

peripheral questions such as the language level of the Greek New Testament, and the semantic structure of the Hebrew verb, are concisely stated and then laid aside. Full use is made of UBS publications, including numerous articles in *The Bible Translator*. The translations are allowed to speak for themselves, more often than not to condemn themselves out of their own mouths, by selective though fair quotation, backed up by discreet comment. The result is a work much easier to read than most doctoral theses, but by no means superficial. The occasional rare term is used for special effect, as when J. U. Glanville's "querimoniously" is appropriately condemned as "inhabile" (114).

Translations are not listed in order of publication (an alphabetical index would have been useful), but grouped according to their approximate position on a scale running from formal correspondence (unfortunately called "formal equivalence") to colloquial language. Precise plotting on this scale is impossible, for reasons both theoretical (the scale is multi-dimensional) and practical; what is one to do with a translation intended for children, but whose author's claim to "simple and direct . . . phrasing" is invalidated by such things as:

"My strength is withered, and my tongue
Fast to my palate cleaves;
Thou bringest me the graves among,
Where death its dust receives"? (163)

Among better-known translations, Moffatt and Weymouth are criticized for a mixture of language levels, K. N. Taylor's style is described as "engaging" but sometimes "crude", and Barclay is found inappropriately diffuse in Mark. "Bratcher 1966" (TEV New Testament, 1st edition) is carefully analysed and unreservedly commended. Among translations of the Psalms, special praise is given to those of Alan T. Dale (in *Winding Quest*, London 1972) and Mother Maria (Lydia Gysi): *The Psalms: an Exploratory Translation* (Filgrave, Bucks., U.K. 1973).

The book concludes with a balanced assessment of the pros and cons of "one-man" translations. Negatively, it "is almost too much to expect of one man" that he should be "both a Hebrew or Greek scholar, an accurate transmitter of the original meaning . . ., and a writer of lucid readable English" (179). Yet at their best, such translations have a "spontaneity and freshness of individual insight" which can "mak[e] the Bible come alive for many readers to whom it was a closed book"; in the author's judgement, they have at times "surpassed the committee versions" (180).

Dr. Sjölander's fine study will help all potential translators to be more aware of their limitations, and of the pitfalls in their path. P.E.

Skilton, John (ed.): **The New Testament Student and Bible Translation** (Vol. IV of "The New Testament Student"). Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1978, 241 pp., \$5.00.

Part I of this book (1-193) is entitled "Forum on Principles of Bible Translation" and consists of twenty-two short articles by eighteen different writers. Part II consists of five additional essays on New Testament themes not related to translation (195-241). The interest for most readers of TBT will lie in Part I. These essays are uneven in quality and for the most part are by Biblical

scholars who hold to the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible. A 1936 article by J. G. Machen which does not even deal with Bible translation is also included and argues for plenary verbal inspiration. In those articles which deal directly with the question of dynamic equivalence translations and formal equivalence translation, some writers clearly support the former (Nida, J. B. Phillips, Bratcher, R. B. Dillard, H. W. Aulie) and others, the latter (N. K. Weeks, R. L. Thomas, F. R. Steele, I. Murray, J. H. Skilton).

The contributors include men who have worked on the Modern Language Bible, the NASB, the NIV, the New Scofield Bible, the TEV, the New Testament in Modern English (Phillips), and the Choc Bible. These articles, about half of which are reprints from the *Presbyterian Guardian*, *The Banner of Truth*, and other periodicals, have been written and gathered for a student project at Westminster Theological Seminary. According to the editor, responses to positions taken in any of the articles are welcome, and later volumes in this series will be glad to continue the discussion.

Several writers attempt to support literal translations through a theological appeal to verbal inspiration. Murray, for example, writes, "But when the Bible is being translated, its own doctrine as to its verbal inspiration imposes limitations on the translators' function. The Scripture teaches us that, as God's word written, its form as well as its thought is inspired" (132). Others such as Weeks speak of the need for "a Biblically based understanding of language processes" (119). Dillard has a much more realistic understanding of what the Bible is: "I do not find in them [the Scriptures] a general theory of language structures that will guide my work as a translator. The Bible is, of course, a linguistic medium. It uses language, but does not directly address the nature of language itself" (116).

Weeks further claims that even when the semantic fields of a given English word do not correspond to the semantic fields of a given Hebrew word, a concordant type translation may still be warranted (107). After all, he argues, perhaps the Bible's original approach to certain things, i.e. the semantic range of a given Greek or Hebrew word, may have something to teach us today about our perception of reality. To follow such misguided reasoning can only take translations one step backwards.

Some writers too easily assume that when certain texts (e.g. Lk 1.27; Ps 2.11-12, 45.6; Is 7.14; Rom 9.5) are not translated so as to support fundamentalist theology, the translator's theology has led him to that interpretation. R. L. Thomas correctly notes that while that may be true, it is not necessarily so (92). C. E. Mason Jr. states most clearly a thought which other writers also seem to share: "If a person does not receive the Bible as God's inerrant Word, he is not a safe translator . . ." (47). Yet if the NIV is any indication, an explicit commitment to the "infallibility of the Bible as God's Word" will unfortunately allow theological bias to override at crucial points (cf. Ps 2.11-12, 45.6; Is 7.14) and prejudice interpretation in what is an otherwise fine translation.

There will be nothing new in this book for most readers of TBT, but as a counter-balance to the orientation usually found in UBS publications, this book may stimulate further discussions of various issues related to Bible translation.

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