

GREEK WORDS AND HEBREW MEANINGS: STUDIES IN THE SEMANTICS OF SOTERIOLOGICAL TERMS, by David Hill. *Cambridge University Press*. 1967. 333 pp. 60s.

This book has a kernel and a husk. The kernel is a series of New Testament word-studies, which, following a familiar pattern, survey in turn the Old Testament words and the various stages of Greek usage (classical, LXX, intertestamental and New Testament). As the title suggests, the general thesis is that the New Testament usage is dominated by the Hebrew meanings; the major channel for this influence was the LXX (p. 14). The husk which surrounds this core is an introduction and conclusion, which discuss the place of language in biblical study, defend the word-study method, and undertake an appraisal and criticism of the reviewer's *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. In general, Dr Hill holds that some of my criticisms of the Kittel dictionary were justified, but that if some necessary corrections are made, and if caution is shown, the Kittel approach can be vindicated; his core section is a demonstration of what this improved Kittel would be like.

His New Testament scholarship in itself is competent and careful, rather than brilliant or original. From a purely scholarly point of view, and independently of the questions of theory which divide us, I find his LXX scholarship defective. He does not ask the right questions to penetrate the operations of the translators, and thus in the end he leaves it quite vague just *how* the Hebrew meanings came to be attached to the Greek words. As a result he oscillates badly between an over-confidence that the sense of the Hebrew has transferred itself correctly to the Greek and an occasional critical perception that quite the reverse has in fact taken place. He accepts, without any real evidence or any discussion of the difficulties, the opinion that LXX idiom derives not from translation technique but from a Jewish Greek (Vernacular (p. 17)—a view which I would consider, once its terms were properly analysed, to be very unlikely. He is less sensitive than was Kittel

itself to the possibilities of failure to grasp the Hebrew meaning on the part of the LXX. His own theoretical emphasis on a psychological penetration into the mental processes is not carried through, indeed is not in practice attempted.

And this is the chief weakness of Dr Hill's book, namely the repeated conflict between the biblical scholarship of the core section and the theoretical discussion of the introduction and conclusion. They appear to be frequently independent of one another, if not actually in contradiction. If I had read his biblical scholarship alone, I would not have guessed that it either presupposed or produced any arguments against my position. His detailed scholarly results are not fed back into his general linguistic viewpoint. For instance, he argues against me that I minimize the difficulty of translating, but his whole central section implies that translation was in fact successfully accomplished, and that by a rather mediocre lot such as the LXX were. Again, one welcomes the fact that he has read some relevant works in general linguistics; but he has sometimes misunderstood their meaning, and in any case it has had no visible effect on the procedures of his biblical scholarship, which follows exactly the same paths as were normal in British Protestant biblical scholarship before the question arose. He cites with approval (p. 9) the 'semantic field' approach as part of a criticism of my own approach, but goes less far towards putting it into practice than I myself have done. The book could well be quoted as a self-indictment of Protestant scholarship for failure to integrate theory and practice.

Concerning the understanding of language in a more general sense, Dr Hill's arguments against my position are courteous and temperate, and they represent a reaction which I have received from a number of others, so that I do not doubt I have some responsibility for its existence. Yet his descriptions of my

position are often wild and represent interpretations against which I had guarded myself quite explicitly, and on the whole I feel myself to have been little touched by his attack, much less refuted; indeed, it hardly even suggests to me that my position has to be rethought, which for me would be an advantage. Sometimes he seems to understand poorly the theological background of my book; for instance, he is disturbed by my suspicion of idealism, and appears not to realize that this was no peculiar idea of my own but was largely shared by both sides in the 'biblical theology' movement. As for his own approach, though he calls it an idealist one, it strikes me rather as a generally empirical one which is not rigorously or analytically so, and which (again characteristically of British Protestant biblical scholarship), rather than follow out the lines of his own empiricism, tends to escape prematurely into a world of ideas. As I see his line of thinking, he wants to say that there is

not only a linguistic level but also other levels, and this is entirely justifiable; but, instead of pursuing the study of linguistic level to its end, he prematurely brings in the other levels, not seeing that they do not work in the same way or have the same function, and cannot be used to *replace* the analysis of the linguistic level.

The idea that a theological structure or pattern can be read off from a survey of the lexical stock, which idea was the main focus of my own previous criticisms of Kittel and other such works, seems to me to have been tacitly abandoned by Dr Hill. His word-studies are disparate, so that one or another could be added or subtracted; the sum of them provides no unified soteriology. Word-studies, even when thus improved, seem after all to furnish no map of the theological world.

I hope to discuss the issues raised by this book at greater length in the pages of *Biblica*.

JAMES BARR

THE INSPIRED WORD, Scripture in the light of language and literature, by Luis Alonso Schökel, translated from the Spanish by Francis Martin. *Burns and Oates, London, 1967.* 418 pp. 63s.

Fr Schökel, S.J., now professor of Old Testament exegesis at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, rose to fame in a notorious controversy in 1960. In that year he wrote a forward-looking article in *Civiltà Cattolica* asking 'Where is Catholic exegesis headed?' It produced a wail of indignation from Msgr Antonino Romeo who denounced Fr Schökel, among others, by name for his views on inspiration and much else besides. Time and sweet reason have consigned Romeo's outburst to the museum of literary curiosities. Instead, chapter 3 of the Council's dogmatic constitution *De Divina Revelatione*, and the eminently sane writings of Levie and Grelot, have insured that inspiration can be now discussed in an adult manner.

Fr Schökel's special concern in this book is with the literary aspect of inspiration. For the Bible, he says, being a written book, 'must be read as an integral literary work embodying all the functions of language' (p. 137). The first concern is with the inspired author and the way he uses language and the extent to which he is inspired in it. Schökel insists that the 'literary work' of a biblical author 'in all its dimensions is an inspired message' (p. 198). That is to say the very technique and literary style are 'elaborated under the influence of the Holy Spirit'. But this is not all. For it is

not the authors who are presented to us in the canon of scripture but their works (p. 256). In many cases the books as we now have them were redacted by somebody other than the original author, or transmitted in a community over a long period, or translated into another language. Inspiration is preserved in this gradual formation and tradition by what Schökel calls the 'energetic power' of the word. He goes on to show how God himself has endowed his word with a saving power (p. 357) which persists throughout the Bible and is effective now in the Church's liturgy.

It will be seen that Fr Schökel covers a lot of ground. He admits frankly at the outset that he has sought 'in these reflections to achieve breadth rather than depth' (p. 14). Inevitably therefore some areas have to be covered somewhat thinly. But he avoids fatuous generalities by studying concrete examples of inspired writing in detail. To do this he goes outside the confines of the Bible itself: for the literary problems that preoccupy him are common to all creative writing. So that if Hosea is a great poet (p. 188) then he can only be understood like other great poets who have the same 'unifying intuition' (p. 186) like Keats, Calderon or Valéry. Similarly Jeremiah 1, 11ff., can be compared in its creative process and intuition with the poems