

Maxwell has drawn on his more than 25 years' experience as a teacher of church history and historical theology to skillfully condense an abundance of complex historical and theological data from both primary and secondary sources in a semi-popular style that can be appreciated by specialists as well as digested by non-specialists. Several charts support the text and endnotes follow each chapter. This book will be valuable reading for anyone desiring to understand the theological roots and motivations of Seventh-day Adventists.

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McNamara, Martin. *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*. The Aramaic Bible, vol. 1A. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992. xiv + 271 pp. \$65.00.

Maher, Michael. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*. The Aramaic Bible, vol. 1B. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992. xiv + 208 pp. \$65.00.

The Aramaic Bible is a Targum translation project of Michael Glazier Books/The Liturgical Press. Though several volumes of The Aramaic Bible series have been published, these two volumes represent the long-awaited first number of the project. Originally the editors planned to publish the texts of Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan on facing pages with integrated notes. However, this proved unfeasible, and the two works were published simultaneously in separate volumes. Eventually the whole Pentateuch of Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan will be published as the first five numbers of the series, but the editors have not made it clear whether further numbers will follow the pattern of the first number with separate volumes for Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan.

Each volume begins with an introduction to the targum represented in the volume. The translation follows, accompanied by extensive footnotes. These translations are revisions of translations prepared for the publications of Diez Macho. Each volume has a bibliography and extensive indexes to ancient and traditional sources, as well as a briefer index to modern authors. Maher's volume also has a short subject index.

The two volumes were prepared together to cover all available exemplars of the Palestinian targum tradition and should be used side by side. McNamara's volume not only translates the text of Neofiti Genesis, but also includes an apparatus representing the other Palestinian targums, with the exception of Pseudo-Jonathan which has its own volume. Thus there are two sets of notes in the Neofiti translation; the first is the apparatus of other Palestinian targums along with erasures, glosses, and corrections in Neofiti, and the second contains translator notes and references to rabbinic and other sources. McNamara's introduction is not limited to Neofiti, but also covers the full range of known Palestinian targums. As the apparatus covers the erasures and glosses of Neofiti it provides an important supplement to Diez Macho's publication of Neofiti which neglected such an apparatus.

In contrast, Maher's volume has no apparatus, the translation is only of Pseudo-Jonathan, and the introduction deals with special features of Pseudo-Jonathan only, deferring the more complete coverage of the targum family to the Neofiti volume. On the other hand, the Pseudo-Jonathan translation has more extensive notes on rabbinic parallels than the Neofiti translation, and for this alone it provides an important supplement to the Neofiti volume.

More so than the Onqelos Targum to the Pentateuch, the Palestinian targums are rather expansive, containing a great deal of interpretation, explanation, expanded narrative, and other added material. However, the Palestinian targums are type-A targums, in which the translation of the Hebrew text is usually separable from the expansion. The Aramaic Bible series emphasizes this separability. A special feature of these two volumes is that the material directly corresponding to the Hebrew text is in roman type and the expansion material is in italics.

The introductions to the two volumes are well prepared and informative, written on a level accessible to most students. The authors discuss available texts (one manuscript each for Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan), text history, the nature of the targums, the special features of the Palestinian targums and possible dates for the present form of the available targums. Occasionally the arguments seem thin, however. McNamara cannot hide the paucity of evidence for the transmission history of the Palestinian targums, and his discussion on pp. 44-45 merely displays our ignorance. Also the argument linking these targums with Jerome (45) is curious. The targums were translations of Hebrew texts into Aramaic. Jerome, however, studied Hebrew and never learned Aramaic, and thus he had to rely on another translator to help him with Tobit and the Aramaic passages of Daniel and Ezra. Any similarity between the interpretations of Jerome and the targums must have been due to Jerome's interaction with the local Jewish community rather than any direct reading of the targums available in his day.

The Palestinian targums are of questionable value as parallel material for New Testament interpretation. Targums were produced since the Hasmonean period and were represented among the finds at Qumran. Some targumic material may go back to the time of Ezra. However, the Palestinian targums underwent continuous revision into the medieval period, and no expansions may be dated with certainty before A.D. 400. At best these targums may supplement writings which can be dated to the first century such as Josephus, Philo, and the Qumran scrolls. The New Testament scholar may find these targums tantalizing but ultimately disappointing as aids for understanding the first-century background of the New Testament. On the other hand, these targums provide a wealth of information about how the language and narrative content of Genesis was understood by Jewish scholars of late antiquity and the medieval period. Also the targums open a window on the history of rabbinic exegesis and the evolution of popular Jewish faith and practice.

The price of these two volumes is a major drawback to their usefulness, and indeed this is a problem with most volumes in The Aramaic Bible series. The cost is out of the reach of students and most scholars who do not specialize in targum research. Those scholars who do specialize in targums presumably do

not need the translations, though they may find the footnotes helpful as a reference commentary. It seems the primary market for these volumes would be libraries where the student and interested nonspecialist could gain ready access to this excellent resource on biblical translation and interpretation.

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Michael, J. Ramsey. *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. Guides to New Testament Exegesis, vol. 7. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. 150 pp. \$9.99.

Interpreting the Book of Revelation is another addition to the excellent Guides to New Testament Exegesis series edited by Scot McKnight and designed to provide interpretive handbooks for each of the genres of the NT. The author attempts to follow in the tradition established by the three previously published volumes of the series. This is a great challenge, due to the nature of the Book of Revelation.

Michael, however, seems equal to the challenge, despite his assessment that Revelation is a mixed genre defying description. It has characteristics of letter, apocalypse, and classic prophecy. Yet, if it is a letter, it is unlike any other extant early Christian letter; if it is an apocalypse, it is like no other apocalypse; if it is a prophecy, it is unique among prophecies (31-32). Michael prefers to see it as a letter which contains a narrative, or story line. But he finds this somewhat inadequate, arguing, more precisely, for either prophetic letter, based on its long title, or apocalyptic letter, based on its content (31). At the same time, he doubts "how crucial the determination of genre is for the interpretation of specific passages" (32). He maintains that "the judgment that it is a letter, an apocalypse, or a prophecy will not take the student very far. The form of a specific passage under discussion is at least as important to the interpretive task as the genre of the entire book" (33).

If the reader did not figure it out by reading the table of contents, it becomes apparent already in the introduction that Michael is a proponent of narrative analysis, an "inside" approach to the text which he favors over "the so-called 'historical-critical method'" (16). Although he admits that the book must also be "interpreted 'from the outside' in light of what can be known of the times in which it was written and the traditions then alive" (18), he subsequently argues that "the student who wants to interpret Revelation probably will have to live with a considerable degree of uncertainty about its date and historical setting" (46). While he believes it is important for students to "familiarize themselves with the historical and social setting of the Book of Revelation in the late first century," he holds that "this setting is known to us only generally." Consequently, "if a precise historical setting is the 'key' to understanding Revelation, then understanding will elude us" (50).

One notable thing about this volume is the spirit of openness Michael displays toward alternative understandings of the Book of Revelation. He displays a healthy lack of dogmatism about his own suggested solutions to the