

saw the Spirit descending. No translator has the right to change the accounts so as to make them conform to a pattern of thought foreign to the original documents themselves.

In Mat. 7:14 'straightened' should be 'straitened'. In Gal. 2:9 'of the Jerusalem church' is an interpretative addition which should be in brackets: the words are not part of the text. In Mat. 3:11 *eis metanoian* is translated 'because of repentance', with a footnote referring to Dana and Mantey's *Grammar*.

To conclude: notwithstanding the obvious amount of labor and dedication that went into this translation, and the translator's laudable purpose of making the New Testament read plainly and clearly for "everyman," it seems to this reviewer that the entire work is based on a wrong concept of the very nature and purpose of language and translation. Translation is always interpretation, and it is not on this score that we would fail to recommend the *Amplified New Testament*. It is not by the piling up of words, however, that meaning is conveyed. Some readers will find this translation helpful; in this reviewer's opinion, however, what it attempts to do has already been done—and much better—by a handful of modern English translations such as those of Weymouth, Moffatt, Montgomery, Goodspeed, the two Williams, and the Revised Standard Version.

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The New Testament in Modern English, by J. B. Phillips. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958; pp. xiv, 575. \$6.00.

The tremendous success of Phillips' translation of the New Testament was assured by the widespread acceptance gained by his translation of the New Testament Epistles, published in 1947. The freshness of his style, the aptness of his choice of words, and the easy flow of sentences all combine to make the reading of the New Testament a richly rewarding and often exciting experience. His mastery of modern vernacular English has laid all English-speaking peoples in his debt, and all translators are urged to become well acquainted with his work.

Principles of Translation

For the translator, Phillips' "Translator's Foreword" is especially interesting, since it is here that he summarizes his guiding principles. The three tests of a good translation, he says, are these: (1) the translation should not sound like a translation at all; (2) a translator should do his work with the least possible intrusion of his own personality; (3) the translation should produce in the hearts and minds of its readers an effect equivalent to that produced by the author upon his original readers. Phillips rightly rejects the implied censure in the charge that a translation which does not consist of word-for-word equivalence of the original is interpretation and not translation. Translation is always interpretation, and the translator's task is faithfully to interpret a text for readers who do not understand the original language. Phillips also deprecates what he calls "the bogey of consistency," as though mechanical consistency were a guarantee of faithfulness in translation. Words have no meaning except in the context of the communication of

ideas, and the precise meaning of a word is always determined by the context in which it is used.

Readers of this journal may recall the two articles in which Phillips discussed some of his principles of translation (cf. *The Bible Translator* Vol. 4, No. 2 (April 1953), pp. 52-59, and Vol. 6, No. 4 (October 1955), pp. 150-159). In these two articles and in the preface to his *Letters to Young Churches* Phillips has emphasized the fact that when necessary a translator should feel "free to expand or explain, while preserving the original meaning as nearly as can be ascertained." Of his own particular version of the New Testament Epistles, Phillips cautioned that "though every care must be taken to make the version accurate, the projected value of this version should lie in its 'easy-to-read' quality."

What Phillips has attempted to do has been to make the New Testament real and relevant to today's readers by the use of language which is, in every respect, the language of today, as used by educated people in their ordinary talking and writing. In this he has been eminently successful, and one could only wish that every translator had his gift for conveying the New Testament message in the words of today.

Modernizing the New Testament

This attempt, however, is beset by many perils, of which the translator soon becomes aware. The first—and second, and last—principle that must guide the translator is that he be faithful to the original. What does this involve? Certainly that the ideas communicated by the original, insofar as they are ascertainable from the text, be transmitted without any change whatsoever. The communication of those ideas, however, is inextricably bound up with the author's vocabulary and style, his cultural, social, and religious milieu, and the response his writing would evoke from his readers. If the style is rough, should it be smoothed out in translation? If the meaning is ambiguous, should it be made crystal clear? If the exact sense of the passage is obscure or even unascertainable, should the translation gloss this over? To all these questions, it appears, Phillips would answer with a resounding Yes: this is the translator's task and duty. For certainly Phillips has done all this in his translation, and done it remarkably well: any intelligent reader should certainly be able to understand the Phillips New Testament!

