

BOOK REVIEWS

Ancient Orient and Old Testament, by K. A. Kitchen (Inter-Varsity, 1966, 191 pp., \$3.95), is reviewed by Kenneth L. Barker, assistant professor in Old Testament and Archaeology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Bannockburn, Deerfield, Illinois.

Seldom has a new release engendered so much excitement and enthusiasm in the reviewer as has this book by K. A. Kitchen, Lecturer in the School of Archaeology and Oriental Studies at the University of Liverpool.

Here is a revolutionary book and, as such, it ought to revolutionize the basic approach of many modern scholars to the Bible. It is scholarly, thoroughly documented (the author possesses an amazing knowledge of sources), and methodologically sound. The disciplines of ancient Near East and Old Testament have developed far more independently than should have been the case. One reason for this is that most Old Testament scholars simply cannot utilize, unaided, the raw materials of ancient Oriental research, and many Orientalists are not interested or competent in Biblical studies. Now Mr. Kitchen has rendered the service of bringing the two together, at least to a limited degree, and the result makes fascinating reading.

Through this comparative study the author attempts to demonstrate that if the principles found valid in dealing with other literature are applied to the Old Testament, the results agree with the structure of the Old Testament *as it is*, not as usually reconstructed. Mr. Kitchen writes in the preface concerning his work that "only diehards, imprisoned within the inhibitions of fixed ideas and inflexibly obsolete methods, need fear its contents."

Some of the topics treated are: The Basis of the Main Problems, Some Basic Principles of Study, The Date of the Patriarchal Age, The Date of the Exodus and Israelite Invasion of Canaan, Some Historical Problems, Hebrew Contacts with Near Eastern Religions, The Question of Literary Criticism (Documentary Hypotheses, Form Criticism, and Oral Tradition), Ancient Law in the Biblical World, and Light on Old Testament Hebrew from Linguistic Studies.

Several illustrations of the book's value and contributions are here given. (1) In his discussion of the date of the Patriarchal Age the author mentions the fact that seasonal occupation of the Negeb region is archaeologically attested for the twenty-first to nineteenth centuries B.C.—but *not* for a thousand years earlier or for eight hundred years afterwards. Since Abraham and Isaac spent time in the Negeb, this has obvious implications for dating them. (2) Patriarchal customs of inheritance have close parallels in the Old Babylonian tablets from Ur (nineteenth to

eighteenth centuries B.C.), a point unknown to many Old Testament scholars. (3) The price of twenty shekels of silver paid for Joseph in Genesis 37:28 is the correct average price for a slave in about the eighteenth century B.C. Earlier, slaves were cheaper; later, their price steadily increased. (4) The charge that the mention of the use of camels in Genesis is an anachronism is untrue. There is both philological and archaeological evidence for the limited use of this animal in the early second millennium B.C. (5) The detailed analysis of the covenant or treaty form of Exodus 20ff., Deuteronomy, and Joshua 24 is very helpful and, in fact, conclusive for the dating of these portions. In connection with this analysis and its implications the following gem appears in a footnote (this will serve as a warning not to overlook the extremely valuable footnotes):

In *Treaty and Covenant*, p. 154, McCarthy blithely makes the astonishing assumption that the usual combination of J, E sources and rearrangement of text in Exodus (by redactors centuries later than second millennium covenants, of course) should just happen to produce a direct correspondence with a covenant-form half a millennium obsolete! A miracle indeed.

(6) In his critique of documentary hypotheses the author argues ably and persuasively against "these superficially imposing theories" and maintains that works which adhere to the conventional sequence and dating of J, E, D, P must be regarded as obsolete in their consequent presentation of Hebrew history, religion, and literature. (7) The chapter on "Principles of Linguistic Study" ought to be heeded by all comparative Semitic grammarians and lexicographers, especially those who are so prone to explain everything on the basis of Arabic etymologies. To one whose special interest is Semitic languages and literatures, this section alone is worth the price of the book. The same may be said of the related section in Part Two, "Light on Old Testament Hebrew from Linguistic Studies," particularly the material on Ugaritic contributions to Hebrew grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. (8) The author nicely refutes the oftheard dictum that Aramaisms are necessarily late.

