BOOK REVIEWS

Translating the Bible, by Frederick C. Grant. Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1961; 183 pp., $4.25.

The distinguished Professor Emeritus of Biblical Theology at Union Seminary in New York has written this account of Bible translating to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the King James Version. As expected, the account is written with great learning, but the author wears his erudition with such naturalness that the reader is nearly always charmed and fascinated. Every so often the author reveals a tendency to "trail his cloak" and (to change the metaphor) to chase rabbits, but all of this is to the reader's profit. Sometimes non-Episcopalians may feel a bit slighted by the many references to (non-canonical) Episcopalian literature, and at other times the *agrammatos* and *idiôtês* reader may have rough going, as for example in the identification of Codex Ephraemi as *"rescriptus,* i.e. a palimpsest."

These are all very minor matters, however, and we can only thank Dr. Grant for his book. In short compass he takes us through the Hebrew, Greek and Latin Bibles (chapters I-III); the English Bible up to the Revised Versions of 1881 and 1901 (chapter IV), and newer English translations, including the Revised Standard Version and the New English Translation. The only non-English modern version mentioned is the *Jerusalem Bible.*

Dr. Grant stresses the sociological and psychological factors influencing translations, and lays heavy emphasis on the fact that the Bible is the Church's book, whose "most natural setting . . . is liturgical. It is the church's book, read aloud and devoutly heard 'in the great congregation,' the assembly of the people of God" (pp. 16f.). This basic consideration was the guiding principle in the production of the King James: "It was clear that the version was to be a lectern Bible, to be read in the church" (p. 75); this, also, was a factor which weighed heavily in the making of the Revised Standard Version.

Only a brief statement is made concerning the New English Translation, which had not been published when the book was written. Its main motivation, Dr. Grant tells us, is not so much liturgical as missionary.

Of greatest interest to translators is chapter VI on "Principles and Problems," discussed under three headings. (1) "The Text" briefly describes the nature of the problem and the manner in which the original text is established when, as in the case of the Bible, the autographs are not available. In John 19:29 Dr. Grant prefers the conjectural *hussô* 'spear' to the textual *hussôpô* 'hyssop', regarding the text as a primitive error perpetuated through nearly all manuscripts. The witness of the eleventh century minuscule 476* would not appear to have any great bearing on the matter, however: it

would seem highly improbable that it alone preserved the original reading against all other manuscripts and versions. One may be persuaded by internal evidence that 'hyssop' is wrong; this does not, however, necessarily mean that the author of the Gospel did not write 'hyssop'. And the translator's task is surely to translate what the author, rightly or wrongly, wrote, and not by conjecture to correct him when he is wrong.

(2) "Principles of Translation" is a lucid and valuable exposition of Benjamin Jowett's principles set forth in the second edition (1875) of his translation of Plato's *Dialogues*. Every translator will profit from Dr. Grant's discussion and his many appropriate references to specific matters. (3) Under "Special Problems" the author deals with other related matters of text. Here, as throughout the book, Dr. Grant advances his own opinions on the meaning of Biblical texts. He believes the correct translation of Mk. 15:39 is 'the Son of God'; in Rom. 5:1 he has no doubts that the indicative 'we have' is what Paul wrote, not the subjunctive 'let us have'. The *proagein* 'go before' of Mk. 14:28, 16:7, is temporal, 'precede', and not spatial, 'go in front of'. The words *epei andra ou ginôskô* 'since I know not a man' in Lk. 1:34 are a later addition, caused by the influence of Mt. 1:18-25. These and other suggestions, orthodox and unorthodox, show how widely Dr. Grant casts his net.

A valuable appendix lists books for further reading. Gustavus Paine's *The Learned Men* (1959), E. H. Robertson's *The New Translations of the Bible* (1959), and Dewey Beegle's *God's Word into English* (1960) should now be added to the list. On p. 116 the date for Stephanus' *textus receptus* should be 1550 (not 1553).

This scholarly and fascinating book puts all its readers in debt to Dr. Grant, to whom we express our thanks; the publishers, however, have put the readers all too much in debt by charging the unreasonable price of $4.25 (= 30s. 4d.) for a book whose text occupies only 164 pages, an amount which will surely keep the book from having the circulation it should.

Robert G. Bratcher

The Scrolls and Christian Origins, by Matthew Black, 206 pp. Edinburgh, Nelson and Sons, 25/-. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961, $3.95.

Principal Black provides a scholarly and lucid account of a subject which is of interest to all who seek to understand the New Testament. His survey covers both the historical and the religious and theological significance of the Qumran literature for Christian origins, and concludes with an excellent summary of the evidence and his conclusions. Of particular interest to translators is his discussion of the meaning and use of *hebraioi, nazoraios,* and especially of *parthenoi* in 1 Cor. 7 (pp. 83-88). He holds that the *parthenoi* of 1 Cor. 7:25-27