The translator's first duty, however, is to be faithful. "Some works, in translation, are better than the original, but they are *not* faithful" (cf. Brenno Silveira, as quoted in *The Bible Translator* Vol. 9, No. 2 (April 1958), pp. 84-89). Why does Phillips never explicitly state the translator's first duty? He would, no doubt, say that this is an axiom that can be taken for granted and need not be cited; nevertheless, one is left with the nagging uneasiness, at times, that fidelity to the original is not, in Phillips' concept, the translator's primary task. He seems to imply as much when he says that the minute study of the text may be somewhat irrelevant. It is to be doubted whether the New Testament writers were quite so artless in their choice of words as Phillips may imagine! Again this same impression is gained in his calling consistency

a "bogey." Sometimes it is, but it is no bogey to be faithful to the author in following him as closely as possible—consonant with faithfulness in meaning—in his use of words, particularly in the case of the books of the New Testament.

In his attempt to make the New Testament read as a contemporary work has not Phillips at times made it too up-to-date? Has he not at times overmodernized the language of the New Testament?

Should today's American reader, for example, get the impression that Mark wrote of a "nickel" (Mk. 12:42) and John of a "quarter" (Rev. 6:6)? The disciples speak of "ten dollars" (Mk. 6:37), and "thirty dollars" (Mk. 14:5).¹ Jesus refers to "ten dollars," and a "hundred dollars," and "fifty dollars" (Lk. 19:13, 16, 18). We read of the "shirt" Jesus wore (Jn. 19:23), of "shoes" and "shoe laces" (Mk. 1:7, Lk. 3:16). Jesus tells the people that they are to relinquish their "overcoat" to the man who might sue them for their "coat" (Mat. 5:40; in Lk. 6:29 the "bogey of consistency" is effectively routed as these two items of clothing become, respectively "coat" and "shirt").

In the same spirit the "holy kiss" becomes a "handshake," usually a "handshake all round" (Rom. 16:16, 1 Cor. 16:20, 2 Cor. 13:12, 1 Thes. 5:26, 1 Pet. 5:14).

These are minor matters and the translator can easily justify himself by presuming that the educated reader will, of course, know that first-century Jews did not use the American monetary system nor did they wear modern Western clothes, but that these terms are simply the modern equivalents of the originals. (While on the subject, it should be noted that the American reader will be misled by the "ears of corn" and the "cornfields" in Mk. 2:23, Lk. 6:1, Acts 7:12; he will be thoroughly confused by the disciples' picking "ears of wheat" in the "cornfields" in Mat. 12:1).

While this type of modernization might be admitted to be part of the translator's task, it would seem that this tendency has led Phillips to overstep his legitimate limits as a translator and change what, in the nature of the case, should not and can not be changed. In making the New Testament a contemporary book the translator runs the risk of uprooting it from its first-century Semitic context and divorcing it from its Hebrew Scriptures setting and its Early Church milieu. These factors, apart from which the New Testament cannot be understood, are the living context in which the words of the New Testament receive and communicate their meaning. A translation which fails to recognize this "situation-in-life" context runs the risk of changing the meaning of the text.

In the examples that follow, such distortions in meaning, we feel, have taken place. In Mat. 7:12 'for this is the law and the prophets' becomes "this is the essence of all true religion"; 'Gehenna' in Lk. 12:5 is "destruction," and 'son of Gehenna' in Mat. 23:15 is "ripe for destruction." The eschatological 'destruction' (*hê apôleia*) in Mat. 7:13 becomes "disaster." Several allusions to Satan are modernized: in Mat.

¹ In the British edition "halfpenny," "shilling," and "pound" are used where "nickel," "quarter," and "dollar" occur in the American edition.

