

Book Reviews

The Authentic New Testament, by Hugh J. Schonfield. New York: Mentor Books, 1948; pp. xlviii, 478. 50 cents.

In response to requests from readers, several modern translations of the New Testament into English will be reviewed in this and other issues of *The Bible Translator*, with particular reference to the needs of translators.

The paper-back edition of Schonfield's translation of the New Testament (upon which this review is based) is generally equivalent to the original hard-cover edition published in 1955 by Dennis Dobson, Ltd., of London, an expensive edition of 3500 numbered copies printed for subscribers. We certainly can be grateful to the editors of Mentor Books for making this translation available at such moderate cost.

Dr. Schonfield is well known for his writings in the field of the New Testament, and states that he appears to be the first Jew to translate the New Testament into English (p. ix, footnote). An introduction covering the first century of Christianity, the Palestinian background, and the present text and translation (pp. xv-xlviii), prepares the reader for Dr. Schonfield's work. Maps and illustrations further enhance the usefulness of the translation.

The first thing to cause comment is the selection of the title. What does "Authentic" mean here? The author himself (in a special note in the paper-back edition) answers the question by stating that in no way does "authentic" mean to imply that other translations are somehow not genuine (p. xi). "The term 'authentic' relates to the quality of the New Testament itself, as it may be read in the Greek, its accurate reflection of the atmosphere of the period in which the documents were written." He further adds that he did not want his translation to be known as "Schonfield's New Testament." With considerable vigor and freedom he aims to break away from ecclesiastical and theological terminology: "What we have been accustomed to reading is a largely idealized interpretation created by the various schools of Christian faith and piety" (p. ix). So he justifies his own method: "To reveal the authentic New Testament a certain abandon and lack of refinement is imperative" (p. viii).

The first indication of his independence is the lack of chapter and verse divisions in the text; a "Table for Comparison" (pp. xlv-xlviii, but only in the paper-back edition), however, enables the reader to locate the text according to chapter and verse. The order of the books does not conform to the order normally found in the New Testament. Schonfield's arrangement is as follows: Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts; Letters of Paul (in two series); Hebrews, 1 Peter, James, Jude, 2 Peter, John, 1, 2, 3 John, Revelation. Titles for the books are imaginative and striking: the writings of Luke are entitled "A History of Christian Beginnings," subdivided into "Part I, How the Good News Came to Israel" and "Part II, How the Good News Came to the Gentiles." Matthew is "The Maxims of the Master," Mark is "The Recollections of Peter," and John is "The Discourses of the Logos."

Another evidence of his independence from ecclesiastical tradition is his free hand at arranging the text. Paul's letters to the Corinthians, for example, are arranged into four: (1) two excerpts, 1 Cor. 9:1-10:22 and 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; (2) 1 Corinthians (except 9:1-10:22); (3) 2 Cor. 10-13; (4) 2 Cor. 1-9 (except 6:14-7:1). The Gospel of John is also freely rearranged: chapter 6 is placed before chapter 5, and at the end of chapter 5 the text continues, 7:19-24, 7:1-18, 7:25-30, 8:12-20, 7:31-32, 7:37-52, (8:1-11), 8:31-59 (pp. 396-406). Further on in the same book the order is as follows: 12:1-33, 7:33-36, 8:21-25a, 8:28-29, 12:34, 8:25b-27, 8:30, 12:44-50, 12:35-43, 13:1 sqq. Some of the transpositions commend themselves as justifiable; others, however, seem to be the result of mere caprice.

