

simple). Hans Peter Rieger and Adrian Schenker both address the question "What do we translate?" Rieger shows that, at least for the Old Testament and the deuterocanonicals, textual criticism is inseparable from questions of the canon; Schenker explores in detail the textual basis of Jer. 34.18-19. Ottmar Fuchs considers the question "For whom do we translate?", with reference among other things to common language, transculturation, and the Bible in the church.

Part II is devoted to three German translations: Bernhard Lohse writes on hermeneutical principles of the Luther Bible and its revisions, Josef Scharbert on those of the (largely Roman Catholic) "Einheitsübersetzung", and Jan de Waard on those of the German common language Bible. The first two of these contributions also include historical material. Part III comprises seven contributions related to the translation of particular texts: Job 16 and Isaiah 1 in one group, and Matthew 13.24-52 and Romans 8 in another, are examined from the point of view exegesis, homiletics, and religious education; the first group also has a study by Mario Wandruszka from the point of view of a comparative linguist. These texts are printed in three translations in an appendix.

The book is rounded off by concluding statements from various participants, an "after-word" by the editors, some "Theses on translation" by four of the participants, and an attempt by Katharina Reiss to clarify for German speakers the difference between paraphrase and translation.

The German Bible Society is to be congratulated on initiating a meeting, some of the results of which should eventually benefit translators outside the German-speaking area. P.E.

Nida, Eugene A. **Signs, Sense, Translation.** Roggebaai, Cape Town: Bible Society of South Africa, 1984, 1985. vi+143 pp., no price stated. ISBN 0 7982 0618 7.

This is one of a series of books published by the Institute for Interlingual Communication of the South African Bible Society. It is based on lectures by the veteran theorist of Bible translation, given in 1981 at the University of Pretoria. This review will loosely follow Nida's own procedure for understanding a text (37).

1st level: "The immediate impression which one receives in the perception of a sign" (a text is a complex sign).

An understandably written book, even for non-specialists, lightened by many graphic illustrations (mostly from Bible texts). Despite its relative brevity, it offers a rounded presentation of the foundations, conditions and possibilities of translation.

2nd level: "A careful analysis of what the sign actually consists of."

Each text is conceived as a complex sign, the main function of which is to transmit meaning(s). In translating texts, it is to be noted that signs of any kind may have differing meaning(s) and function(s) in different cultures. In translating biblical texts, it is specially to be noted that they are documents of faith, to

be made understandable to all levels of readers. Various translations are therefore necessary, corresponding to the "needs and circumstances" of the prospective readers (120 ff.) and the various purposes to be served (122 ff.); yet translation must not deform the message contained in the source text. Nida's definition of Bible translation is thus:

Translation consists in the reproduction in the receptor language of the message of the source language in such a way that the receptors in the receptor language may be able to understand adequately how the original receptors in the source language understood the original message.

The problems which arise in doing this, and how to solve them, are dealt with in three carefully structured chapters. The first, "Signs", (1-39) discusses the nature of signs, particularly linguistic signs, as fundamental elements of communication. The second, "Sense", (40-90) discusses the meaning of signs, again particularly linguistic signs, on various levels. Signs combine with the previous (linguistic or cultural) knowledge which may be presupposed in the reader to make accessible the meaning of a text. The third chapter, "Translation", (91-137) uses the findings of the first two to present the principles, possibilities and limits of Bible translation as a three-stage process of analysis, transfer and reconstruction, all related to translational practice. The book concludes with six pages of bibliography, references having been largely avoided in the body of the book.

3rd level: "Seeing as it were through a sign to its broader implications."

More decisively than before, Nida bases his treatment on the semiotic principle that all communication takes place with the help of (linguistic and behavioural) signs; that these signs are related (by the producer and by the receptor) to meaning, and that a translation must transfer the relation of sign and meaning in a source language and culture to a relation of sign and meaning in a receptor language and culture.

It is not to be expected that all the problems raised will be fully discussed within the limits of a series of lectures. Some of the presentation (e.g. the definition of translation, 119, and the discussion of paraphrase, 93) may thus need to be modified if *Bible* translation is not, as here, expressly in the centre of interest. As an introduction to the subject, this book is however extremely stimulating and fruitful, not only for Bible translators, but for all who have to do with translation, whether in theory or in practice.

KATHARINA REISS

Bruce [D.] Chilton's **Beginning New Testament Study** London: SPCK 1986. xii+196 pp., £5.95. ISBN 0 281 04210 1

Contains a useful chapter (pp. 95-119) on English translations of the New Testament, and editions of the Greek text, entitled "Which translation? And how to use it". Of the three main reasons for new translations, namely newly discovered manuscripts, changes in the receptor language, and changes in the understanding of the translator's task, he pays most attention to the third.