5:37 'is from the evil one' (*ek tou ponêrou estin*) is rendered "has a taint of evil"; in Lk. 22:3 'Satan entered into Judas' is translated "a diabolical plan came into the mind of Judas"; 'I delivered to Satan' in 1 Tim. 1:20 reads "I had to expel from the Church" (yet cf. the same phrase in 1 Cor. 5:5). The forceful 'one of you is a devil' in Jn. 6:70 becomes "one of you has the devil in his heart." In Lk. 13:11 'having a spirit of weakness' is brought up to date with the words "ill from some psychological cause." In 1 Jn. 3:2 'when he is manifested we shall be like him' reads "if reality were to break through we should reflect his likeness."

The phrase 'in a vision' in Acts 9:10 and 10:3 is translated "in a dream," and in Acts 9:12 "in his mind's eye" (although in Acts 10:17, 19, 11:5, 12:9, 16:9, 10, 18:19 it is correctly translated "vision"). 'From the seed of David' (RSV "descended from David") in 2 Tim. 2:8 is rendered "of human ancestry." 'With the Holy Spirit and fire' in Mat. 3:11, Lk. 3:16 becomes "with the fire of the Holy Spirit." 'Your redemption is drawing near' in Lk. 21:28 reads "you will soon be free"; the parousiatic 'the Lord is near' in Phil. 4:5 becomes the mystical "never forget the nearness of your Lord"; 'in the day of visitation' in 1 Pet. 2:12 is translated "when disasters come."

The Semitic passives which are a circumlocution for the divine activity are applied to human agency in the saying in Lk. 6:37-38, so that a statement of God's retributive judgment becomes a prudential maxim on how to win friends and influence people: 'Forgive and you shall be forgiven' (by God on the Day of Judgment) is rendered "Make allowances for others and people will make allowances for you." The same divine activity in Mat. 6:33 is also nullified: 'shall be added to you' (by God) becomes "will come to you as a matter of course." In like manner 'Judge not, that you be not judged' in Mat. 7:1 reads "Don't criticize people, and you will not be criticized." The divine predestination in 'to which they were placed' in 1 Pet. 2:8 becomes "a foregone conclusion."

In the same vein one might call attention to the treatment of *metanoëō* 'to repent' and *metanoia* 'repentance'. It is commonly said that the words "repent" and "repentance" do not carry much meaning in modern English and that more meaningful expressions should be used. (Is this actually so?) In the Synoptic Gospels, the two Greek words occur a total of twenty-four times: only six times does Phillips use "to repent" and "repentance" (Mat. 3:11, 11:21, 12:41, Lk. 10:13, 11:32, 15:7); more often he uses "to change the heart" (sometimes with the added "completely" or "really"), and less often "change the heart and mind" (Mk. 1:15), "change one's ways" (Lk. 5:32), "change one's whole outlook" (Lk. 13:5), "change completely" (Lk. 16:30), and "to be sorry" (Lk. 17:3, 4). In Acts, however, of the eleven occurrences of the two words, only twice are they rendered "change of heart" (19:4, 26:20); in the nine other passages Phillips has used "to repent" and "repentance." Is there perhaps a difference of approach between his translation of the Gospels and his translation of Acts?

In the Gospel of Matthew the phrases *hina plêrôthê* and *hopôs plêrôthê*, both meaning 'in order that (the Scripture) be fulfilled',

occur a total of nine times. Both phrases indicate purpose, in keeping with the author's concept of the nature and meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures in the ministry of our Lord. Is a translator free to render the phrase in such a way as not to indicate purpose? Does he not violate the cardinal rule of faithfulness to the original if he does so? Whether we agree with him or not, the author of the first Gospel wrote—and we must presume that he meant it—"this was done *in order that* (such and such a Scripture) *be fulfilled*": Phillips, however, only three times indicates purpose (Mat. 1:22, 13:35, 21:4), while in the other six passages he tones down the purpose clause to a statement of fact, "this is a fulfilment" (2:15), "thus fulfilling" (2:23, 12:17), "in this way . . . came true" (4:14), "thus was fulfilled" (8:17), and "as the prophets said it would" (25:26). Is this not an example of modernization which divorces the text from its original setting in life and thus changes it altogether?

