

meaning seems to him to be too obvious for comment; if, on the other hand, he is dealing with a passage of uncertain meaning, he may obscure his uncertainty with a smokescreen of verbiage or he may list a number of explanations without coming down definitely in favour of any one of them. The translator, however, must translate everything, both simple and difficult, and in places where varieties of sense and rendering are possible, he must make up his mind in favour of one. If the evidence is fairly evenly balanced, he may put a variant rendering in a footnote, and then he will be accused of sowing doubts in the minds of unsophisticated readers. The one precedent he must not follow is that of *The Amplified Bible*, where all possibilities (and some impossibilities) are put together in the text, so that the reader is at liberty to pay his money and make his choice.

The problems of translation and exposition are particularly acute in Romans, where so much depends on the careful following of Paul's argument stage by stage. The authors of this volume are to be highly commended for the skill and helpfulness of their work. They have had the TEV text printed section by section, and to each section they have added their comments. While they have set out specifically to help translators, all readers and expositors would profit from their work, because they compel us to think of the exact meaning of Paul's language, clause by clause and sometimes word by word. The translator may have to produce a version of the Letter in a language with a structure quite different from that of English and other European languages. Where Paul uses a passive construction, how is that construction to be turned into an active one in a language which possesses no passive voice? It is necessary then to define the agent, and this calls for exegesis. "Creation was condemned to become worthless" (Rom. 8.20, TEV)—condemned by whom? According to RSV, "the creation was subjected to futility . . . by the will of him who subjected it". In the latter clause the verb is active, but even so the subject is not explicitly stated. TEV comes down on the side of the most probable explanation—"because God willed it to be so"—and so, when the active must be substituted for the passive voice in the former clause, the translator is advised to use some such wording as "God decided that", "God determined that" or "God judged all creation as".

In Rom. 7.7–25 the nature of the "I"—autobiographical, representative or dramatic—is sensibly suggested. In 3.21–25 the concepts of righteousness and propitiation (as the older versions say)—"God's way of putting men right with himself" and "the means by which men's sins are forgiven"—are carefully explained, together with the adjoining phrases, in such a way as to safeguard all the essentials of the Pauline gospel.

F. F. BRUCE

Black, Matthew: **Romans**. New Century Bible. London: Oliphants 1973. 186 pp. £3.50.

The New Century Bible Commentary on Romans by Dr. Matthew Black represents a welcome addition to the long list of commentaries on this letter "which has presented generations of biblical scholars with their most challenging exegetical task" (p. 7). For the translator with scholarly interests,

one of the most helpful things that Dr. Black has done is to provide a listing of bibliographical items relevant to the interpretation of the letter. This is done both by the inclusion of a select bibliography at the beginning of the commentary (with the categories "older commentaries"; "modern commentaries"; "other recommended studies"; and "the structure of Romans") and by listing throughout the commentary bibliographical information relevant to the particular passage under consideration (for example, see 1.3; 1.19, 22; 3.24; 25; 5.12; 8.15, 28; 9.1, 5; 10.4; 13.1-7).

The commentary is brief (less than 200 pages), but compact, wasting no words, and giving detailed exegesis where necessary. Some of the more significant concepts in Romans are discussed (for example, "salvation" pp. 43-44; "the righteousness of God" pp. 44-45; "wrath" pp. 48-49; *hilastērion* pp. 68-70, with an additional note on pp. 72-73; and "fresh", "body", "spirit", pp. 108-113). Textual problems are evaluated; and the translator will be especially interested in Dr. Black's conclusion regarding "through faith for faith" (see pp. 46-48). Of no little importance to the translator is the necessity of understanding the overall structure of the book, and of each section of the book that he is translating, and in this regard the analysis of each section of the letter is extremely valuable. More often than not, where there is a significant difference of interpretation, the various viewpoints are given, followed by the writer's own conclusion.

Some of the same features that commend this commentary so highly to the reader who has a sophisticated grasp of English, and who is familiar with Greek and Hebrew terminology, may possibly make it difficult for other readers. Sometimes the discussion of a subject is interspersed with a great deal of bibliographical data and/or transliterated Greek terms, which makes reading difficult. In fact, there are several Latin quotations, as well as the transliteration of Hebrew and Syriac, and the use of a few German terms. Sometimes even the English may sound like a foreign tongue to second readers of the English language ("The argument is a little tortuous, and very much in the disputatious style of rabbinical logomachy. But it enables Paul to reply to the charges of antinomianism to which he had been exposed", p. 62).

This is one of those commentaries that a translator ought to have available to help him through the many difficult problems of Romans. If the translator happens to be one of those persons whose knowledge of English is minimal, then it would be well worth his while to find someone who could help him get the full benefit from this work.

BARCLAY M. NEWMAN

Lambdin, Thomas O.: **Introduction to Biblical Hebrew**. London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1973. 345 pp., £3.25.

As the beginner turns to the book's first paragraph he will be pleasantly surprised to realize he need not go into the intricacies of Hebrew orthography all at once but can refer back to the initial section as directed. It is this understanding of the student's fears and needs which characterises the book