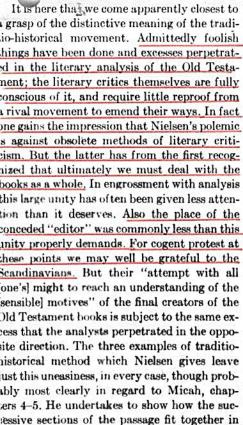
It is he



We can well be grateful for any light that Vielsen and his colleagues can throw on the obcure question of the final formation of the Old 'estament books, whether we are to call it asembling, editing, or authorship. Not less will re welcome any and all valid information or irection toward a better understanding of neir ultimate origins and their transmission the final editors or authors. Beyond any deial traditio-historical study can and does conibute significantly to the methods and conusions of Old Testament scholarship, not ast by its emphasis upon facts and views that we received less than their due. It is a valid ldition to the total of our common endeavor understand the mystery of ancient Israel's reer. But it provides no talisman or magic to ad us inerrantly to the truth. On the con-

in intelligent plan. At numerous detailed

points the plan is not at all apparent, much

ess convincing.

trary it is subject to all the excesses that have marred the work of the literary critic. In fact its basic disparagement of this latter is at the same time a confession of its own error; for the two must not be set in opposition. We go forward not by choosing one or the other but by accepting both.

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Ancient Israel. By HARRY M. ORLINSKY. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1954. Pp. 193. \$2.50 (cloth), \$1.75 (paper).

Professor Orlinsky has here given us a lucid and excellent account of the history of ancient Israel from its earliest beginnings to the establishment of post-exilic Judaism subsequent to the work of Nehemiah and Ezra. Written for the series, "The Development of Western Civilization," so the editor informs us, it was designed for college survey courses. It is eminently suited to this function, but as well should prove illuminating and highly rewarding for the general reader.

The value of the book is enhanced by an introduction that points out with fine emphasis the unique place and creative influence of the Bible in our culture. A similar appraisal is merited by the nine-page sketch of "Suggestions for Further Study." In a "Chronological Summary" Orlinsky somewhat characteristically avoids adjudicating the arguments of Thiele and Albright, but instead lists both systems in parallel columns. He cannot be criticized for failure to take account of Thiele's article in Vetus Testamentum published after he wrote; but the additional information which Thiele there adduces was known and it demonstrates conclusively that Albright's system is untenable.

Orlinsky shows himself, as we expect, conversant with the immense bulk of knowledge that has continued to pour upon us through archeological and other media since the close of the first World War. However, readers will be arrested, with varying reactions, by the use that he makes of these facts. In his attitude toward the Bible as historic source material