Departures from the Text

In another way, we feel, Phillips has exceeded the legitimate limits of the translator's task in his willingness to depart from the text he is translating, either by the addition of (what seem to us) unnecessary words or phrases, or the omission of words and phrases found in the Greek text. Once he indicates a departure from the text: the footnote on p. 373 states that 1 Cor. 14:22 "is the sole instance of the translator's departing from the accepted text." Other departures are thereby implicitly justified on the grounds of his freedom in dealing with the text. The majority of these departures consists of omissions of words or phrases on the grounds—one must assume—that they are unimportant, so far as meaning is concerned, and may be safely discarded. Some of the omissions follow:

'For they were fishermen' in Mk. 1:16; 'for they were afraid' in Mk. 16:8; 'from the beginning' in Lk. 1:2; 'which I tore down' in Gal. 2:18; 'referring to many' (RSV; the Greek is *hōs epi pollōn*) in Gal. 3:16; 'under sin' in Gal. 3:22. In Phil. 1:2 he omits 'our'; in 1:5 'until now'; in 1:17 'not sincerely'; in 1:26 'Jesus'; in 2:20 'like him' (*isopsuchon*); in 3:14 'above' and 'Jesus'. In 1 Tim. 1:1 he omits 'Jesus'; in 1:2 'genuine'; in 1:12 'our Lord'; in 1:16 'Jesus'; in 1:17 'Amen'; in 3:12 'children'; in 6:3 'our Lord Jesus'; in 6:14 'our Lord Jesus'. In 2 Tim. 1:1 he omits 'Christ Jesus'; in 1:9 'Jesus'; in 4:18 'amen'; in Phm. 20 'in the Lord' and 'in Christ'; in Phm. 23 'in Christ Jesus'. In Titus 1:3 'of God our Savior' is represented simply by "his"; in 2:13 he omits 'great'; in 1 Pet. 1:3 he omits 'Jesus'; in 2 Jn. 13 'elect'; in Jude 21 'our Lord'.

Some additions which are not required—since the meaning of the text as it stands seems plain enough—are as follows: in Gal. 2:5 after the final 'you' he adds "and all Gentiles"; in 2:20 'I have been crucified with Christ' becomes "as far as the Law is concerned I may consider that I died on the cross with Christ"; in 4:31 at the end of the verse he adds "not sons of slavery under the Law but sons of freedom under grace." In 1 Tim. 3:16 after 'angels' he adds "as well as of men"; in 4:4 he adds the repetitive paraphrase: "The holiness or otherwise of

a certain food, for instance, depends not on its nature but on whether it is eaten thankfully or not." In 2 Tim. 1:9 after 'he rescued us' he adds "from all that is really evil." In Lk. 11:22 he adds at the end "among his friends"; in like manner at the end of Mat. 25:30 he adds "over his stupidity"; and at the end of Mk. 6:52 he adds "to see who he was." In 1 Jn. 5:6 the RSV reads: "This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with water only, but with the water and the blood"; Phillips translates and expands as follows: "Jesus Christ came with the double sign of water and blood—the water of his baptism as man and the blood of the atonement that he made by his death. It is a mistake to think of him as only the perfect man—he made the perfect atonement as well." In 1 Pet. 3:20 he translates *di' hudatos* ('through water') by "from the flood," and in the following verse "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you" (RSV), is translated and expanded, "And I cannot help pointing out what a perfect illustration this is of the way you have been admitted to the safety of the Christian 'ark' by baptism."

In the case of the Epistles he adds at the end of each one the name of the author in capital letters: so at the end of every Pauline epistle appears the author's signature "PAUL." At the end of 1 Peter Phillips adds "PETER," but not at the end of 2 Peter (for which one must consult his introduction to the epistles in his *Letters to Young Churches*).

It may be granted that since the name of the author (or the proposed author) appears in the body of all these epistles Phillips has not exceeded his limits as translator by adding the author's "signature" at the end of each letter, as a modern letter writer would do (except that his failure to do so in 2 Peter will prove puzzling to the lay reader for whom the translation is intended). In the case of the Johannine Epistles, however, since the name of the author appears nowhere in the body of the letters, has not Phillips again taken unwarranted liberties as a translator by adding "JOHN" at the end of all three? Again, so far as the lay reader is concerned, the conclusion will inevitably be drawn that the name "JOHN" actually appears in the original—which is certainly not the case. But Phillips has compounded his error: he curiously omits a translation of *ho presbuteros* 'the elder' in 2 Jn. 1, but more than makes up for it in 3 Jn. 1, where he translates the same *ho presbuteros* by "John the Elder"!

