

pressive, this is definitely a workable format, for the texts stand out one from another and yet comparison is not difficult even from the top row to the bottom.

Margaret T. Hills

Luther and the Bible, by Willem Jan Kooiman, translated from the Dutch by John Schmidt. Philadelphia, Muhlenberg Press, 1961; \$ 4.00.

Translators will be challenged by Luther's seemingly impossible accomplishment: translating the entire New Testament from Latin and Greek into German in just eleven weeks! One of his central concerns was to prepare an accurate and idiomatic translation which would "make Moses so German that no one would guess that he was a Jew".

At times he was an exceedingly rapid translator as he worked on the Old Testament. Other times he probed the meaning of a specific word for weeks, or was scarcely able to complete three lines in four days. This prompts him to comment:

"Dear people, now that it has been translated into clear German, everyone can read it easily. He can let his eyes race over three or four pages without ever meeting with difficulties. He is not aware now what holes and bumps were once there. Where he now rides smoothly, as on good pavement, we had to sweat and toil to remove obstacles and fill holes that later travelers can go with ease."

Here are some of the basic presuppositions which may be gleaned from his writings and correspondence. Most translators will agree with many of these principles:

The Bible is not just a book for personal reading, but for public hearing.

The Hebrew language is the best of all and richest in vocabulary. (The translator will do well to consider this particular thesis in the light of James Barr's *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, Oxford University Press, reviewed in *TBT* October 1962, pp. 227-231.)

A translation is never final but must be continually revised; this can best be done through teamwork. (Recall that a revision committee assisted him in the painstaking revision of his earlier work.)

A translator must never work by himself, since the best words do not always occur to one when he is alone.

The Holy Scripture speaks of divine actions and subjects and therefore must be handled with reverence.

Where more than one explanation of an Old Testament passage is possible, it should be interpreted in accord with the New Testament.

Laws, history, prayers, doctrinal and poetic passages each have their own style which must be strictly observed in translations.

These principles of translation are worked into a thoroughly competent study of Luther's spiritual development and his first acquaintance with the Bible. This leads to Luther, the teacher of Biblical theology and lifelong translator. The course of his translation (New Testament, then Old Testament law, prophets, poetry) is set

forth with ample discussion of his views on the relation between the Testaments, the place of James and the other Catholic Epistles, and of course inspiration and incarnation.

Kooiman writes this volume in the best tradition of thorough scholarship: there is extensive documentation from the sources and relevant monographs and also an index. Yet the difficult and often highly debatable areas of study are handled with a lucidity which makes the book easy to read (thanks also to the translator), absorbing to follow and stimulating to ponder.

It is clear throughout the book that the writing is not just an academic exercise of historical interest but devotion to the understanding of a person who molded the religious history of the West as have few persons.

"This man, who occupied himself day and night with the Book for decades, warns us just before his death. Do not attempt to follow God's way through the world, but bow reverently over the marks left by his holy feet."

Robert P. Markham

A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic, by Franz Rosenthal. Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1961; 28/6d.

This book will be a great help to translators of the Aramaic portions of Ezra and Daniel.¹ Aramaic is treated as a language in its own right and the author claims that no knowledge of Hebrew is presupposed, though the book will of course be more readily followed by those who have already learned at least some Hebrew.

Since this is a grammar of biblical Aramaic, it does not attempt to deal with the post-biblical forms of the language and hence is less liable to cause confusion than W. B. Stevenson's *Grammar of Palestinian Jewish Aramaic*. Dr. Rosenthal disclaims any intention of providing a special discussion of biblical Aramaic syntax, but he touches on problems of syntax at appropriate points in the grammar and provides a couple of pages of "notes on the syntax of the verb".

The book is plentifully stocked with illustrative references from the Old Testament and there is a full glossary or vocabulary, giving references to the sections of the text where each word is dealt with. The paradigms of the verb are fully set out and there is also a useful bibliography.

The gratitude of English-speaking Bible translators is due to the German publishers of this work for producing it in English.

B. F. Price

¹ Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4b-7:28. There are also a few words of Aramaic in Gen. 31:47 and Gen. 10:11.