

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.

in the past, so that both the standard versions and some of the older botanical guidebooks prove unreliable. On the other hand, the Bible translator can seldom afford the money and time necessary to secure scientific competence in all the fields which could help him do a better job. Accordingly, there will be several reading these pages who will no doubt welcome knowledge of the two works being reviewed here. They will be treated in the order in which they appear in the heading of this review.

The first thing that can be said concerning Moldenke's *Plants of the Bible* (hereafter *MPB*) is that it is a monument of the most thorough and painstaking scholarship. It is published by the Chronica Botanica Company as one of a series of botanical works under the general editorship of Frans Verdoon. The editor's biographical sketches of Dr. Harold Moldenke (the principal author) and of Mrs. Moldenke (his associate) assure the reader of their thorough competence to produce a work which should demand the reader's confidence. Perusal of the work itself amply supports the expectations raised by the biographical sketches. At the time of publication of *MPB*, Dr. Moldenke was curator and administrator of the herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden, while his wife was instructing in the biology department of the Evander Childs High School of New York City. The authors, because of their positions, were able to command the assistance of a large number of specialists in various fields of study in the course of producing *MPB*, while their own independent research covered a span of twelve years and included the study of a vast amount of material on the subject treated.

The main part of *MPB* is introduced by a Historical Sketch which gives an account of known works on Bible botany and the significance of their contributions from that of Levinus Lemmens in 1566 to several published just prior to World War II. It also includes a discussion of the ways in which Bible scholars of the past often went about identifying the plants mentioned in the Bible.² From this discussion come important warnings against two common errors: (1) that of identifying the plants of the Bible with those native to European or American regions, and (2) that of supposing that all the plants now found in Palestine also flourished there in Bible times (pp. 4-5). Several species which have been naturalized in Palestine since Bible times are named. The sketch closes with a brief discussion of the transmission of the Biblical text, highlighting the matter of accidental corruptions which raise philological problems in relation to the matter of plant names, followed by a list of some of the Bible translations and versions which have been consulted.

The main part of the work consists of the discussions of two hundred and thirty botanical items. These are entered according to

²Incredibly enough, until the explorations of Hasselquist (a pupil of Linnaeus) and of Forskål in Palestine and related areas in the latter half of the 18th century, the approved way of identifying Bible plants was wholly on the basis of philological researches and supposed resemblances to European and American species, rather than by first-hand observation of the flora of Bible lands.

their official botanical names, in alphabetical order. The name of the plant to be discussed is given in bold-faced type at the head of the article, followed by the Scripture passages in which references to it are found, after which the discussion proceeds.³ The discussions include (1) a description of the plant and its normal habitat; (2) products derived from it; (3) problems of identification (if any), and the way the Hebrew or Greek term is rendered in several of our English-language versions; (4) mention of the plant in ancient literature (legends, traditions, etc.); (5) current uses of the plant by the peoples of the Near East, and their current traditions or superstitions concerning it; and (6) any other interesting information discovered.

A collection of about ninety-five plates in black-and-white grace the work, most of them being grouped together following the main text of the book. These include reproductions of illustrations taken from older works, photographs of drawings, and a few recent first-hand photographs of plants. The book is also furnished with several useful indices, a very complete bibliography, and a section of supplementary notes relating to a number of the entries in the body of the text.

The one serious defect of this work, in the reviewer's opinion, is the lack of a clear-cut illustration for each item which is discussed. Some of the illustrations which do accompany certain items (e.g., figure 25, facing the entry "Olea europaea L." on page 157) are from wood engravings taken from an old work. These are not clear enough to make it possible for a translator to compare the plant being discussed with those of his area to see if there is any real resemblance or relatedness. Far too many of the comparably few illustrations in this otherwise outstanding work are relatively valueless for purposes of comparison.

For such purposes, the field worker will find *All the Plants of the Bible* by Winifred Walker (hereafter *WAPB*) of considerable help. The author is an accomplished artist and a member of the Royal Linnaean Society of Britain. While in the United States doing a series of botanical paintings, she received the inspiration to do a series of illustrations on Bible plants after reading a descriptive list of the trees, herbs, and flowers of the Bible which had been prepared by Dr. Harold Moldenke and issued by the New York Botanical Garden. This project of discovering specimens and reproducing them in watercolor took Mrs. Walker the better part of five years.

Already wellknown for her *Flowers of California* series which she had produced on an earlier visit to the United States, the author was invited to bring her collection of Bible plant illustrations to the States for publication. While she prepared the text for the book, her paintings were photographed in black-and-white to provide the plates which make this work so valuable to anyone interested in, or needing information on, the subject of Biblical botany.

