

New Books on the Old Testament

Old Testament commentaries remain in full spate as this article confirms.

The **Daily Study Bible** has been mentioned in these review columns before (See '*Foundations*' 10). Since then, the series has moved on apace and thirteen volumes have now been produced. Almost uniformly they offer sound, generally conservative exposition with an emphasis upon the final canonical form of the text and upon the application to the individual reader. They are semi-popular in format and presentation.

Perhaps the least satisfactory of the volumes under review here is that entitled '**Genesis II**' by J.C.L. Gibson.¹ The author views the Patriarchal narratives as mythological history and is willing to subject the theology of Genesis to criticism. He criticises, for example, the nationalism he claims is implicit in Genesis 14. In view of the fact that there are so many good commentaries on Genesis most readers of this article will regard the purchase of this volume as an unnecessary extravagance.

The same could not be said for the '**Exodus**' volume by the late H.L. Ellison² which provides sound, thorough exposition with perceptive pastoral applications. Ellison's views on miracles will

not necessarily commend themselves but should not unduly prejudice the reader in the use of this helpful over-view of the Book of Exodus.

Walter Riggans' contribution on '**Numbers**'³ is less conservative than that of Ellison although the author's more liberal views do not markedly mar this excellent little book. Riggans uses a Christological hermeneutic with great profit in seeking to apply the scarcely handled passages in Numbers to the present believer through Christ. He thus furnishes much valuable material for preachers.

The book by David Payne on '**Samuel**' (i.e. 1 and 2 Samuel) is very similar to that of Ellison.⁴ A double concern is evident: first, to unfold the theology of the two books (a much needed task) and then, secondly, to show, especially at the level of Christian leadership, the relevance of the theology to today.

With reference to these four volumes as a whole (and with the exception of Gibson's book) expositors of each of these Bible books will want to use and will value the practical help provided by these volumes in the proclamation of God's Word. These volumes show that these books can be preached.

All that G.A.F. Knight produces is worthy reading — a fact which is true of his double-volume commentary on the **Psalms** in the same series.⁵ His style and

technique is lively. He seeks to uncover the original situation of the Psalm (often in a dramatic way) and then to provide a paraphrase which encompasses contemporary application. This method sometimes exposes his liberal tendencies (as for example in Psalm 110, where the Psalm is only regarded as 'Messianic' in a limited sense and where the NT use is regarded as 'rabbinic' and not normative for the Christian Church today). Nevertheless, for lively devotional reading and for providing comment which gets to the heart of the relevance of each Psalm, these books are invaluable.

Robert Davidson's book entitled '**Jeremiah 1**'⁶ covers the first 20 chapters of the prophecy. Typical of most modern scholarship, Davidson does not credit all the content of Book of Jeremiah to the prophet. Nonetheless, this little volume is to be recommended as providing a useful survey of the Book by means of a sort of 'expanded paraphrase'. Thus, it will be of value to the student or preacher seeking to work out the overarching message and structure of the Book while wrestling, at the same time, with the more detailed commentaries. Davidson is thin on application although the relevance of the prophet's message lies only just beneath the surface of his comments.

The volume on '**Ezekiel**' by Peter Craigie⁷ is an excellent outline of

the prophet's message by an unimpeachably orthodox evangelical scholar. It is almost identical in format to that of Davidson.

Mention of Ezekiel leads to the necessary reference to two other commentaries that have recently appeared on the Book. We are in debt to John Job for his superb study guide entitled, '**Watchman in Babylon**'.⁸ He provides the essential background data necessary and then gives a survey outline of each passage, a Christian interpretation/application together with questions for further study. Here is a volume to get us into and appreciating this mysterious Book. It is highly recommended.

Few Bible students who have consulted the Hermenia series of Commentaries will be unaware of the massive (in every sense of the word) contribution they make to Biblical exposition. Fewer still who have consulted, for example, H. W. Wolff's volumes on 'Hosea' and 'Joel and Amos' will be unaware of their value to the serious Bible Student. Thus, a further volume in the series, W. Zimmerli's life's-work on '**Ezekiel**' (volume 2, covering chapters 27 and onwards) is most welcome.⁹ As to be expected, the volume includes detailed textual analysis, form and history of religions criticism from a liberal perspective and exposition together with a highly useful statement of the teaching of the

passage set against the entire book. This last feature is highly stimulating and suggestive. Doubtless, this work will be the standard critical commentary on Ezekiel for a long time and, used with discernment, should enrich all study and proclamation of the Book for the more scholarly preacher.

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| 1. | J.C.L. Gibson:
St. Andrews Press
322pp. £2.95 | Genesis II |
| 2. | H.L. Ellison:
St. Andrews Press
204pp. £2.95 | Exodus |
| 3. | W. Riggans:
St. Andrews Press
252pp. £2.95 | Numbers |
| 4. | D.F. Payne:
St. Andrews Press
281pp. £2.95 | Samuel |
| 5. | G.A.F. Knight:
St. Andrews Press
I, 337pp., II, 369pp. £2.95 each | Psalms 1 & 11 |
| 6. | R. Davidson:
St. Andrews Press
166pp. £2.95 | Jeremiah I |
| 7. | P.C. Craigie:
St. Andrews Press
322pp. £2.95 | Ezekiel |
| 8. | J. Job:
Paternoster Press
101pp. £2.20 | Watchman in Babylon |
| 9. | W. Zimmerli:
Fortress Press
606pp. £19.50 | Ezekiel 2 |

Readers of this journal will also be interested to know that Baker Book House have recently issued a new edition of R.B. Girdlestone's '**Synonyms of the Old Testament**'. Originally published in 1871 this volume was always superior to that of Trench on the New Testament and although dated is still valuable. Coded to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance and with an attractive typeface this edition is commended.

The Grace Baptist Assembly has begun a series of **recommended reading lists**. Two are currently available on the Old Testament. These include Old Testament Introduction and Commentaries on the Pentateuch. Others on Church History, Scripture, New Testament Introduction and God and Man are also available. Details may be obtained from: Mr. John Cooke, 5 Swiss Avenue, Watford, Herts. WD1 7LL.

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