Wrong Translations

On many passages there is difference of opinion over the precise meaning of the text. The majority of passages in the New Testament, however, are reasonably clear, and within a fairly narrow range of meaning do not allow the translator much freedom of choice in his rendering. Phillips' concept of the translator's role, we feel, has led him to mistranslate passages whose meaning is clear and unambiguous. Some of them may be cited: In Gal. 6:15 'a new creation' reads "the power of a new birth"; in Gal. 2:17 'but if seeking to be justified in Christ' is translated "if, as we grasp the real truth about justification"; 'those who are troubling you' in Gal. 5:12 is rendered "those who are so eager to cut your bodies." 'Our Savior' in Titus 2:10 reads "their

Savior"; "the aim of our charge" (RSV) in 1 Tim. 1:5 is translated "the ultimate aim of the Christian minister." In Acts 17:31 'he will judge... by a man' (*en andri*) becomes "he will judge... by the standard of a man." In Lk. 6:15 *Iakōbon Alphaiou* is translated "Judah the brother of James"; in the parallel Acts 1:13, however, the identical phrase is translated "Judah the son of James." In Lk. 24:49a the clear and meaningful 'And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you' is translated by Phillips, "Now I hand over to you the message of the Father." In Jn. 20:22 Phillips translates *labete pneuma hagion* by "receive holy spirit," with an explanatory footnote (p. 234) saying: "Historically the Holy Spirit was not given until Pentecost" (this footnote does not occur in certain earlier editions). Phillips' translation involves a purely theological judgment and is not based on the Greek as such (notwithstanding his note, "Lit., 'receive holy spirit'"; on this basis he would have to translate the anarthrous *pneuma hagion* throughout by 'holy spirit' or 'a holy spirit', which is manifestly wrong). In the Gospel of John the Holy Spirit is communicated to the disciples by the glorified Christ, and this passage is, so to speak, the "Johannine Pentecost." The statement "receive holy spirit" is as meaningless in the Greek New Testament as it is in English (cf. Acts 8:15, 17). In 2 Tim. 4:8 'to all those who have loved his appearing' (*epiphaneian*) becomes "to all those who have loved what they have seen of Him."

These examples are enough. Again one must say that the translator is not free to communicate to his reader ideas which cannot, by the widest stretch of exegetical and hermeneutical imagination, be found in the original. This, we feel, Phillips has done in many instances and thereby failed in his task.

The Greek Text

Phillips does not specify which Greek text he is translating; in the preface he says simply "the best available Greek text" (p. x). In the preface to *Letters to Young Churches* he was more specific, saying he was basing his translation on "the Greek Text used in the 1881 revision" (p. xiv).

Several examples may be cited, however, of passages in which Phillips has followed the *Textus Receptus* in opposition to the 1881 ERV and the modern critical Greek text as represented by Nestle and Westcott and Hort. In Mat. 26:28, Mk. 14:24 he adds "new"; in John 3:25 he prefers "Jews" to 'a Jew'; the whole verse John 5:4 is added; in John 19:29 he reads "spear" (*hussō*) instead of 'hyssop' (*hussopō*) (for this reading, found only in one Greek minuscule, cf. Kilpatrick in *The Bible Translator* Vol. 9, No. 3 (July 1958), pp. 133f.). In Lk. 24:43 he adds "and part of a honeycomb"; in Titus 1:4 he adds "mercy" and "the Lord"; in 2 Tim. 4:22 the critical text is 'the Lord'; *Textus Receptus* has 'the Lord Jesus Christ'; Phillips has "the Lord Jesus." Instead of 'through God' in Gal. 4:7 Phillips prefers "of God through Christ"; in Gal. 4:14, instead of the better-attested 'your (pl.) trial' Phillips reads "my trial." With the *Textus Receptus* he adds in 2 Jn. 3 "the Lord." In Lk. 2:33 the preferred reading is 'his father'; Phillips translates the *Textus Receptus* "Joseph." In Mk. 7:19 Phillips adopts

the inferior neuter participle *katharizon*, instead of the better-attested masculine participle *katharizôn*, 'thus he cleansed' (cf. also Jude 22, 23, Lk. 2:38, Phil. 2:19).