With regard to text, Schonfield is willing to depart from the critical Greek text and adopt a versional reading and, occasionally, a conjecture, in the interests of greater intelligibility. In Lk. 1:46 (p. 143) he omits 'Mary' as a later addition; in Gal. 4:26 (p. 262) he adds 'Sarah' at the end of the verse; in Acts 2:9 (p. 195) for 'Judea' he reads 'Edessa', justifying the substitution on the basis of a presumed misreading of the "underlying Semitic source" (other conjectures at this point are listed in the critical apparatus to Nestle's text). In Jn. 19:29 (p. 425) for *hussôpô* 'hyssop' he reads *hussô* 'spike' (on this cf. Kilpatrick, *The Bible Translator* Vol. 9, No. 3 (July 1958), pp. 133-34); in Jn. 4:5 (p. 394) instead of the Greek *Suchar* 'Sychar' he adopts 'Shechem', attested to by the Sinaitic Syrian Version; in Mat. 1:16 (p. 88) he follows the Sinaitic Syriac reading 'Joseph... who begot Jesus'; in Mat. 1:21 (p. 89) he follows the Sinaitic and Curetonian Syriac, 'She will bear you a son...'; in Lk. 23:48 (p. 188) he preserves the addition found in one Old Latin ms. and partly in the Curetonian Syriac, 'saying, "Woe to us! What has been done to-day? Woe for our sins, for the desolation of Jerusalem has drawn near."'.

In six passages in the Gospel of Matthew Schonfield departs from the Greek text to adopt readings found in an old Hebrew version of the Gospel, called *Du Tillet*. Schonfield himself issued a translation and an evaluation of this manuscript in his book *An Old Hebrew Text of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927). He called it the "oldest and most complete Hebrew version of any part of the New Testament at present known" (p. 13), and conjectured that perhaps this is "a descendant of the lost original of Matthew's Gospel" (p. 17). The readings of this Hebrew version are adopted in Mat. 1:13 (p. 88), 7:1 (p. 96), 8:20 (p. 99), 11:23 (p. 104), 19:7 (p. 118) and 28:9 (p. 137).

The explanatory footnotes throughout are generally extremely helpful in the added information they supply to clarify the meaning of the text. Some, however, are highly conjectural and hardly commend themselves. On p. 221 note 113 suggests that 'a man of Macedon' who appeared in Paul's night vision (Acts 16:9) was perhaps some definite person, "the most probable being the famous Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, known as 'the Man of Macedon' (Horace, Bk. III, Ode 16)." Footnote 42 on p. 399 suggests that 'Simon Iscariot' in Jn. 6:1 is "perhaps the same as Simon the Zealot (Kananean), listed as one of the twelve envoys."

The translation as a whole is vivid and forceful: in adhering to his purpose to depart from ecclesiastical and theological tradition, Schonfield deliberately rejects terms and phrases consecrated by Christian usage and employs words which carry force and depth ordinarily lacking. Consider the translation of Mk. 8:34-38 (p. 66):

Then he summoned the crowd as well as his disciples and said to them, 'Whoever will follow me must be utterly reckless and ready for execution in joining me; for whoever would preserve his life will lose it, while he who loses his life for me and the News will preserve it. How will it benefit a man to gain the whole world if his life is forfeited? What can a man offer in barter for his life? Whoever, therefore, is disdainful of me and of my words in this adulterous and reprobate generation will find the Son of Man disdainful of him when he comes in his Father's state with the holy angels.'

Acts 17:18 reads: "What is this garbage-picker driving at?" (p. 225). The difficult *hupage opisô mou, satana* in Mk. 8:33 Schonfield translates, "Follow me, *satan!*" (p. 66); in the parallel Mat. 16:23, however, he adopts the more conventional "Get behind me, *satan!*" (p. 114). In Jn. 11:53 "So that day they decided to kill him" (p. 411) is far superior for directness and thrust even to the RSV ("So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death").

At times his rejection of conventional terminology is less happy in its effect. His translation of Rom. 8:28-30 reads (p. 306):

We know further, that for those who love God, for those called in accordance with his purpose, God makes everything turn out for the best. For, those he had in view, he also planned in advance that they should come to resemble his Son, that thus he might be the eldest of many brothers. And those he purposed in advance he duly called, and those he called he duly exonerated, and those he exonerated he will duly ennoble.

