BOOK REVIEWS

SOME TORCH BIBLE COMMENTARIES

Jeremiah, by H. Cunliffe-Jones (Torch Bible Commentaries). London, S.C.M. Press, 1960; 287 pp., 16/-.

Recent commentaries on the book of Jeremiah in the English language are unfortunately scarce and this book is a welcome attempt to fill the gap. It does not endeavour to cover the ground in such detail as would be expected from a volume in such a series as the I.C.C. Nevertheless, it is a more substantial book than most of its companions among the Torch Bible Commentaries and throws much light on the meaning of one of the key books of the Old Testament.

There is an admirable introduction which helps greatly in piecing together the different elements which go to make up the book and in relating Jeremiah to the rest of the Old Testament, and indeed to the New Testament as well.

Unlike some of the earlier volumes in this series, the text upon which the commentary is based is that of the R.S.V. Dr. Cunliffe-Jones draws attention to the significant differences in wording between the A.V. and R.S.V. and often suggests a different translation, not given in either of these. The comments made on the message of the prophet are brief and to the point—one could often wish them to be developed more fully. The writer supplies some good short studies of individual words. This will be of considerable help to translators, but still more helpful is the provision of the background necessary to the understanding of Jeremiah's thought. Those who are entrusted with the responsibility of translating the book of Jeremiah would do well to use this commentary as part of their preparatory material.

Hosea, by George A. F. Knight (Torch Bible Commentaries). London, S.C.M. Press, 1960; 9/6 d.

A glance at the footnotes to Hosea in the R.S.V. will give some idea of the difficulty of producing a satisfactory translation of this book. The Torch Commentary on Hosea claims to be based on the A.V., and this gives the writer all the more scope for drawing attention to renderings of the Hebrew or of the ancient versions which differ from the A.V. Those who are engaged in the translation of Hosea will find here many helpful suggestions regarding the interpretation of obscure passages. In such a small commentary (less than 80 pages apart from introduction) there is no scope for a full treatment of problems of text and translation, and this may sometimes give a misleading impression that the book is more straightforward than it is. The author never loses sight of the religious issues involved in the situations, both domestic and national, which confronted Hosea, nor does he overlook the fulfilment of Hosea in the New Testament.

Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, by J. H. Eaton (Torch Bible Commentaries). London, S.C.M. Press, 1961; 159 pp., 12/6 d.

There is no doubt a subtle significance in the omission by Mr. Eaton of the I.C.C. volume dealing with these four books from his bibliography. One has only to compare the two volumes to see how radically the climate of scholarly thought has altered in the fifty years intervening between their publication. Mr. Eaton writes in what might be called the "post-critical" period of Biblical scholarship, a period in which the fruits of earlier learning are being gathered up but in which also a more positive approach is made to the theological background of the prophetic oracles. A notable feature of this Torch Commentary is the insistence upon the unity of each of the four books dealt with. Mr. Eaton is, of course, well aware of the difficulties involved in supposing, for example, that Zephaniah is responsible for the closing verses of the book which bears his name. By showing the worship of the pre-exilic Jerusalem Temple as the setting of the whole material, not only of this book, but also of Nahum and Habakkuk, he is able to provide them with a background which can account for all the seemingly contradictory elements in each book.

The introduction includes a clear summary of recent views regarding the relation between prophecy and temple worship in Israel, in which the distinction is drawn between such professional prophets as were associated with the temple and the false prophets so frequently denounced in the Old Testament. Throughout the commentary there is a stress on the centrality of the temple linked with the pre-exilic emphasis on the Kingship of God.

Mr. Eaton has made a successful attempt to relate the message of each prophet to the saving acts of God as recorded in both Old and New Testaments. A good example of this relation of the prophetic oracles to their whole Biblical setting is provided by the treatment of Hab. 2:4—not simply the latter half of the verse.

As a general rule, Mr. Eaton reproduces the text of the A.V., drawing attention to clear examples of mistranslation and often substituting a vigorous rendering of his own, which will help translators over many of the difficulties in these little-known books. There is a good example of this treatment in Hab. 3, which is here attributed to the same prophet as the first two chapters of the book.

While the emphasis on the unity of the prophetic books set out in this volume is a welcome contrast to the excessive fragmentation of the text met with in earlier commentaries, there is a danger that the underlying mythology which provides the background to these oracles may take too prominent a place in interpretation, at the expense of a firm attachment to the historical situation which prompted the particular expression of the Word of God as we have it in the Old Testament.

The text is treated here with fuller detail than in most volumes of this series, to which it is a welcome addition. It is good news that we may look forward to a commentary on the Psalms by Mr. Eaton as a companion volume.

B. F. Price

TRANSLATION NEWS

The Bible in 1202 languages

Some part of the Bible has been published in 1202 languages and dialects as of the end of December 1962, according to the records of the American Bible Society. According to the chronological arrival of the publications in the library, the 1200th language to be added to this list is the Rincon dialect of Zapotec, spoken in Mexico.

Languages in which the whole Bible has been published . . .	228
Languages in which a whole Testament has been published . .	285
Languages in which at least a complete Gospel or other book has been published	689
Total languages in which some complete part of the Bible has been published	1202

Complete Bibles have now been published for the first time in Gogo (Tanganyika) and Lunda: Ndembu (formerly Kalunda, of Angola).

First New Testaments were published in Anuak (Sudan), Kikinga* (Tanganyika), Murut (Borneo), Ndandi (Congo), Nkore-Kiga (formerly Nkole, Uganda), and Trukese (Caroline Islands).

*Also *first publication in the language.*

Scriptures were published for the first time in:

Achi: Cubulco	Guatemala	Luke	BS in Guatemala	1962
Alangan	Mindoro, P.I.	Mark	Philippine B.H.	1962
Aztec: Puebla, North	Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962
Baniua	Brazil	Matthew	New Tribes Mis.	1959
Buli	Ghana	Mark	BFBS	1962
Campa	Peru	Mark	SIL	1962
Chinantec: Lalaná	Oaxaca, Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962
Cuicatec: Teutila	Oaxaca, Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962
Ha	Tanganyika	Mark	BFBS	1962
Ifugao: Banaue	Luzon, P.I.	Acts	Philippine B.H.	1962
Kikinga	Tanganyika	N. Test.	BFBS	1962
Lele	Tchad	Matthew	BFBS	1962
Machiguenga	Peru	I Jn., I Cor.	SIL	1962
Manobo: Agusan	Mindanao, P.I.	Mark	Philippine B.H.	1962
Mayo	Sonora, Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962
Mixe: Isthmus	Oaxaca, Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962
Mixtec: Jicaltepec	Oaxaca, Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962
Nyengato	Brazil, Colombia	Mt. Jas-Ju.	New Tribes Mis.	1960
Rawang	Burma	Luke	BFBS	1961
Tepehuan: Northern	Chihuahua, Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962
Trinitario	Bolivia	Mark	New Tribes Mis.	1962
Zapotec: Rincón	Mexico	Mark	BS in Mexico	1962

Some of the languages in the above total are for various reasons no longer in use. In others that have long been on the list, revised translations are being worked out; and still others, appearing on the list for the first time, will at some time be shifted to the groups having complete Testaments or whole Bibles.