

But has any practice along these lines been evident in modern and ancient Christian church life? In testing a number of active parish members on their understanding even of such central terms as "righteousness" (which is in all standard versions very consistently rendered), or "mercy" (now much clearer in RSV as "steadfast love"), or "peace," one certainly would find that many of them have only a very faint, if not wrong, notion of the precise content of these terms in the original language. This experience should, it seems to me, make a Bible translator rather hesitant to sacrifice too much idiom for such pastoral considerations.

From Dr. C. Douglas Ellis of Canada

Linguistic analysis takes the most fascinating lurches forward. By the end of last season, I felt all the major features of Cree had been taped. Yet every week or so some new insight comes. The latest has been the "changed" form of the conjunct subjunctive. Of course, there is a slot on the verb table for it, but nobody ever seemed to use it. Then out of the blue my informant "brought forth." (One thing, I feel, *must* be stressed in language learning techniques: The importance of asking the right questions.) You know, I am certain, that many long-time, bilingual speakers up here have gone on for years talking naturally in both languages, but interpreting clumsily, because they have never equated two radically different ways of perceiving the same set of phenomena. Cree after Cree will wrestle with the English "As soon as he comes, he always visits my house," trying, with much perspiration, to fit the word *wipac* 'soon' into a Cree translation. Thinking in Cree, however, what they naturally come out with is *tekošike* 'when he (iterative) arrives': *changed conj. subj.* Beautiful!—instead of the ugly *wipac e takošik* 'soon in (his) arriving'.

Book Reviews

Jesus of Palestine: The local Background to the Gospel Documents, by Eric F. F. Bishop. London: Lutterworth Press, 1955. 310 pp. + 18.

The author of *Jesus of Palestine* identifies himself in the introduction as a missionary who spent about twenty-five years in Palestine. Most of that time he was engaged as principal of the Church Missionary Society's Newman School of Missions. In that capacity he had excellent opportunities to study the culture of the Holy Land. He also availed himself of the knowledge of such eminent missionary authors, archaeologists, and geographers as Thomson and Neil, Warren, Conder and Bliss, George Adam Smith and Dalman, to mention a few, through personal conversations and study of their publications. The author is not only well-qualified to write concerning modern Palestine, but it soon becomes evident that he is a New Testament scholar, *au courant*

of the leading theories concerning the Gospel documents, as well as familiar with the various Greek texts and the versions important for textual criticism. He gives the impression of being as much at home in the Arabic as he is in his native English, and makes much use of the readings in the Arabic versions of the Gospels during the course of his discussions.

The character of this book leads this reviewer to suggest that a more appropriate title would have been: *Modern Palestinian Parallels to the Culture of Jesus' Times, with Special Reference to the Arabic Gospels and to Arab Life*. The present title suggests a content which is not specifically documented, viz. a study of first-century Palestinian culture such as would help elucidate the Gospel narratives for translator or exegete. Rather, it is a study of the Gospels in the light of twentieth-century Palestine, a study to which Bishop was spurred by some remarks of Canon B. H. Streeter many years ago (as he relates in his introduction). The author's chief point seems to be that this or that detail in the Gospel accounts is genuinely "Palestinian" in view of what is now known of Palestinian culture, and thus supports the veracity of the record.

In order to gain a better appreciation of the nature of the book, and a better basis for understanding the reviewer's comments, the author's plan and method must be noted. The different sections of Huck's *Synopsis of the Gospels* (mentioned in the introduction, but no publication data given anywhere) were made the basis of comments. Each section is identified as to its original source (i.e. Q, L, M, or Mark, according to B. H. Streeter's hypothesis of four original documents as given in his *The Four Gospels*). Up to the Passion narratives, the notes are based on Mark's account, except where Matthew or Luke (or sometimes Q) give independent material, which is handled in distinct units. The Passion narratives are treated as given first by Mark, then the additions supplied by each of the other Synoptists. The accounts of the Resurrection are dealt with in a similar manner. John's account of the Passion and Resurrection follows that of the Synoptists' in each instance, but most of the Johannine material is treated separately, in Part Two.

