

## BOOK REVIEW

**This Is That**, by F. F. Bruce. Paternoster Press. 80p.

The writer of this review, the Rev. Bryn Price, is Old Testament Adviser at the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The title of Professor Bruce's book is taken from Acts 2:16: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet." In other words, he is concerned with the relation between the Old Testament and the New Testament. This relation is brought out by examining some of the leading themes of the Old Testament and observing the way in which they are carried forward into the New Testament. The main themes with which Bruce deals are God's kingship, God's salvation, God's people, the Messiah and the Servant.

The task of Bible translation involves an understanding not only of the technique of transferring a message from one language into another, but a sympathetic understanding of the message that is to be so conveyed, an understanding that involves as far as possible a participation in the world of thought of the original writers. To understand the New Testament in this way involves seeing it as the fulfilment of the Old Testament, a background which was taken for granted by the apostles and evangelists.

Professor Bruce refuses to go all the way with some recent scholars who impose an Old Testament pattern on the New Testament even where it does not fit. Nor can he accept the viewpoint of those who try to find one single principle around which to construct a whole Old Testament theology, whether that principle be the covenant principle or the history of salvation, but instead this book is greatly enriched by the variety of imagery which is traced throughout the Bible.

A specially attractive feature of Professor Bruce's presentation is the way in which he links up the world of the Old Testament writers with the wider world of the ancient Near East to which they belonged. Just as the New Testament cannot be fully understood without reference to the Old Testament, so we may add that the Old Testament itself cannot be understood apart from its setting in Western Asia. The reader is shown the way in which so much of the Old Testament imagery is derived from the same thought-world as the literature of Ugarit. Thus we are reminded that the language of Matt. 1:23 can be traced back, not only to Isa. 7:14, but past that still further to the almost identical expression in "the much earlier Ugaritic poem, *The Wedding of Nikkal and Yarih*". There is, however, nothing in the Ugaritic poem to suggest the idea of a virgin birth, despite Bruce's use of the expression "Isaiah's virgin oracle" on page 103 (see also page 73). Near Eastern mythology forms the background of another passage in the Old Testament (Psalm 89) which is discussed by Professor Bruce, this time in relation to Yahweh's activity in creation. It is, however, doubtful whether Rahab in verse 10 is meant to be an allusion to Egypt, as is claimed in the section entitled "Defeating the Dragon", a section which concludes with the reminder that there is an exact Ugaritic parallel to Isa. 27:1, which is in turn reflected in Rev. 12:3.

Enough has been said to indicate that we have here a fascinating study of the close dependence of the New Testament upon the Old Testament, a body of literature deeply embedded in the thought of the ancient Orient. The reader of this book will learn a great deal about the unity of the Bible, and will have his attention drawn to many fascinating ways in which this unity is brought out. It is of interest to see that Professor Bruce accepts the reading of the UBS Greek Testament in Jude 5, a reading which the translators of TEV have left on one side.

There is a misprint in the Greek of one of the footnotes on page 98, and the value of the book would be enhanced by the addition of an index of Scripture references.

## A TRANSLATOR'S HANDBOOK OF LUKE

Translators will be happy to learn that the United Bible Societies has published Volume X in its series of *Helps for Translators*,

### **A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke.**

This new Handbook follows the pattern of the *Handbook on the Gospel of Mark*. The authors of the Luke Handbook, J. L. Swellengrebel and J. Reiling, have provided translators with another valuable aid which, because of the greater length of the Gospel of Luke, has 798 pages.

This commentary differs from the Mark commentary in that it does not deal with problems of text and punctuation. It was felt that *The Greek New Testament* editors have handled these problems in such a way as to make their appearance in this volume superfluous. The English text is the Revised Standard Version.

Translators may apply for this book by addressing themselves to the Translator's Consultant in the area where they work.

### *Today's English Version*

TODAY'S ENGLISH VERSION New Testament is now available with the Psalms from the American Bible Society. More than twenty-five million copies of "Good News for Modern Man" have been sold. Dr. Robert G. Bratcher, director of the TEV Old Testament project, reports that the entire Old Testament will be completed in 1973.