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Foreword to the Old Testament Books by Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J.

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Robinson Crusoe, Hans Brinker, Heidi, Alice, the Five Little Peppers, Tom Brown, Long John Silver, Tom Sawyer, the Wind in the Willows, Peter Rabbit, Peter Pan—they are all here, critically evaluated, historically pigeon-holed. The scholarship is sometimes not profound (as in the evaluation of Comenius); but in a work of such amplitude, such defects are hardly noticeable.

This is only one of several recent studies of children's literature. Eventually, the savants will be reading *Alice in Wonderland* again. When that happens, we can hope that our modern writers will give us less painful prose and less turgid poetry.

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

Foreword to the Old Testament Books. By Frederick L. Moriarty, S.J. Weston College Press, Weston, Mass. 1954. Pp. 118. \$1.00.

The 1953 convention of the Catholic Biblical Association of America devoted one of its meetings to a discussion session on the methods of teaching Sacred Scripture. From this discussion it became clear that the teacher's task in explaining the Bible is rendered doubly difficult by the lack of a manageable, up-to-date textbook which would aid the student in his reading of the Bible, especially the Old Testament. The present book by Father Moriarty, intended primarily for students on the college level, is an answer to that need and will serve as a trustworthy guide to those who undertake the study of the Old Testament. The established results of modern biblical scholarship are set forth in a clear, readable form; it may be said that one of the finest features of this book is the combination of clarity and accuracy with which complex problems are presented and solutions offered.

Since many of the difficulties which Catholics meet in reading the Old Testament arise from a failure to determine the literary form of the biblical book they are reading, the student would be well advised carefully to note the observations made in the five-page *Introduction*. "Since the Old Testament contains such a rich variety of literary forms, many of which are peculiar to the ancient oriental world, the student must take into careful consideration the character of these forms under penalty of misinterpreting their message" (pp. 4-5). Following the *Introduction* are summaries of the contents, genre, date, and authorship of each book of the Old Testament. These summaries contain the essential facts which

will enable the student to fix the historical position and the theological importance of each biblical writing. Thus he will see that the brief book of Jonah is a parable written to inculcate the universal character of God's love for men, and that he is not obliged to defend the historicity of its various details. The Psalms will appear as the living prayers of the Jewish Church, composed over a period of six centuries; their vitality and their embodiment of the most varied religious aspirations will explain why they came to play such an important part in the Christian liturgy. In short, the student who reads his Old Testament with the help of this guide will shed that unhappy thought which pictures the Old Testament as a static book, given by God at some one moment in the remote centuries before Christ. He will come to realize the dynamic character of God's revelation, so clearly enunciated in the opening words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "It was little by little and in different ways that God spoke in old times to our forefathers through the prophets. . . ."

A *Chronology*, *Glossary*, *Guide to Pronunciation*, and three maps greatly enhance the usefulness of this excellent *Foreword to the Old Testament Books*.

MITCHELL DAHOOD

REVIEWERS

REV. MITCHELL DAHOOD, S.J. received his doctorate in Semitic studies from Johns Hopkins University where he studied under Dr. W. F. Albright. Father Dahood has published articles in *Biblica*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* and *Theological Studies*.

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