Many of these things have, of course, been said elsewhere in the various scholarly journals of learned societies, but now we have them available in one handy volume, and that in itself is a significant contribution. Moreover, it must be noted that Mr. Kitchen adduces fresh and little-known evidence and also introduces some new insights and syntheses.

Finally, a few minor criticisms could be raised against the book and these now follow. The author's explanation of I Kings 6:1 (the 480 years) is unsatisfactory, or unconvincing. The treatment of the large figures in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 is weak. No bibliographical footnote on the Habiru is complete without Mary P. Gray (following J. Lewy), "The Habiru-Hebrew Problem in the Light of the source Material Avail-

able at Present," pp. 135-202 in the *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. XXIX, Cincinnati, 1958, 383 pp. (For some strange reason this article has been generally ignored in discussions of the Habiru question.) It is also curious that under "False Identifications" Solomon's supposed smelter or cooper refinery at Ezion-geber is not mentioned (cf. now Glueck's retraction on pp. 73-75 of his article "Ezion-geber" in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3, September, 1965). The work is perhaps too brief (one keeps desiring more elaboration and illustrations, particularly from Ugaritic and Akkadian—much more could be added concerning the importance of these languages for a better understanding of various words and passages in the Hebrew Bible), but this may be regarded by some readers as one of its strengths. There is no bibliography aside from the copious and excellent footnotes. Printing mistakes are remarkably minimal (one such appears on p. 162, where in place of "for he unhappy" read "for the unhappy"). But it must be stressed that these areas of possible weakness do not upset or detract from the major thrust of the book. They are rather intended as suggestions for possible improvement of future editions.

It is not very often that so much genuinely worthwhile material is compressed into so few pages. This is required reading for all students and professors of Old Testament and Semitics and, more generally, of ancient Near Eastern studies. Let us hope that it receives the wide circulation and careful reading it deserves, for it is the kind of book that has long been needed. In the general field of ancient Near Eastern languages, literatures, history, and religion it should take its place as one of the truly important books of the third quarter of the twentieth century.

Kenneth L. Barker

Beacon Bible Commentary, eds. A. F. Harper, et al. Vol. IV: *Isaiah through Daniel*, 694 pp. Vol. V: *Hosea through Malachi*, 453 pp. 10 vols. Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1964. \$4.95 each. Reviewed by Dr. J. Barton Payne, Graduate School of Theology, Wheaton College, Illinois.

Attention by the evangelical public needs to be called to this new ten-volume commentary, issued by a lesser-known denominational publishing house which is not listed in *Books in Print* or the *Cumulative Book Index*.

Vols. 4-5, which have just been released, comment respectively on the Major and Minor Prophets and complete the Old Testament half of the project. The prophetic books are distributed in each volume among four faculty members (eight in all) of American Nazarene colleges and seminary, with the exception of Obadiah-Jonah-Micah, which is handled by the general editor of the Pilgrim Holiness Church. Their work is abreast of recent scholarship; it also reflects the consistently high view of inspiration maintained by the commentators. The unity of Isaiah and

Zechariah is clearly upheld; Joel is placed in the 9th Century B.C., though Obadiah (which Joel quotes?) is "most likely" dated 586 B.C. Footnote references to the latest works of such evangelical Old Testament scholars as Gleason Archer, George A. F. Knight, and Edward J. Young, as well as to such older works as Keil's or Pusey's, abound, though at the same time cognizance is regularly taken of modern neo-orthodoxy, as represented in the Interpreter's Bible *et al.*

As might be expected from a commentary "written from the viewpoint of Wesleyan-Arminian theology," Ezekiel 18:21 ff. is entitled, "The Righteous Can Fall from Grace"; but theological exegesis is carried on at a high level throughout the commentary. The authors remain non-committal on such debated points as the time of the fulfillment of the kingdom of God in Daniel 2:44 or of the prophet's 70th week in 9:26; but the alternatives are uniformly well stated, considering the necessarily restricted nature of a commentary of this size.

