

translator of the Bible into his own vernacular. On p. 33 Strand refers to an astonishing remark in Luther's *Table Talks*: "Thirty years ago no one read the Bible." A similar statement by the same Professor Luther has caused enormous misunderstanding: "Under the papacy, the Bible was unknown by the people." As a direct result, says Strand correctly, "there was a time when relatively little attention was devoted to the medieval German Bible, especially among Protestant scholars." It certainly is high time that the general public becomes properly educated in this field of study, and it is for this reason in particular that Strand's impartial discussion can dispel unwanted delusions. Luther's *Table Talks* were, of course, written for the most part by his students who often were careless in reporting what he actually did say.

The whole book is beautiful and meticulously precise. All of the fourteen Bibles have been carefully traced and their manuscript sources properly described. The latest findings by outstanding authorities have been utilized. Especially valuable are the illustrations and also the references to work done by the artists who took great pains to make their books attractive to discriminating students of the Christian religion. On page 61 there is unfortunately a printing error in the omission of the plate number and description, but Strand's complete list of plates on page 42 provides us with the information that this is Plate XVIII and that it shows a page from the American Bible Society Library copy of the First Schönsperger Bible.

It was Martin Luther who shaped for the German people of today their language, which is neither High German nor Low German, but that of the Chancery of Saxony, about half-way between North and South, and between East and West. In this manner he destroyed the Low German language, which at the end of the Middle Ages was still the official organ for such famous cities as Cologne, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, and Magdeburg. The fact that Luther used those Bibles accessible to him makes Strand's book a guide for numerous students in our universities and theological seminaries.

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Thiele, Edwin R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings: A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah*. Revised edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965. xxvi + 232 pp. with numerous charts. \$ 6.00.

E. R. Thiele's book really needs neither an introduction nor a recommendation. His scheme of the chronologies of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah has been well known ever since its first publication as an article in *JNES*, III (1944), 137-186. This work was later expanded into book form and published by the University of

Chicago Press in 1951. It was justifiably hailed as the first real breakthrough in the study of the perplexing problems connected with Hebrew chronology, and Thiele's chronological scheme has been accepted and used by an increasing number of Biblical scholars and writers. That some solutions advocated by Thiele have not found general acceptance is understandable in view of the nature of the complex and thorny problems connected with all ancient chronologies. W. F. Albright, for example, while accepting certain solutions of Thiele has rejected others (see *BASOR*, No. 100 [Dec., 1945], 16-22), and this reviewer has found himself in disagreement with Thiele's chronology of King Hezekiah's reign (see *AUSS*, II [1964], 40-52), although he agrees with him on most of his major premises.

Since the appearance of the first edition of his book, Thiele has repeatedly defended his position in articles dealing with various phases of Hebrew chronology. In these articles he has also clarified a number of details. However, for several years, his *opus magnum* was out of print and unobtainable. This fact and the discovery of new evidence made the publication of a second edition urgent. It is, therefore, with gratitude to the author and to the new publisher that we greet the reappearance of this valuable work, which no one who works in the field of the history of the divided Israelite kingdoms can afford to disregard or ignore.

Into the revised edition new discoveries bearing on Hebrew chronology have been incorporated such as the Chaldaean Chronicles published by D. J. Wiseman in 1956. Thiele has also taken cognizance of his critics, and marshalled new arguments in support of his views. On the other hand, the new edition is 66 pages shorter than the former, probably caused by a desire of the publisher to keep the price on the level of the earlier edition, fourteen years its senior. Chapters IX-XI of the first edition, dealing with the variant data of the Greek texts and of Josephus, and Thiele's discussion of the chronologies of other scholars, have been dropped. However, the new book contains a chapter not found in the former edition on "The Origin of the Book of Kings." Another difference noticeable between the two editions is the abundant use of charts in the new edition against a very sparing use of such devices in the earlier work.

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