The author's method is to go through each section, noting any cultural feature (action, saying, object, historical site, etc.) which finds any counterpart in his observations of twentieth-century Palestine, making appropriate comments. He tries to give the Palestinian viewpoint involved in each case as a way to better understanding the significance of the original. Local customs or details of modern Palestinian culture are noted and explained, and the tradition of the Arabic versions is often invoked to throw added light upon a passage or to aid in the solution of a problem of interpretation.

It can readily be imagined that such a treatment of the Gospel text would make it more vivid and meaningful for the student. There is page upon page of material which would furnish innumerable real-life illustrations for the pastor and Bible teacher. Not a few better textual readings are suggested, and better translations are recommended, based

on the Palestinian background well understood, e.g. *epibalōn* rather than *apobalōn* ('having put on' instead of 'having cast off') to describe the action of the beggar in Mark 10:50; or 'nightwatchman' rather than 'gardener' in John 20:15 (pp. 205 and 312, respectively). To mention the many others, equally suggestive, would require too much space. There are equally numerous instances in which customary actions, attitudes, or sayings are made more understandable to the Western mind through the author's comments, as well as a few instances of providing suggestions as to the true location of controverted sites.

In spite of the many valuable features of this work, it suffers from several technical defects which tend to lessen its value for the translator and the serious exegete. First, although the passage of Scripture being dealt with is always identified at the heading of the section, the specific verses within the section on which comments are based are not always cited. Inasmuch as the first comment or item of discussion may involve a word or phrase midway in the section of text (or, in some instances, two different words or phrases found in two different parts of the section), it is obviously quite awkward to try to find the context for many of the author's remarks. The very fact that, in order to get the full benefit of the author's discussion, a good Greek Gospel harmony is almost a necessity, makes portions of this work inaccessible to a reader who does not also read Greek, while it wastes time for the researcher who needs to work rapidly. Furthermore, the author's rather casual manner of making some of his comments—as if what has been reproduced were his own unworked jottings of the moment—render some of his remarks in some places somewhat unintelligible as to purpose or connection. While not a characteristic of the whole book, this sort of thing occurs often enough to be annoying.

What is characteristic is the author's frequent allusion to the readings of the Arabic versions, and the introduction of many Arabic terms into the discussion. Not all of them are given a clear-cut, on-the-spot explanation, as might be desired. A list of Greek terms, with translations, is given in the back of the book. One could wish that a list of the Arabic terms, with meanings, had also been included.

The manner of footnoting also appears rather haphazard. For instance, a series of notes may extend over a single section, which they follow according to the reference numbers in the text; or they may extend over several sections. One lengthy single section (the Sermon on the Mount) extends over seventeen pages, with notes at the end; in another instance notes were run continuously through ten sections (over twelve pages); while often a one-page section will be followed by its own notes. Inasmuch as some of the notes are necessary to a full understanding of some part of the discussion, hunting them up becomes a somewhat timewasting undertaking.

To be noted as minor defects, too, are references to readings in various of the critical manuscripts without reproducing the reading for the benefit of the reader. Could it be that the author supposed all his readers to have access to critical editions of the Greek New Testament, together with copies of the various Syriac manuscripts?

In this same vein are a few references to some modern author's comment on the text without telling the reader what the comment was (e.g. "Torrey's slight emendation in 45..." [p. 113]).

To this reviewer's mind, however, the one thing which makes this book less than valuable as an aid to translators—in spite of what its value might be to pastor or Bible teacher—is the author's apparent assumption, shared by many another scholar, that the Palestinian Arabic culture of this century is a relatively undistorted mirror of first-century Palestine. This is a viewpoint which needs documenting. It would be welcome to the translator, if provable, since he would have only to go to Palestine (or read one of the extant works relative to Palestine and the Bible) whenever he had a problem of finding the nearest cultural equivalent and the most suitable linguistic form for making the Gospel narratives intelligible to those for whom he was making the translation.

