

enjoyable to read, make getting to the point a circuitous affair. In addition, occasional parts read like a collection of notes and comments instead of a coherent narrative or argument. Chapter 8, entitled "More Biological Questions," is a clear example of this. Other chapters contain sections of material previously published by Roth. Regular readers of the journal *Origins* (not to be confused with this book) will recognize in Roth's work many of the thoughts expressed when he served as editor of the journal. A section entitled "Life in the Deep Rocks," which readers of the journal *Origins* will instantly recognize, illustrates the use of previously published material. This is not necessarily unfortunate, as this book takes many of Roth's previous thoughts and places them in a much more comprehensive framework than when they were initially published.

Modern geology has served up many of the greatest challenges to biblical creationism, and it is in this area that Roth's expertise is most evident. It is refreshing to read the interpretation of an ancient-earth skeptic. As long as readers are willing to entertain rapid formation of the geological column as a possibility, they will enjoy Roth's thoughts on swift deposition of geological strata by a recent global flood. Those committed to accumulation of the geological column over long ages will find much of what is written exasperating.

One of the great positives of *Origins* is the extensive documentation provided in endnotes following each chapter. The wealth of bibliographic references and the glossary of technical terms following the last chapter make *Origins* a valuable resource for both novices and those already familiar with creationist arguments.

The extensive endnotes do make one wonder about the intended audience of *Origins*. In fact, many readers may find themselves wondering whether the book is supposed to be a textbook or a book for professional scientists and theologians, a book for general readers, or a reference book. All those endnotes may cause some to think it is a reference work or technical publication, but the use of language and illustrations makes it accessible to a general audience. *Origins* is a very difficult book to categorize. It is probably best described as a book recording the thoughts of someone who has paid his dues as a professional scientist studying questions surrounding the origin of life and who has chosen to place his faith in the literal interpretation of Scripture.

It is unfortunate that so much emotion is expended on the positions taken by believers and unbelievers, as many will reject arguments made by Roth purely on the basis of prejudice. Anyone interested in the creation-evolution debate can profit from reading *Origins*. Others, equally committed to the creation model, may interpret the data differently, and evolutionists will have major objections to the interpretations offered, but Ariel Roth has, after thirty years at the epicenter of the creation-evolution debate, earned the right to have his perspective taken seriously.

Andrews University

TIM STANDISH

Sheeley, Steven M., and Robert N. Nash, Jr. *The Bible in English Translation: An Essential Guide*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. 116 pp. \$12.95.

Sheeley and Nash, both teachers at Shorter College in Georgia, have written this guide to help laypersons in selecting a Bible translation. The first two chapters, the first on the history of the canon and the English Bible, the second on textual criticism

and the philosophies of Bible translation, serve as background for the rest of the book. Chapter 3 deals with translations that follow the principle of what the authors call "verbal translation," translations that are conservative in seeking to make the translation into the target language as faithful as possible to the original language. Chapter 3 also deals with "Dynamic Translations and Paraphrases." The final chapter gives suggestions in selecting and using translations.

The authors have sought to do the impossible in the first two chapters. A better plan might have been to expand or to eliminate these chapters and refer the readers to other sources. For example, under early translations, the authors list only the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and do not mention other ancient versions such as Old Latin, Coptic, Old Syriac, etc. It is misleading to say simply that Coverdale's translation was from the Latin Vulgate and Luther's German Bible and that William Whittingham translated the Geneva Bible alone. In dealing with the dates of the biblical books the authors' orientation is a liberal one, both in the OT and the NT. They place the Pastoral Epistles, the General Epistles, and Hebrews "late in the first century or early in the second century A.D." (150).

The treatment of textual criticism in the book is too superficial to be of benefit. More should have been said, especially about the value of the majority texts and the *textus receptus* versus the fewer, but more important, early manuscripts of the Bible. This would help to explain why there are differences between the KJV and later translations of the Bible. An obvious error appears when the authors date the Masoretes before the time of the NT!

It is difficult to see why the New English Bible is placed among the verbal translations (26). The authors indicate that "a paraphrase is intended only to update another modern language version" (28). While this is generally true, some paraphrases would contend that they are following the original languages. Wuest's translations are paraphrases, but "based" on the Greek. While the Amplified Bible is a type of paraphrase, however, it does have its sources in the original. Eugene Peterson seems to indicate his paraphrase is from the Greek. Therefore, evidence indicates that it is a bit of an oversimplification to say that a paraphrase is based on an English version.

Too much is made in criticism of the RSV's use of "you" for singular and plural. After all, this is the nature of the English language and other options would have been worse (thee and you, for instance). Also, it seems contradictory to say that the NASB used the best Hebrew and Greek texts available in one paragraph and then, in the next, say that it "refused to abandon traditional readings in the light of obvious textual evidence that supports a different reading" (39). While the authors have written clearly, their facts are not always accurate. Another discrepancy is the statement that the plural of *biblion* is given as *biblios* (12).

The treatment of the different versions, while brief and somewhat superficial, is probably adequate for the book's purpose. The final chapter in the book is the most beneficial because it states the *raison d'être* of the book. Sheeley and Nash have provided a helpful laypersons' guide for selecting a translation, but unfortunately in trying to be brief they have made misleading statements and several errors, which have made the book less useful.