

of the flesh'. In v. 11 RSV has completely ignored *ba^a lē* 'the masters of', and *rō'eh*, 'shepherd', is taken as meaning God, which is very questionable. In v. 12 *yōtēr* is emphatic (its usual sense), and the infinitive '*āśōt* belongs to the imperative immediately preceding it, 'be instructed'. Also, the infinitive with its object does not mean 'to make books'. That is an idiom peculiar to the English language and is not at all a Hebrew idiom, which is of course 'to write a book' (e.g. Mal. 3: 16). The sense of the infinitive here is that found, for example, in Ex. 38: 24; 1 Sam. 8: 16; Jer. 3: 16, 'to use, to make use of'. At the end of the verse *yig'at bāsār* is in the accusative of result, 'to weariness of flesh', or more freely 'until the body is weary'. Our translation of the passage is accordingly as follows: 'The words of the wise are like goads; like well-fastened nails are the masters of the collected sayings from a single teacher. Be well instructed from them, my son, to make much use of books without end and to study diligently until the body is weary'—a very different rendering from the accepted one and more intelligible. Instead of being a warning against too much study it is quite the opposite, and that assuredly fits much better into the whole context of the book, as well as the immediate context. Qoheleth was a diligent searcher after truth.

These are only a few of the many problems facing the translator of the Old Testament. However, enough has been said to indicate what an intricate and difficult task he has undertaken and the numerous items of vocabulary and syntax in both English and Hebrew that he must ever keep in mind to be certain that he is correctly interpreting the original.

BOOK REVIEWS

Leviticus, in the 'Old Testament Library' series, by Martin Noth, Engl. trans. by J. E. Anderson. London: SCM Press, 1965, pp. 208; 35s. 0d.

1 and 2 Samuel, in the 'Old Testament Library' series, by H. W. Hertzberg, Engl. trans. by J. S. Bowden. London: SCM Press, 1964, pp. 416; 50s. 0d.

The appearance of two new volumes in English on **Leviticus** and **Samuel** will be welcomed by readers of this journal. It is a long time since either book has been treated on so full a scale, and **Leviticus**, in fact, is one of those Old Testament books which have never been covered in the *International Critical Commentary*. Both these volumes are translated from German commentaries in the series *Das Alte Testament Deutsch*, and gratitude must be expressed to the SCM Press for the way in which they are making these works available to those who would not be able to use the German original.

The commentary on **Leviticus** is half the size of that on **Samuel** and one feature in particular will make it of less practical use to translators than the other volume. The original German commentaries both contain fresh translations of the whole text into German, but unfortunately the English edition of **Leviticus** reproduced the RSV 'though in a few cases where it has seemed

most convenient small modifications have been made to conform to the text presupposed by the author in his commentary'. Even this principle has not been consistently carried through, as when 'coats' is retained in 10: 5 in the translation, but 'shirts' appears in the commentary following the German. It is a pity that we could not have Noth's translation of the list of birds, etc., in chapter 11, rather than a reproduction of the RSV, even though, as Noth admits, 'their special meanings are still largely a matter of conjecture'.

The introduction is brief and relates the book to the rest of the material in the Pentateuch, an emphasis which continues throughout the commentary. We are reminded at the outset of the odd fact that 'the book of Leviticus . . . deals hardly at all with Levi and the Levites; less, in fact, than any other book of the Pentateuch'. Noth emphasizes the underlying 'inner articulation' in the plan of the book, despite its apparent lack of coherence, and brings out the logic of the present arrangement of what may at first sight look like material haphazardly thrown together.

However the attitude of scholars toward the traditional source analysis of the Pentateuch may have changed during the past generation, it is clear that Noth would not seek to dispense with such symbols as P, from which the book exclusively derives. Nevertheless, emphasis is laid on the fact that P is a composite work, of which Leviticus 8-10 forms the literary kernel of this book. The remainder of the book, consisting of cultic material, was later added to the priestly narrative either while it still retained its independent existence, or after it had already been combined with the other sources of the Pentateuch. The 'Law of Holiness' (chapters 17-26) existed independently before being inserted in its present position.