His use of the verb 'to squat' in Mk. 6:40 (p. 62) and Mat. 11:16 (p. 104) is hardly to be recommended. Lack of concordance appears in his relegating Mk. 13:32 to the bottom of the page, as the author's comment (p. 77) while the parallel in Mat. 24:36 remains in the body of the text as a saying of Jesus (p. 128).

A surprising inconsistency is seen in the translation of the 'sixth hour' in Jn. 19:14 as "six o'clock in the morning" (p. 424), with the following explanatory footnote: "Lit. 'the sixth hour' (Roman reckoning) corresponding to the first hour (Jewish reckoning)." Yet the other references to the hour of the day in the Gospel of John are correctly translated according to the contemporary reckoning: Jn. 1:39 the 'tenth hour' is four o'clock (p. 391); Jn. 4:6 the 'sixth hour' is midday (p. 394); Jn. 4:52 the 'seventh hour' is one o'clock (p. 396). Not yet has the ghost of the "Roman hour" been laid to rest. Not even Augustine, in *De consensu evangelistarum* (Book III, xiii), tried to harmonize the discrepancy between the time notes in Mk. 15:25 and in Jn. 19:14 on the basis of "Roman time" versus "Jewish time" (he explained it that "the Lord Jesus was crucified at once at the third hour by the voice of the Jews, and at the sixth hour by the hands of the soldiers").

There are occasional typographical errors and there are several mistakes in the page numbers in the "Index of References."

In all Dr. Schonfield's vigorous rendition of the New Testament Greek is impressive and striking. His work is to be recommended to translators, not as a model to be copied, but as an outstanding example of freedom in rendition to be praised in putting the words of the New Testament into the words of today.

This reviewer must confess, however, that despite the author's explanation, he still does not like the sound of that word "Authentic."

Robert G. Bratcher

The Amplified New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. (Copyright 1958 by the Lockman Foundation, La Habra, California.) 989 pp. \$3.95.

This translation, sponsored by the Lockman Foundation of California, has been made by Frances E. Siewert, B.Lit., B.D., M.A. The stated reason for this new English translation is that in ordinary translations the different shadings of meaning present in the Greek are lost, since the translators have to select one out of many possible choices. "Thus they omitted the delicate shadings of meaning contained in the other possible choices, losing these shadings through translation and depriving today's readers of much that would otherwise clarify and enrich the Word" (inside front dust jacket). By listing the various choices of meaning allowed by the Greek text, this translation claims that "the original and hidden meanings of every key word in the New Testament become the property of every Christian."

Following important words there are listed several other possible meanings as given by standard Greek lexicons and commentaries, and even, in some cases, by Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary* (cf. Mat. 6:12, 15, Acts 10:35, Eph. 6:33). So the verb "to follow" is expanded in Mk. 1:18: "And at once they left their nets and yielding up all claim to them followed (with) Him—joining Him as disciples and siding with his party" (cf. also 1:20, 2:14). In Mk. 1:4 "repentance" and "forgiveness" are expanded: "John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness (desert), preaching a baptism (obligating) repentance—(that is) a change of one's mind for the better and heartily to amend one's ways with abhorrence of his past sins—in order to obtain forgiveness of *and* release from sins." In Mk. 1:15 the verb "repent" is further amplified: "have a change of mind which issues in regret for past sins and in change of conduct for the better." The adjective *makarios* 'blessed' in Mat. 5:3 reads: "Blessed—happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous (that is, with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) . . ." In 2 Peter 1:2 "peace" is expanded by quotations from Matthew Henry and Webster: "May grace (God's favor) and peace (which is perfect well-being, all necessary good, all spiritual prosperity and freedom from fears and agitating passions and moral conflicts) be multiplied to you . . ." In Mk. 6:3 "and they took offense at Him" is further explained: "*and* were hurt (that is, they disapproved of Him and it hindered them from acknowledging His authority); *and* they were caused to stumble and fall." In Gal. 2:9 "And