of you, / this trampling of my courts? / Stop bringing meaningless offerings! / Your incense is detestable to me. / New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— / I cannot bear your evil assemblies.

There is much in the NIV translation of Isaiah that will appeal to the younger reader and to those who have a limited acquaintance with the Bible. This reviewer would recommend it highly for personal and family devotions where family members read around the table after meals.

For those who wish to engage in intensive Bible study, the present edition of the NIV translation provides some alternate readings as footnotes, but they are far fewer than in the ERV, ASV, or NASB. Marginal cross-references to other passages, so important to topical study, are not provided. Hopefully when the NIV is completed, these will be provided, together with maps, map index, and a concordance of generous proportions, so that the advantage of the other translations in this respect may be eliminated.

It is almost a tradition that a reviewer of Bible translations point to specific words and

phrases upon which to bestow praise or blame. That is hardly possible here, but a few items may be mentioned: (1) It is good to see the term "virgin" used in Isaiah 7:14 (cf. the discussion of E. J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, I, pp. 286-289), as is (2) the use of the term "sprinkle" in Isaiah 52:15. On the other hand, (3) Isaiah 9:2,3 uses the present tense, prompting one to ask, "If they are now seeing a great light" (the Son of God), are they still "walking in darkness?" While there is admittedly a problem of rendering Hebrew verbs into the tenses characteristic of Indo-European languages, the choice here seems ill advised. (4) The use of "crushed" to translate  $\text{כָּרַס}$  (rendered "bruised" in the KJV, ERV, and ASV) in Isaiah 53:5 and 53:10, although sanctioned by Brown, Driver, Briggs' Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, seems to suggest an oppression of such force as to contradict John 19:36b, "A bone of him shall not be broken." In the experience of the reviewer, whenever a person has been reported as having been crushed, bones were invariably broken, usually with compound fractures. In the light of John 19:36b, "bruised" would be better.

All things considered, The Book of Isaiah From the New International Version is an excellent translation for general use, a work that deserves to be read in the home and from the pulpit.

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The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary, Vol. 1, John 1:1 - 4:54, by James Montgomery Boice. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1975. \$9.95. Reviewed by James A. De Jong, Assistant Professor of Theology.

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This volume marks the debut of an ambitious and important project. It is ambitious because Mr. Boice, minister of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, promises that this 443-page series of expositions on the first four chapters of John's gospel will be followed by four others of similar size and scope. It is important because it represents a genre of Christian literature badly needed today and because it stands in the solid tradition of Spurgeon, Ironside, Barclay, and Stott.

The fifty-six expositions in this volume were first given from the author's pulpit and on his radio program, "The Bible Study Hour." While not theologically technical, they are theologically informed. They are clearly written, limited to roughly seven pages each, and filled with contemporary examples and applications.

Their greatest strength is a lucid and reliable explanation of John's text. They lend themselves easily to devotional usage. So employed, they stand to enrich one's faith by means of a thorough exposition of one of the New Testament's most beautiful books.

In chapters sixteen through twenty-three, Boice gives extended treatments of baptism and witnessing. He wishes to focus on the meaning of baptism rather than on the controversy regarding infant versus adult baptism. One ought to realize, however, that the two can never be completely separated. For what is at stake in this controversy is two theologies or meanings of baptism, and the emphasis Boice gives baptism as a sign and seal of God's grace is more compatible with the position of infant baptism. The author's treatment of witnessing stresses its verbal dimension as opposed to witnessing in deed, though he concedes that the two are both imperatives given to all Christians. The latter remains undeveloped as a theme in his expositions, however. Yet John's designation of "sign" as applied to Christ's miracles provides a crucial theological foundation for the importance of witnessing in deed. Despite these qualifications, Boice's study and its sequels, if they are at all comparable to this volume, deserve wide circulation and use in Christian circles.

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Amsterdamse Emigranten, onbekende brieven uit de prairie van Iowa (1846-1873), by Dr. J. Stellingwerff, Buyten en Schipperheyn, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1975, 395 pages. Reviewed by Kornelis J. Boot, Assistant Professor of Languages.

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The author is the head librarian of the Free University of Amsterdam. The book consists mainly of 110 original letters from immigrants who lived in the prairie of Iowa and of their friends and relatives who remained behind in Amsterdam. Rev. H. P. Scholte led these immigrants to carve a place of refuge out of the wild Midwest. Rev. Scholte was not only their pastor, but also engaged in real estate, banking, school supervision, and politics. There are many accounts of the early settlers in and around Pella which make the book an interesting story of human events. But this is not the main thrust of the book.

Between the lines we discover the forces which motivated them to emigrate and how they intended to realize their objectives. First of all, the author introduces us to the leaders of the seceders in Amsterdam who also advocated