The place of origin of the cultic material cannot always be discovered with any certainty, but Noth is inclined to believe that chapters 1-7 and 11-15 belong to the Jerusalem tradition, and probably the Law of Holiness also. Chapter 16, on the other hand, may reflect in its earlier stages the ritual connected with some local holy place other than Jerusalem. Azazel here is interpreted as being 'a demonic being thought of as inhabiting and casting his spell upon a particular wilderness'. Noth attributes the date of the final form of the non-narrative parts of Leviticus to the beginning of the sixth century B.C. Hence they already existed in a more or less final form before the narrative framework of P.

The above simplification does not represent at all adequately the complex process involved in the production of Leviticus in its final form, and Noth constantly emphasizes the various 'layers' of tradition to be found in the book. The opening verses of chapter 10 are a characteristic reminder of our lack of knowledge of the historical situation underlying the evolution of the book in its present form.

For translators of Leviticus, one of the most difficult passages is that dealing with the treatment of the 'leper' in chapters 13 and 14. As in the RSV, the word 'leprosy' is retained here, though in a footnote the point is emphasized that 'it is clear from these chapters that a much wider range of conditions is indicated'. In thus using the word 'leprosy' in inverted commas, the translator is following the precedent of the German original and not committing himself to any radical departure from tradition. (For a further discussion of

'Leprosy' see *The Bible Translator*, Vol. 11 (1960), Nos. 1 and 2.) Nevertheless, it is said that the possibility of the disappearance of the signs of the illness in question rules out 'leprosy' as a valid translation of *šāra'at*, at any rate so far as leprosy is understood as an incurable disease.

The translation into English has been ably carried out by J. E. Anderson, though attention should perhaps be drawn to two wrong references arising from the difference in the German and English verse enumeration. On p. 38, line 8, '6: 23' should read '6: 22'; and at the foot of p. 55, '6: 7' should read '6: 8'.

Most translators will derive more benefit from the second of these two commentaries, on **1 and 2 Samuel**. It is a pity that there is not more in the way of an introduction to such a volume—perhaps the days when emphasis was laid on such matters is past. Instead, we have seven 'Note[s] on formation and structure' at intervals throughout the book, at the end of each main section.

The text of Samuel has, as Hertzberg says in his introduction, been very badly transmitted. 'In this respect, too, the Books of Samuel unfortunately stand out among the prose literature of the Old Testament.' As with Leviticus, the German commentary provides a new translation of the text, but here the editors have wisely agreed to allow the English equivalent of the German translation to be printed instead of the RSV. The translator who does not know Hebrew will be greatly helped by comparing the RSV and this present translation, especially as at the places where they most notably diverge an explanation is provided in a footnote.

Hertzberg and the RSV have not by any means always agreed in their treatment of the Septuagint (LXX) as against the Massoretic Text (MT). In his introduction the author points out that 'The Qumran texts evidently represent the same tradition as a Hebrew text underlying the LXX'. This gives added value to the LXX tradition and at a number of places, e.g. I. 6: 19; 10: 13; 11: 9; 12: 3; 13: 15; 21: 13; II. 12: 16; 13: 27; 17: 28; 18: 28, the LXX is preferred to the MT reading which is followed by the RSV. On the other hand, Hertzberg also differs from the RSV at many points where he prefers the Massoretic text but where the RSV has followed the LXX, e.g. notably at I. 14: 41 where, as against earlier commentators such as Gray and S. R. Driver, Hertzberg follows the trend of Lindblom and others in retaining the shorter text 'God of Israel, give a right judgement'. A similar tendency to retain the MT is found in I. 2: 33, where a not very convincing case is made for the traditional rendering of the end of the verse, in II. 6: 22; 21: 2, etc. These differences of treatment of the MT on the part of modern translators underline the fact that it is quite impossible to apply any rule of thumb to LXX readings as against those of the MT, or to treat the latter as infallible. Individual readings in Samuel, as elsewhere in the Old Testament, must be considered on their merits and it is inevitable that different translators, all with an equal right to be heard and respected, will have different opinions on the superiority of one reading to another.

Other noteworthy differences between the RSV and the translation in this commentary do not necessarily depend on differences of text, but may arise from differences of interpreting the Hebrew, as in I. 11: 10, where a more

literal following of the text brings out a double meaning in the reply of the men of Jabesh; and I. 15: 32, where 'with tottering step' is preferred to 'cheerfully.' In II. 6: 19 'loaf of bread' sounds more natural than RSV's somewhat archaic 'cake of bread'.