Conclusion

Only the overwhelming popularity of Phillips' translation warrants such a long review. In face of its wide acceptance, however, it is incumbent upon English-speaking readers in general, and translators in particular, to examine his translation closely for its merits and its faults. Of its merits we can only add our voice to the chorus of praise it has elicited from the whole English-speaking world. His brilliant interpretations, his vivid style, and his imaginative use of modern idiom have transformed the New Testament from a "foreign" and rather tedious book into a vibrant contemporary document of faith, urgent with meaning which breaks through the thick crust of traditional terminology and opens the ears and heart of the reader to the living oracles of God. It is especially in the translation of Paul's Epistles that Phillips' genius shines the brightest.

Some examples from his translation of the Epistles follow:

This is a ministry of the new agreement which God in his mercy has given us, and nothing can daunt us. We use no hocus-pocus, no clever tricks, no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God. We speak the plain truth and so commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. If our Gospel is "veiled," the veil must be in the minds of those who are spiritually dying. The spirit of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, and prevents the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, the image of God, from shining on them. For it is Christ Jesus the Lord whom we preach, not ourselves; we are servants for his sake, God, who first ordered light to shine in darkness, has flooded our hearts with his light. We now can enlighten men only because we can give them knowledge of the glory of God, as we see it in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4:1-6)

Or consider his rendition of Philippians 2:1-4:

Now if your experience of Christ's encouragement and love means anything to you, if you have known something of the fellowship of his Spirit, and all that it means in kindness and deep sympathy, do make my best hopes for you come true! Live together in harmony, live together in love, as though you had only one mind and one spirit between you. Never act from motives of rivalry or personal vanity, but in humility think more of one another than you do of yourselves. None of you should think only of his own affairs, but each should learn to see things from other people's point of view.

His vivid style is effectively employed in his translation of Romans 8:18-21:

In my opinion whatever we may have to go through now is less than nothing compared with the magnificent future God has

planned for us. The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been blinded—yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God!

The intensely personal tone of Paul's letter to Philemon comes to life in the Phillips translation (Philemon 15-21):

It occurs to me that there has been a purpose in your losing him. You lost him, a slave, for a time; now you are having him back for good, not merely a slave, but as a brother Christian. He is already especially loved by me—how much more will you be able to love him, both as a man and as a fellow Christian! You and I have so much in common, haven't we? Then do welcome him as you would welcome me. If you feel he has wronged or cheated you put it down to my account. I've written this with my own hand: I, Paul, hereby promise to repay you. (Of course I'm not stressing the fact that you might be said to owe me your very soul!) Now do grant me this favor, my brother—such an act of love will do my old heart good. As I send you this letter I know you'll do what I ask—I believe, in fact, you'll do more.

The apostolic exhortation in Romans 12:1-2 carries meaning and conviction to the modern reader:

With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable by him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity.

Of Phillips' three tests of a good translation we would conclude that the first one—a translation should not sound like a translation at all—has been met with brilliant success; the second one—a translator should do his work with the least possible intrusion of his own personality—has not been met quite so successfully; the third one—a translation should produce in its readers an effect equivalent to that produced by the original on its readers—has the witness of numberless readers that it has been met with uncommon skill.

As for the ultimate test of a translation—that it be faithful to the original—we must conclude that Phillips has taken certain unwarranted liberties with his text. In our estimate he has not, as a translator, wholly submitted himself to the arduous and oftentimes grating discipline of resisting the attempt to "improve" the text in one way or the other. However, as Phillips has himself said, "For close meticulous study, existing modern versions should be consulted."

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