

“. . . In the nature of the case, a translation cannot be truly ‘literal’” (97). The discovery of formal correspondences is only a first step towards translation: “the job of translation also takes the translator into the subjective realm of deciding how the impact made by a phrase in one language can be approximated in another language” (99)—something not to be confused with paraphrase. Prof. Chilton’s discussion is illustrated with reference to particular texts, such as John 2.4 and Rom. 13.10b, and particular versions.

TEV (=GNB) wins praise for its clarity: “It is not only linguistically more direct, it is also conceptually simpler than any other major rendering”; but in Rom. 13.10b, “to love, then, is to obey the whole Law”, the “search” (by “those responsible for TEV”) “for the simplest rendering has . . . interfered with the basic accuracy of their work” (107). TEV is also commended for “basing [the] translation on sound and accessible textual work”, in this respect setting, Prof. Chilton hopes, “a standard which future translators will at least try to attain” (108). By contrast, “the NIV represents a retreat from the ideal of dynamic transference, and a fresh attempt at formal correspondence” (109).

A section entitled “Choosing a version” begins by eliminating paraphrases such as the Living Bible, and continues by referring to the varying needs of different groups of readers; in any case, “an edition with a preface should be sought, so that the reader can be informed of the principles of translation which were followed” (112), and the standard (i.e. level of register) of English aimed at. Students should pay attention to the context of individual statements, and compare a variety of translations. The RSV is commended for scholarly use, though of course “among scholars working in higher education, use of the New Testament in Greek is assumed to be regular practice” (114).

Textual problems are briefly discussed, using the endings of Mark as an example. There are suggestions for further reading.

P.E.

**Mbiti, John S. Bible and Theology in African Christianity.** New Jersey: Oxford University Press, 1986.

This new book by John Mbiti owes its origin to the Benjamin Henry Paddock lectures which he delivered in March, 1982 at the General Theological Seminary, New York City. To the original lectures more material has been added in order to widen the scope of the book. The result is a very informative and wide-ranging book on the present currents in African Christianity, a phenomenon the author describes as “fascinating,” “fresh and fragile,” “dynamic and domineering.” He sees it as echoing “in some ways . . . the experiences of the early church; in others it is creatively forging ahead in response to the situations of today. In some ways it leans heavily on the religious background of African people, in others it seeks and finds its legitimation and strength in the Bible. In some ways it is deeply African; in others it is committedly ecumenical and universal” (pp. ix-x).

The second chapter, Bible Translation and Use in the Church, is bound to be of interest to Bible Societies in Africa and to all interested in the work of

translating the Bible in African languages and its general impact on church activity and life. Information that could be provided by United Bible Societies (UBS) and bodies such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) is not taken into account. This, however, does not weaken the arguments of this chapter. For example, the author argues here that "to a large extent, the independent churches are the product of Bible translation and in their existence the Bible plays a great role" (p. 29), and that "the translation of the Bible into African languages has become largely an ecumenical undertaking" (p. 32), thus becoming a "point of convergence, a guide recognized and followed by both strands so that the Scriptures which played a role in separating Christians are also playing a role in bringing them closer to one another at many points" (p. 32). The author then discusses ways in which the Bible is used in preaching and how it is shaping African Christianity. He writes, for example: "The Bible is seen and used more and more by Africans as a weapon by which to reclaim part of that authority from these centres for the local regions of Africa . . . More and more Africans would rather listen first to the speaking from overseas centres, in matters that concern the life-and-death of the Church, the body of Christ in a given area" (p. 42). Thus for the author "The gospel, backed as it is by the Scriptures in local languages, is growing into African peoples and they are growing into it. They are domesticating it within their total milieu, both traditional and modern for the practical formation of African Christianity. However it is read and interpreted, the Bible is making indelible marks on the religious scene in Africa" (p. 44).

This is certainly an excellent book and very insightful at many points. It gives an overview of trends, some major personalities and some key themes coupled with a personal knowledge and experience of the events being described. Even though Professor Mbiti has been living outside Africa for some years now, he has remained in close touch with events there. This book is highly recommended for theologians, translators of the Bible, church leaders and the interested general readers.

ALOO MOJOLA

van der Woude, A. S. (ed.) **The World of the Bible: Bible Handbook I.** Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans; Exeter: Paternoster Press 1986; 400 pp., 155 illustrations (40 in colour), \$34.95/£34.95

Thompson, J. A., **Handbook of Life in Bible Times.** Leister, UK and Downers Grove, USA: Inter-Varsity Press. 384 pp., 258 illustrations (223 in colour).

Helps to our understanding the background of Bible times abound, and we are now in a period of up-dating with others promised (V. H. Matthews, *Manners and Customs in Bible Times*). This is good for those wishing to use materials from the cultures of the ancient Middle East to broaden their understanding and interpretation of the Bible.

Van der Woude's volume is a translation from the Dutch edition of his *Bijbels Handboek, Deel 1*, 1981. It brings together six major essays covering the geography, archaeology, languages and writing systems of Bible lands; the text and