

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Bible Translation in India, Pakistan and Ceylon.** A Second Edition (revised by W. J. Culshaw) of *The Bible in India* by J. S. M. Hooper. Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 226; Rs. 6 (9s. 0d.).

Dr J. S. M. Hooper's *The Bible in India*, published in 1938, has for long been invaluable. It is a mine of scholarship, yet it is written with a touch that is popular in the best sense, so that it has proved not only informative but attractive. Nothing can ever rob it of its pioneer value.

Yet inevitably, in the course of a generation, it has become dated. Population figures have increased enormously, political changes have been far-reaching and, above all, Bible translation work has continued and grown.

A new edition was therefore imperative, and Mr Culshaw was obviously the right man to do it. For many years a missionary in Eastern India, with an intimate knowledge of Bengali and Santali supplemented by Hindi, a respected anthropologist, and until recently for six years Translations Secretary to the Bible Society of India and Ceylon, he has qualifications that none could excel.

It has been a fascinating task to compare his new edition paragraph by paragraph with Hooper and note how skilfully he has retained, modified, added, rearranged and rewritten. Political changes and new emphases needed the careful and observant handling they have received. Census figures needed bringing up to date. In the main these have had to be the 1951 figures, but in a few cases the 1961 ones were available. A very few errors in the first edition needed correction.

Mr Culshaw has been equally wise in what he has retained and what he has substantially modified. Apart from the changes of detail needed in every language, he has left the South Indian languages and one or two others almost untouched. They needed little change, and he could not hope to improve on Dr Hooper's special field. (Sad to say, there are two deteriorations from Hooper in the Tamil: the word for God is *Kadavul* not *Kaduvul*, and Dr Larsen would turn in his grave at finding Pandit Doraiswamy demoted from joint chief reviser to assistant. There is also a slip in the first line of the Telugu chapter.)

The chapters on Bengali and on Hindi and Urdu are retained in substance, but quite considerably modified out of Mr Culshaw's own first-hand knowledge. The result is excellent. The minor Hindi dialect versions, on which much nineteenth century work was done but which are now little circulated, are collected into a separate chapter.

Oriya and Assamese are rightly taken from their previous chapters, where they were associated with tribal languages with which they had little in common but geography. West Pakistan has also called for separate treatment on political grounds, comparable with Hooper's treatment of Ceylon, which is of course retained.

In many ways the most exciting chapters are those which deal with languages on the outer borders of India: 'Languages of the Himalayas'

and 'Tribal Languages in Assam, North East India and East Pakistan'. These are far from being the most important languages in the book, but they include the languages of many of the most vigorous and growing churches, especially in the hills of Assam and Nagaland, and a great deal of translation work has gone on in many of them since the war. They have compelled the added treatment that Mr Culshaw has rightly given them. He has a similar chapter on 'Tribal Languages of the Central Belt', and, in passing, one notes his restraint in retaining Hooper's Santali section unaltered and simply brought up to date—a tribute to both men!

Useful appendices giving lists of languages and the dates of their first publication complete the book, together with a satisfactory index and an excellent language map. We shall long be grateful to Mr Culshaw for this careful, thorough and interesting work. When, like its predecessor, it becomes out of date, its new reviser will have similarly firm foundations on which to build.

H. K. MOULTON

**Four Prophets**, by J. B. Phillips. London: Bles, 1963, pp. 161; 15s.

Those who have used J. B. Phillips's translation of the New Testament—a description which must apply to most readers of *The Bible Translator*—will welcome this, his latest achievement in the field of translation.

The four prophets whom he has chosen as what one hopes will be but the first instalment of his translation of the Old Testament, are Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. Of all but Isaiah, the text is complete, but since Mr Phillips seeks to present the message of the eighth century prophets, he has translated the first 35 chapters only of Isaiah. The division of the book at this point seems somewhat arbitrary, since it involves the omission of some passages which reflect Isaiah's characteristic emphasis on faith, for no better reason than that the omitted section is duplicated in 2 Kings. If these chapters are to be omitted, what of chapters 34 and 35?

The result of Mr Phillips's new experiment is a very readable translation, clearly set out in poetic form where the parallelism demands such treatment. While verse numbering is retained in the margin for easy reference, the text is set out in sections divided from one another according to the sense, and provided with appropriate headings. Where there are problems to be faced arising from a faulty text, Mr Phillips does his utmost to ensure intelligibility. This often involves taking liberties with the received text, and there is seldom any indication when emendations have been made. Very occasionally a footnote comments on textual problems, but the insertion of a note at Isa. 28: 13, and almost nowhere else, saying, 'The manuscript evidence for this part of the verse is uncertain', seems very arbitrary. The translation is intended to be read, not to be used as a literal rendering of the underlying Hebrew. In fact, the whole book is an excellent example of what can be done when a translator is at liberty to depart from the traditional text whenever he is convinced that the original writer produced a different text from what we now have.