But Samuel is more than a quarry for textual problems. It is a rich mine of material throwing light on the early history of the monarchy and the period preceding it. Hertzberg does not commit himself to any precise theory of its authorship. The kernel of the book is seen to be the 'succession-history' relating the events leading up to Solomon's accession as King of Israel (II. 9-20). Ahimaaz and Hushai are mentioned as possible writers of these chapters. Whoever it was had 'a clear eye for the theological essentials'. And these theological factors in history are stressed over and over again in this commentary, particularly with reference to the life of David himself. Whether the author is commenting on David's relations with Saul, on the events leading to his accession, or on the causes of the eventual failure of the revolt of Absalom, there is a constant stress on the divine over-ruling of history. David is destined in the purposes of God to be the founder of the true royal line, and this not because of his worthiness (the Bathsheba incident brings this out clearly enough) but through the grace of God, a feature underlined in II Sam. 7, which Hertzberg describes as 'the climax of the whole Davidic tradition'. It is a pity, however, that the relation between this chapter and Psa. 89 is not discussed.

The commentator shows a fine insight into the psychological case of Saul who, despite being the anointed of Yahweh, the inaugurator of the kingdom, lacks the qualities possessed by his successor: 'Only he who allows God to be wholly king, and who is therefore himself completely obedient, can be king over the people of God'. David's sin in the matter of Bathsheba is dealt with in a masterly fashion and we are reminded that the mention of the incident here (in contrast to its omission by the Chronicler) 'stresses that God's cause is advanced not through blameless persons, but by God himself, despite the sinfulness of his best people'.

It is only indirectly that a commentary on Samuel needs to touch on the question of the Davidic authorship of the Psalms. It is, however, naturally enough raised in connection with II Sam. 22 and 23. It is somewhat curious that one and only one 'Psalm of David' is reproduced in Samuel and that 'The Last Words of David', so like the psalms in some ways, occur only here. The reproduction of Psa. 18, in chapter 22, is because of its 'comprehensive significance' as a 'theological commentary on the history of David'. Hertzberg is somewhat dogmatic in his treatment of the question whether or not any psalms are Davidic in origin. 'It is hard to deny that he wrote psalms; had he not done so, the attribution of so many psalms to him would be incomprehensible.' But how many centuries separate the psalms themselves from the present form of the 'attribution' in the Hebrew Bible? Hertzberg regards II Sam. 23: 1-7 as mainly Davidic in its authorship.

The translation into English reads smoothly and the reviewer has found little to indicate that the wrong meaning has been conveyed, except on p. 402 where note (a) fails either to make sense or to fit the facts on the present renderings. For 'up to' one must understand 'with the exception of', and

another dash should be inserted before 'are according', but even so the note could well be reworded. There are, moreover, a number of places where it is not clear in the English to what passage in the translation a footnote refers. This is often because the translator has either retained the RSV text or has not taken sufficient care to see that his footnotes fit in with the text, and also because the German indicates the beginning and ending of emendations and insertions by the commentator. Here are a few examples:

- p. 77, note c: 'This clause' includes practically the whole of Saul's speech to this point, which is not suggested by the English translation.
- p. 102, note a: The 'long section' here extends from the previous 'Gilgal'.
- p. 230, note i: There is no need for '...' between 'their' and 'temple'. The footnote has 'temples of their idols' for the same expression as the text translates as 'houses of their idols'.
- p. 277, note b: 'Praised be . . . Israel' should read 'Praised be . . . people of the LORD'.
- p. 399: The translation 'godless men' in v. 6, which is taken from the RSV, conflicts with 'children of the devil' on p. 401.
- p. 410, note c: The Hebrew transliteration is not enough to indicate to some readers just what has been added in English.

It is difficult to reconcile note (b) on p. 90 with note (b) on p. 94, but this is a difficulty inherent in the German original. A reference to Judges 12: 13-15 would have been helpful on p. 95 (note d).

A number of misprints have been noticed, including the following:

- p. 225 (3 lines up): the semi-colon and superior h should come after 'given us' in the text.
- p. 377, line 20: 'gilt' may be more colourful, but presumably 'guilt' was intended.
- p. 76: the verse number (26) has been omitted after 'roof' in the text.

Since reference is made to Noth's *History of Israel* (e.g. in the footnote on p. 259), it could well have been included in the bibliography.

It is good to know that the SCM Press are preparing to publish further commentaries in this series.

B. F. PRICE

LINGUISTICS AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

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