Tyndale Bulletin, Vol. 17, ed. by A. R. Millard. London: Tyndale Press, 1966, 120 pages, 25s. (\$3.50). Reviewed by Richard N. Longenecker, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

Journals do not usually find their way into book review sections. But the inauguration of a new journal which promises to be of significant aid to American evangelicals deserves mention here.

Tyndale House at Cambridge, England, sponsors summer study sessions in areas of Old Testament, New Testament, Archaeology, and Biblical Theology, and hosts two annual lectures in Old Testament and New Testament respectively. The lectures have been published separately in pamphlet form, but the study papers were too often unavailable beyond the bounds of the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research.

But now these lectures and papers are being brought within the compass of a single journal. And for this all biblical scholars can be thankful, especially those of us in the "colonies." While the present issue carries the designation of volume "17" (for sixteen volumes of collected materials precede it), this is a new venture in journal publication. And under the editorship of the Tyndale House Librarian, with F. F. Bruce, D. Kidner, and D. J. Wiseman serving as advisory editors, it gives promise of continued excellence.

The present volume for 1966 carries three major articles and four study papers. In the Tyndale O. T. Lecture for 1965, David A. Hubbard, President of Fuller Seminary, addresses himself to "The Wisdom Movement and Israel's Covenant Faith." He argues that the literature of the sages and that of prophets and priests developed simultaneously, and are, to some extent, interdependent and intertwined. Thus wisdom literature is covenantal literature, and not to be considered an evolutionary growth from the covenant or to be distinguished from revelation it-

self. In a concluding section, he develops the theses of Wisdom Literature as adding to the wholeness of revelation, as part of the preparation for the New Covenant, and as of practical significance for the Christian life today.

Professor Stephen Smalley, in the Tyndale N. T. Lecture for 1965, evaluates the current discussion on the Fourth Gospel in "New Light on the Fourth Gospel." Such matters are considered as (1) the historical value and independence of the Johannine tradition, (2) the relation of kerygma and history, (3) apostolic authorship or apostolic sources, (4) the impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls, (5) lectionary backgrounds, and (6) the Second Moses motif. Smalley reflects an optimism regarding the drift of current critical study on the Fourth Gospel, and suggests evangelical reconsideration of kerygmatic "patterns" and apostolic "sources" in John.

In "Historical Method and Early Hebrew Tradition," Professor K. A. Kitchen, in a paper arising from O. Eissfeldt's contributions to the revision of the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Vol. II (Cambridge University Press, 1965), discusses historiography and the concept of history in the Old Testament. He faults Eissfeldt on an improper historiographical approach and for ignoring recent historical and covenantal studies; and develops a positive rationale for the individuality, historicity and dating of the Patriarchs and patriarchal narratives. In reaction to modern historiography, Kitchen observes: "no matter how brilliant, or finely adorned with all the critical acumen of scholarly judgment, guesswork remains qualitatively guesswork, from the point of view of a strict and proper methodology."

In addition, R. A. Ward writes on "The Semantics of Sacramental Language" (esp. baptism), D. Kidner on "Genesis 2:5, 6. Wet or Dry?," A. R. Millard on "For He Is Good," and S. G. Taylor on "A Reconsideration of the 'Thirtieth Year' in Ezekiel 1:1." Though space permits the abstracting of only the three major articles, the entire seven merit serious study.

As we have come to expect from Tyndale publications, here is a splendid combination of exacting scholarship and evangelical commitment. As American evangelicals, we rejoice at the appearance of this new journal.