

22. The Nature of Faith, p16
23. TRANSFORMING BIBLE STUDY, SCM Press 1981, £3.50
24. ibid, p21

OLD TESTAMENT HELPS

Rev Stephen Dray, MA BD, London

The last two years has seen some exciting development in the field of Old Testament publications. In particular there has been the beginning of several major new series of Old Testament commentaries and the progression of some earlier series into areas which are rarely commented upon in the Old Testament literature.

Under the former category comes the series of commentaries entitled 'The Bible Student's Commentary'^{1,2,3,4}. This is a highly promising series with a projected sixty-two volumes on the Old and New Testament. The volumes are a translation of the 'Korte Verklaring Der Heilige Schrift' which was originally published in Dutch between 1930 and 1960. The various contributors take a conservative evangelical stand and the publishers have been willing to comment upon statements made in the Leviticus and Numbers volumes which reflect the unorthodox viewpoint of the original author. This is very helpful and might usefully be adopted by other publishers of commentaries. The series is exegetically very thorough and it majors on exegesis, explanation and background. In these areas the commentaries are invaluable even if they are slightly dated and somewhat pedestrian. Little attention is give to hermeneutics although the volume by Gispen in particular makes use of a controlled typology which seems to reflect the Dutch Biblical Theology Movement. The commentaries take a very strong apologetic slant and this is especially true in the Aalders volume where the documentary hypothesis is brilliantly debunked. Aalders essay on the Pentateuch is of particular value to the student. The style of these volumes makes them very readable, with few footnotes and the standard of translation is consistently high.

In comparison with other commentaries the Aalders volume will now probably rank above that of Leopold. Gispen's work is the best conservative commentary currently available in an area little commented upon by evan-

gelicals. The volume by Noordtzij on Leviticus is superior to that by Harrison in the Tyndale series and ought to compliment Wenham's New International commentaries on the same book. Similarly the Numbers volume should compliment Wenham's excellent commentary in the Tyndale series.

Another major new series of commentaries is 'The Word Bible Commentary'. Fifty-two volumes are projected for the Old and the New Testament and the stance is a broad evangelical one. The first volume to be published in the Old Testament is that which covers the first fifty Psalms and is by Peter Craigie.⁵ The author is a suitable commentator for the Psalms in view of his considerable knowledge of Ugaritic Literature. His commentary is scholarly and includes his own translation and exegetical notes which are then followed by a discussion of background and introductory issues, exposition and application. Thus serious attention is given to the context, the overall meaning of the Psalms and the hermeneutical principles involved in applying the psalms to the contemporary world. The general introduction deals in a helpful way with the major critical issues of Psalm study. Discussion includes the origin of psalmody, the compilation and authorship of the Psalter, the theological perspectives of the psalms and is concluded with a discussion of psalms in recent biblical research.

This is an excellent commentary. The preacher in tune with modern developments of the Psalms will find in this volume much to enrich his ministry.

Two new commentaries which ought to be mentioned at this point are the volumes on Daniel and Ecclesiastes with the Song of Solomon by Stuart Olyott.^{6 7} With these titles the Welwyn commentaries have entered the Old Testament for the first time.

Both books are written in a straight-forward style which is aimed at the general reader and which makes the practical application of the scripture the overriding aim. These intentions are admirably achieved. The Daniel volume is the best and its great achievement is to show how the apocalyptic portions of the book may be taught in a practical and relevant way so as to meet the individual pastoral needs of each reader.

The volume which includes Ecclesiastes and the Songs of Solomon is more by way of a summary outline of the content and the message of each book.

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