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## BOOKS

### THE BIBLE KEEPS PACE

THE ISABEL REED BIBLE STORY BOOK: Bible stories by Alfred, Marian and Wychiff Reed. Edited by A. H. Reed, A. H. & A. W. Reed, Wellington.

SO much has been crammed into the 500-odd pages of this volume that it will certainly appeal as very good value for money to many parents who are seeking an improving present for their children—if one is permitted to think of money in connection with a volume of this type. One can certainly not apply to it the same standards of criticism as one might apply to almost any other kind of writing, for we are here in that region of faith where such criticism does not enter. The people who will be interested in buying this book will not be wanting (and might be upset if they received) an estimate of the truth of its contents, an appreciation of its literary merit, or an analysis of the selective capacity of its compilers. They will be seeking, and can readily be given, an assurance that the writers and the editor have shown remarkable diligence and complete earnestness. It must obviously have been something of a labour of love to them to prepare and assemble these 129 stories from the Old and New Testaments, these "event" maps (rather too detailed for adult eyes but possibly not for the young ones for which they are intended), this introductory memorial to Isabel Reed, these prayers and hymns and notes about them, these Biblical games and puzzles, and all these big and little illustrations (some already brightly-coloured, some with instructions for colouring-in by the young reader). For good measure they have even thrown in the words and music of New Zealand's national song and a sheet of cut-out Biblical characters and animals.

But one speculation may be permitted: not as a matter of criticism but of interest. How would the parents or grandparents of the mothers and fathers who will be buying it now have reacted if they had been confronted with such a volume as this and it had been recommended to them as ideal material for Bible study by the young? Would they have rejected it as new-fangled, and have recoiled from the juxtaposition of Genesis and games, of crossword puzzles and St. Paul? They might certainly have stroked their beards in surprise on reading about "Gideon and his batman"; on learning that "Jacob got work on his uncle's station"; that Rebekah's mother and father held a "long korero"; and that Herod was "descended from our old friend Esau"; or on coming across such expressions as "mates," "pals," and "quick and lively" in stories from the Good Book.

Still, such speculation should not deter anybody who wants this kind of book from buying it. It merely suggests that, to keep pace with modern language and modern methods of teaching, traditions have had to be discarded even in the most tradition-bound sphere of all.

### OUR OWN STORY

FROM TRACK TO HIGHWAY. By Alan Mulgan. Published by Whitcombe & Tombs.

THIS sketch of New Zealand history was written, the author explains, with "American friends in mind," and it was

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