³Occasionally, several related species are grouped together in the heading of a discussion.

The book is very simple in plan. On each left-hand page appears the name, description, and a brief discussion of a Bible plant; on the facing, or right-hand, page, appears the illustration. Each entry page has the name of the plant printed in large type at the top left, in proper alphabetical order. Rather than using botanical names for her entries, however, Mrs. Walker gives the name as found in the King James version of the Bible. Under the name, in italic type, appears the quotation of an appropriate Scripture passage where reference to the botanical item occurs.⁴ Following this is given a brief description of the plant, and other information.

"Other information" includes (as in *MPB*, above) remarks on the use of the plant in Bible lands, and any superstition, legends, or traditions connected with it. At one point the author has allowed tradition and the questionable conclusions of some older commentaries to lead her astray in the matter of identifications. Under the heading "Locusts" a partial quotation of Matthew 3:1, 2, 4-6 appears, and the commentary begins with: "The locust is the fruit of the carob tree, accepted in the East as the food on which St. John the Baptist fed . . ." (p. 120). The tree which is being illustrated is the *Ceratonia siliqua*, or Palestinian carobtree. No careful scholar can accept the identification which is here made, for the word used in Matthew and parallel passages for "locusts" is a form of the Greek *akris*, which is a grasshopper-like insect, and not a tree or its fruit.

The identification which the author wanted was with the *keration* found in Luke 15:16: "he aimed to get his stomach filled with locust-pods which the hogs were eating" (*Berkeley Version of the New Testament, in loc.*). Here the reference is clearly to the carob-pods, which resemble the fruit of the honey-locust tree of our hemisphere. Moldenke (*MPB*, p. 73) discusses this false identification, but does not accept it. However, apart from this rather glaring error, the rest of the material in the book seems reliable enough.

The illustrations, which are more than worth the price of the book by themselves, number one hundred and fourteen. Each is life-sized and all but fills the page. In the case of trees the large size of the execution means that only a portion of a limb can be shown; but each is very clear and lifelike in detail, showing characteristic branching, foliage, flowers and fruit (if any). In the case of the flowers and other plants, the foliage, stalks and branching, blossoms, and fruit (if any) are all clearly depicted. These features make comparison with living specimens quite easy.

Beneath each illustrative plate the Bible name is given together with the scientific botanical name, the Hebrew or Greek term (in transliteration) for which the plant is a referent, and a suitable Scripture quotation.⁵

The book is brought to completion by a Supplement which lists

⁴ All Scripture quotations seem to be from the King James version.

⁵ Interestingly enough, under the illustration of the carobtree (a branch showing fruit-pods), the author has given the Greek word from Luke 15:16, but cites again the quotation from Matt. 3:4. Cf. discussion of her erroneous identification, above.

and, in some cases, discusses a number of other plants of the Bible which are not illustrated. In spite of the fact that, contrary to the title, not *all* of the plants of the Bible are illustrated nor described,⁶ this book is, because of its excellent illustrations, of great value.

It may not be entirely true that a picture is worth a thousand words, but it certainly *is* true that a faithful pictorial reproduction of an item can give a great deal more meaning to a good verbal description. For full value and adequate help, both Moldenke's scholarly descriptions and Walker's unsurpassed illustrations should be side by side on the translator's reference shelf. At the same time, we could wish that Mrs. Walker, or someone else with her botanical competence and artistic skill, would furnish the translator a more complete reference work of equal excellence.

Henry R. Moeller

A Rendering May Be Anti-Semitic

Mr. F. Lovsky, Secretary of the Committee of the French Protestant Federation for the Evangelization of Israel, has pointed out that in some instances translations of Matthew 27:25 have tended to be anti-Semitic—often, no doubt, without a translator realizing quite the implications of his rendering. In this verse the direct discourse in Greek has no verb whatsoever, and thus in most languages such must be supplied. A correct rendering would supply a verb such as 'be' or 'come upon' or a phrase 'is our responsibility' (e.g., the RSV and most other English translations read "His blood be on us and on our children"). In some instances, however, translators have employed the equivalent of 'fall again' or 'will come upon us'. As the result of such a rendering, some persons have excused the persecution of the Jewish people as being a warranted fulfillment of their own predictions. There is nothing prophetic about this statement of the Jewish crowd. It is only that they were quite willing to assume responsibility for their demands by exposing themselves and their children to the judgment of God. Accordingly, a translator must make certain that his rendering does not seem to imply more than the text justifies, or literalists may find a way to excuse unchristian attitudes.

⁶ It seems that the publishers could have been content with a more modest title, or one more noncommittal.