

Book Reviews

A Companion to the Bible, by J.-J. Von Allmen, ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958. 479 pp.

A Companion to the Bible is the translation into English by P. J. Allcock and others of the second edition of *Vocabulaire Biblique* (Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1956). The English edition of the book, published by Lutterworth, appears under the title *Vocabulary of the Bible*. One wonders why the American edition did not avail itself of the same title, particularly in light of the existence of the very useful *A Companion to the Bible* edited by T. W. Manson and published by T. & T. Clark in 1946.

The book consists of eighty-nine articles written by thirty-six French scholars and edited by J.-J. Von Allmen, Professor in the Theological Faculty of the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland. The articles study the Biblical meaning and use of major words, doctrines, events, persons, and places. Where necessary, an article is written in two sections, by two different men, one of which deals with the Old Testament and the other with the New Testament. There are abundant quotations of passages and a complete index at the end of the book.

Inevitably the book invites comparison with the similar *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* edited by Alan Richardson. In many instances the two run parallel courses, and their treatment of a given word will be similar. *A Companion to the Bible* is more extensive, however, and deals with subjects not covered by Richardson's book. An example of this is to be seen in the ten-page article on Jesus by P. Bonnard, in which the major names and titles used of Jesus in the New Testament are studied; the article in Richardson's book takes up only half a column. An article on Paul covers three pages in Von Allmen's book; there is no article on Paul in Richardson's.

It might be said that the two titles are fairly indicative of the specific emphasis of each book, theological as contrasted with the Biblical. This, of course, is not to say that the "Biblical" studies are any less theologically orientated than the "theological" studies.

The articles in *Companion*, unlike those in *Word Book*, contain no references to other works, nor do they have a bibliography at the end. This, however, in no way detracts from the worth of the study and exposition of the different subjects.

The work will prove of immense value to the English-reading Bible student as it already has proven its worth in French. It will also benefit the Bible translator who wishes to get a comprehensive view of a particular Bible word before translating it in any specific passage. What is still needed, however, is a word book of the Bible written with the specific needs of the translator in mind.

Robert G. Bratcher

The Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, by Alfred Marshall. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited. 1958. xvii, 1027 pp. 42s.

Samuel Bagster and Sons have issued another volume in their series of Biblical handbooks, a revised edition of their interlinear Greek-

English New Testament. The Greek text is that of the twenty-first edition of Erwin Nestle (1952), the literal English translation is by the Reverend Alfred Marshall, D. Litt., and the King James version is printed in the margin. The author's introduction (pp. v-xvii) explains the various devices used throughout the work to make the sense of the English more intelligible to the reader.

A work such as this has value for the student and the translator if used with a proper regard for what it is and for what it is not. By the very nature of the case it is not and does not claim to be a *translation* of the Greek text into English, since translation implies that the meaning conveyed by words in one language is transferred to another language in accordance with the normal grammar and syntax of the receptor language. No one speaking or writing English would ever say, for example, "Not by way of command I say, but through the of others diligence also the of your love reality proving" (2 Cor. 8:8), or "And they gave heed to him because of the for a considerable time by the sorceries to have astonished them" (Acts 8:11). So J. B. Phillips remarks in his Foreword: "It need hardly be said that this giving of verbal equivalents is not a full translation, but it is an essential stage in that process" (p. ii). What we have, therefore, is not properly a "literal translation" of the Greek but an English word-for-word equivalent of the Greek text, following the word order of the original. As such it may occasionally result in a mistranslation, as happens, for example, in Jn. 1:1c, "...and God was the Word." Very properly Dr. Marshall appends a note pointing out that the meaning of the Greek is "the Word was God."

On the whole, the translation is accurate and often illuminating. Phillips calls attention to Mat. 16:19 (and 18:18) where the periphrastic future perfect passive phrase has been accurately reproduced in English, the resultant sense being quite different from that ordinarily found in translations.

Objections could be raised at some points: the translation of *zēmiôthēnai* in Mk. 7:37 by "to be fined"; the disregard of the exact force of the masculine participle *katharizôn* in Mk. 7:19; the translation of the aorist *eudokēsa* in Mk. 1:11, Mat. 3:17, Lk. 3:22 by "I was well pleased." In Mk. 10:11 Dr. Marshall adopts the suggestion made by Nigel Turner (*The Bible Translator*, October 1956) to the effect that *moichatai ep' autēn* means "he commits adultery with her," i.e. the woman whom he marries. It should be noticed, however, that Mark never uses the preposition *epi*, followed by the accusative, with the meaning "with"; often, however, it means "against" (cf. Mk. 3:24, 25, 26, 13:8, 12, 14:48). It would appear, therefore, that the majority of commentators and translations are correct in translating "he commits adultery against her," i.e. the woman whom he divorced (cf. in particular Lagrange's commentary, and Arndt and Gingrich *Lexicon, epi* III.1.b.ε).

In a footnote on Acts 1:21-22 Dr. Marshall says that the object of the verb *dei* is *hena*, with *martura* as its complement after *genesthai*. It would seem more in accord with Greek usage to say that the whole *genesthai* phrase is the subject of *dei* ("to become . . . is necessary"),

with the accusative *hena* as the subject of the infinitive (which some grammarians call "the accusative of general reference") and *martura* the accusative predicate (agreeing with *hena*).

These observations are not meant to derogate from the true worth of this work. It is a useful tool to the translator and to the student, so long as its limits are recognized. As a "pony" or "crutch" it will hardly carry the student very far in mastering the Greek New Testament; as a "transitional stage," however (as Phillips calls it), the book can serve the translator in the process of properly translating the New Testament.

Robert G. Bratcher

TWO BOOKS ON BIBLE BOTANY

Plants of the Bible, by Harold N. Moldenke and Alma L. Moldenke (Waltham, Mass.: The Chronica Botanica Co., 1952); *All the Plants of the Bible*, by Winifred Walker (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957).

One of the notable features of the Bible is the number of references to a large variety of plants and their products which abound in it. This is particularly true of the Pentateuch, of the Old Testament poetic and prophetic literature, and of the New Testament Gospels. From the fateful tree in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:8, 16) to the ever-fruitful tree of life in the eternal Paradise (Rev. 22:2), the list is a long one. It runs the gamut from the lowly fungi and mold plants to the stately palm and spreading terebinth, "from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall" (1 Kgs. 6:33).

This abundance of botanical references cannot fail to be a source of embarrassment to the conscientious translator, inasmuch as (1) the flora of the Near East is not completely duplicated in any other area of the world, and (2) so many of these botanical items form the basis of metaphors. As Ephraim Alphonse pointed out in these pages some years ago, for illustration, it would not do to translate John 15:4 literally for the Valientes of Panama, since the vines which they know are not grape vines; hence a substitute metaphor must be used.¹

In order to produce an effective translation where such references occur, the exact character of the botanical referent of the Hebrew or Greek term must first be discovered, if at all possible. Then, if a literal translation is not possible or feasible, the translator is free to make necessary substitutions according to the exigencies of the situation. Unless, however, he has first ascertained as accurately as possible the referent for his term, he has not produced a faithful translation because it has not been based upon an informed decision.

This methodological demand is a third source of possible trouble, inasmuch as many plants of the Bible have been incorrectly identified

¹"The Translator's Struggles," TBT 2.3.112, 1951. It has struck this reviewer as odd how little has been said in TBT about the problems of translating botanical references and metaphors based on botanical items. Perhaps an article discussing how some of the problems have been met in practical situations would be in order.