What is still needed, however, is a thoroughgoing comparison between the culture of first-century Palestine (as reconstructed by a thorough study of the archaeological evidence and the witness of ancient documents) and that of present-day Palestine to determine what has been the extent or direction of change in the cultural picture. The cultures of all areas change over a period of several centuries, whether the processes of change have been accelerated by outside contacts and influences or not. No one who knows anything of Palestinian history would contend that it has been isolated from outside influence over the past nineteen centuries, or that the first-century status has been preserved *in toto*. Accordingly, the results of such influences upon Palestinian culture make it an erroneous practice to assume that some contemporary cultural feature is "the same as" something mentioned in the Gospel record, unless research can defend its descent from Gospel times.

While this may seem an overly rigorous attitude, it serves as a precaution against the all-too-facile method which writes a cultural commentary on the Gospels on the sole basis of observations made in the Holy Land in this, or even the preceding, century. A cultural commentary on the Bible, based upon fresh studies of the archaeology of the Holy Land (and the contiguous Near East) together with studies of early documents bearing on this area of concern, is sorely needed—especially designed as a sort of reference encyclopedia for the use of the translator and exegete. Much of the desired material is now incorporated in many scattered publications, both books and journals. A real service could be rendered if someone would undertake to gather this material, evaluate it in the light of independent research, and put it out in a single work adapted to the needs of the translator, who often wishes to know the precise nature of a cultural feature alluded to in the Biblical text so as to discover the nearest equivalent in the culture of the people for whom he is making a translation of the Scriptures.

In all fairness to Bishop, it must be said that this was not his intention in writing *Jesus of Palestine*. In all fairness, however, to the

translator who might surmise from the title that here is the detailed description of Bible life and times which he desires, it must be said that, even though it contains much interesting and stimulating information, it is not the *vade mecum* which the translator so much needs.

Henry R. Moeller

The Gospels: An Expanded Translation (Wuest's Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament, Vol. 1) by Kenneth S. Wuest. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956. 320 pp. \$ 3.50.

The well-known teacher of New Testament Greek in Moody Bible Institute, author of numerous books on the Greek New Testament, has published the Gospels as the first part of an anticipated "expanded" translation of the New Testament, the aim of which is said to be to give to the English reader as much as possible of the full implications of the Greek text. The volume is a selection of the Evangelical Book Club.

The statement, which appears twice on the book jacket, that this translation gives "the full English equivalent of the Greek text" is a promise impossible of literal fulfillment. Since no two languages are exactly equivalent, any translation—expanded or otherwise—involves linguistic "distortion." Moreover, no translation or commentary is likely ever to explain fully every word, even within the limits of linguistic possibility.

That the translation is "in modern speech" or has "a decent regard for good English diction" (p. 13) must likewise be qualified, for the style clearly differs from idiomatic English. Many awkward expressions are to be found: Luke 18:5, "in order that lest"; Mark 10:23, "How with difficulty"; Matt. 21:46, "they were holding him for a prophet"; Mark 7:37, "flabbergasted"; Matt. 24:15, "the object of religious nausea"; John 3:14, Moses "elevated the snake"; and in Mark 5:40 and 11:15, Jesus "throws" people out. Even more dubiously, in Mark 10:20 Jesus "fell in love with" the young man; in Luke 1:34 Mary protests, "I do not have an experiential knowledge of a man"; and in Matt. 27:46, Jesus on the cross cries, "O my God, O my God, why did you let me down?" However, a translation which also includes exegesis and explanation is not likely to be good literary English. This review is therefore primarily concerned with the extent to which Wuest brings out the implications of the Greek text for those who know no Greek.

The author is to be commended for bringing out the meaning of certain constructions, for example, imperfect tenses as in Luke 2:41, "customarily went," and Mark 1:5, "kept on proceeding out." He takes note of questions expecting a negative answer, as in John 3:4, "He is not able . . . is he?" although in John 4:29 he overlooks a similar construction and consequently misses the force of the question. He brings out the perfect tense, as in Luke 4:4, "It has been written and