

not glossing over problems and for making no attempt to argue for or against one line of evidence. That can be a point of weakness as when the author follows unquestioningly the first interpretation of the Ebla texts given by Pettinato in which he finds a creation story or the names of Adam, Ishmael and even Saul there c. 2300 B.C. Much of this has been refuted by A. Archi's subsequent technical publications. Other scholars would use more caution in presenting some of the rather uncertain archaeological data and do not class Kathleen Kenyon as the great historian the author does.

Archaeological data is of such a scale and complexity that it probably cannot now be adequately conveyed in a single volume, especially without adequate illustrations (the thirty here are of poor quality). Nonetheless, this volume packs so much detail into it that the general reader will be fascinated by the range of knowledge which he would not normally research or collect for himself. It is excellent in referring to seals with Hebrew/Aramiac inscriptions and gives a fair coverage of the extra-biblical references to named kings of Israel and Judah (though that of Joash, *Ia-ú-su*, in the Tell el-Rimah stela is omitted and the names of Ahab (*a-ha-ab-bu*) and of Jehu (*Ia-ú-a*) spelled incorrectly). There are a few references to points of translation: most are well known (Gen 27.33; 1 Sam 4.4; 2 Sam 1.21; 2 Kings 23:5 and 1 Chron 17.19 'and your dog' (dubious)) though 'through the earth', i.e. underground, in 2 Chron 32.4 is interesting. This is a useful book for beginners or those without access to reference books on Biblical archaeology.

D. J. WISEMAN

Hagner, Donald A.: **Hebrews. A Good News Commentary.** San Francisco: Harper and Row 1983. xxviii+257 pp., \$9.95.

This is the first volume in this series to have come into my hands; but commentaries on Mark, Philippians, and 1-2 Thessalonians have already appeared in the United States, and there are plans for Marshall, Morgan & Scott to publish the series in Britain. The New Testament Editor is W. Ward Gasque.

The present volume will not make the recent *Translator's Handbook on Hebrews* superfluous, and does not aim to compete with major commentaries such as those of Michel and Spicq; yet within the relatively limited space available, the author gives an adequate and balanced introduction to this letter and the problems which surround it. His use of GNB enables him to make many helpful comments on the way in which a translator moves from the literal wording of the Greek to a dynamic-equivalent representation of its meaning. He is in general sympathy with GNB, but gives alternatives where appropriate, and takes account of other English translations where they have something distinctive to offer.

A particularly valuable aspect of the commentary, from the translator's point of view, is the set of "Additional Notes", in slightly smaller print, which follow each section of the commentary. These give references to much secondary literature which is not listed in the bibliography. These are, perhaps unfortunately, almost all to publications in English; so that, for example, there is no mention of Vanhoye's work on the structure of Hebrews.

Here and there, one misses points which would be useful for translators, and indeed other people too. To take just one example from the first verse: the author quotes TEV "our ancestors", and correctly adds "(lit., 'fathers')", but does not mention that an even more literal translation is "the fathers"—leaving open the possibility that not all the original readers were Jews.

The presentation is generally attractive, but the computer setting has produced what is technically called garbage on pages xxii and xxv.

P.E.

Bailey, Lloyd R. (ed.): *The Word of God. A guide to English versions of the Bible.* Atlanta: John Knox Press 1982. 228 pp., no price stated.

This is essentially an extended review of nine modern English translations of the Bible, together with an introductory chapter by Eugene A. Nida entitled "Why so many Bible Translations?" and a survey of study Bibles by Robert G. Bratcher. In all cases but one, the translations are analysed by people who were not involved in their preparation; the one exception, Bruce M. Metzger on RSV, is largely historical, and scrupulously objective.

Roger A. Bullard's account of NEB is critical of its approach to the Old Testament text, and suffers occasionally from a failure to appreciate nuances of British English; but it is otherwise generally positive: NEB's "marshalling of the vigorous resources of contemporary English idiom into such a forceful array makes it a triumph" (61).

Keith R. Crim finds the New Jewish Version faithful to the Massoretic text, and idiomatic in its use of contemporary English. By contrast, Barclay M. Newman finds the New American Standard Bible guilty of distortion, especially of "reading the New Testament into the Old Testament" (78), and of awkward style; he is particularly critical of its notes.

Bruce Vawter, C. M., judges the Jerusalem Bible "a monument", that is, "a faithful reproduction of some of the best biblical scholarship of the late 1950s". He also believes it to be too much tied to the French Jerusalem Bible, but this reviewer has found significant exceptions to this rule.

W. F. Stinespring concentrates almost exclusively on the Old Testament of TEV; his review contains interesting suggestions on points of detail, but no general assessment. The late James D. Smart disposes of the Living Bible, "this specious volume" (138) in about four pages.

Walter Harrelson believes that the New American Bible is in some respects the best available, but criticizes among other things its male-oriented language. Robert G. Bratcher pays tribute to the success of the New International Version. True, its aim to win "universal acceptance" (153) is unrealistic, but it "bids fair to establish itself as the Bible for evangelicals" (152). Nevertheless, it shows signs of doctrinally motivated harmonization (especially in Isa. 7.14); the exegesis breaks little new ground, it uses male-oriented language, and its style is close to that of RSV.