

tion. How it says what it says may confuse the intention of what is to be said.

There are here many things to stimulate, and some to frustrate. But one must not expect more than the author intends. What we are here given is a method, by which a model (*i.e.*, the idea of a model) may be applied to the given materials of Christological history. But hints for construction might follow clarification.

The following errata were noted: "scriptures" for scriptures (p. 42, l. 37), "which is the model is" for "which the model is" (p. 57, l. 12), "protects" for "projects" (p. 106, l. 21).

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EDWARD W. H. VICK

Strand, Kenneth A., *German Bibles Before Luther: The Story of 14 High-German Editions*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966. 64 pp. \$ 4.00.

The author of this fascinating volume wrote his doctoral dissertation on the translation of the New Testament into Low German by the Brethren of the Common Life at Rostock. He later presented a detailed account in his book entitled, *A Reformation Paradox: The Condemned New Testament of the Rostock Brethren of the Common Life* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1960). Moreover, in his next book, *Reformation Bibles in the Crossfire* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ann Arbor Publishers, 1961), he added further information in a chapter devoted exclusively to this subject. These contributions may be considered as preludes to the work reviewed here.

Once more the writer refers to the remarkable treatise by Gerard Zerbolt of Zutphen entitled, *De Libris Teutonicalibus*, in which the reader is advised that it is permissible to make proper use of the Bible in his own vernacular. Zerbolt's production was not considered as a safe guide for laymen, for which reason only one copy has survived. That being the case, we must not be surprised to find even today all sorts of persons in high positions who either strongly condemn or highly favor the reading of sacred writings by ordinary laymen. At the same time we must look forward to reading reviews of the latest book by Strand that will go to an extreme in accusing him of having misrepresented certain facts and opinions. The old controversy has not yet yielded to a demand for enlightened interpretation of the historical developments.

Particularly valuable is Chapter IV, which is devoted to the use of the Bible in the Middle Ages. The author asks an important question here, and he indicates that he has long been aware of two widespread attitudes on the part of both Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars. On the one hand we wonder if the publishers of the translated Bibles were good Catholics, and on the other hand we must reckon with those Protestants who imagine that Luther was unique in his work as a

translator of the Bible into his own vernacular. On p. 33 Strand refers to an astonishing remark in Luther's *Table Talks*: "Thirty years ago no one read the Bible." A similar statement by the same Professor Luther has caused enormous misunderstanding: "Under the papacy, the Bible was unknown by the people." As a direct result, says Strand correctly, "there was a time when relatively little attention was devoted to the medieval German Bible, especially among Protestant scholars." It certainly is high time that the general public becomes properly educated in this field of study, and it is for this reason in particular that Strand's impartial discussion can dispel unwanted delusions. Luther's *Table Talks* were, of course, written for the most part by his students who often were careless in reporting what he actually did say.

The whole book is beautiful and meticulously precise. All of the fourteen Bibles have been carefully traced and their manuscript sources properly described. The latest findings by outstanding authorities have been utilized. Especially valuable are the illustrations and also the references to work done by the artists who took great pains to make their books attractive to discriminating students of the Christian religion. On page 61 there is unfortunately a printing error in the omission of the plate number and description, but Strand's complete list of plates on page 42 provides us with the information that this is Plate XVIII and that it shows a page from the American Bible Society Library copy of the First Schönsperger Bible.

It was Martin Luther who shaped for the German people of today their language, which is neither High German nor Low German, but that of the Chancery of Saxony, about half-way between North and South, and between East and West. In this manner he destroyed the Low German language, which at the end of the Middle Ages was still the official organ for such famous cities as Cologne, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, and Magdeburg. The fact that Luther used those Bibles accessible to him makes Strand's book a guide for numerous students in our universities and theological seminaries.

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ALBERT HYMA

Thiele, Edwin R., *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings: A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah*. Revised edition. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965. xxvi + 232 pp. with numerous charts. \$ 6.00.

E. R. Thiele's book really needs neither an introduction nor a recommendation. His scheme of the chronologies of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah has been well known ever since its first publication as an article in *JNES*, III (1944), 137-186. This work was later expanded into book form and published by the University of