

example of Cicero, in his translations of the *Protagoras* of Plato, the *Œconomics* of Xenophon, and of the two fine discourses of *Æschines* and Demosthenes against him. But lest the example of Cicero should be rejected by his adversaries, he adds, that Hilary the Confessor had followed the same method in his translations of several homilies on the Book of Job, and of several treatises and sermons on the Psalms, from Greek to Latin.

This method of keeping more to the sense, than to the words, in translating the Holy Scriptures, seemed so essential to this famous interpreter, that giving his opinion on this subject to Sunia and Fretella, he repeats again, that it was the chief business of the translator, to render the turns and proprieties of a strange language, in the most clear and exact expressions of his own, as Cicero, Terence, Plautus and Cecilius (the most learned of their age) had done in their translations from Greek to Latin: and in another place he tells us, that 'tis difficult to give translations the graces of their original, and that when they are rendered word for word, they are in many places barbarous and ridiculous. (pp. 34-37)

The Scriptures: Translation and Distribution

William L. Wonderly

The American Bible Society tried a new approach to an old problem when in May 1958 it sponsored a three-day gathering of over forty missionaries and nationals from some fourteen denominations and missions to consult together regarding problems connected with getting the message of the Bible to the Indian tribes of Mexico. The meeting took place at Camohmila, a YMCA camp on the outskirts of the Aztec Indian village of Tepoztlan, an hour and a half by auto road from Mexico City. It was organized by Sr. Francisco Estrello, Secretary of the Bible Society's Mexico Agency, and Dr. William Wonderly, consultant in Mexico for the Society's Translations Department. Dr. Eugene Nida, Secretary for Translations, helped in leading a number of the discussions.

During the past decade and a half the Bible Society has published Scripture portions in over 30 Indian languages of Mexico, including a complete New Testament in one of them, and is now being called upon to publish New Testaments in several others. With this investment in the Scriptures for these peoples, it was felt to be highly important that a serious study be made of how these Scriptures are being used, and to bring together people from various organizations and different parts of the country who are responsible for their use, with a view to sharing experiences and ideas that would make for a more effective use of the Word of God among the Indians.

It was gratifying to hear reports from the field of the Tzeltal Indians of Chiapas, in whose language the Bible Society published the New Testament two years ago, and from the Chol field of the

same state, for which the Society now has the New Testament in the hands of the printer; and to hear how God has led the people responsible for these fields to work out plans whereby, within the pattern of the evangelical church of the country, it is possible to encourage the growth of the Indian churches along lines especially meaningful in terms of their own way of life. To the Chol Indians, for example, the preaching of the gospel is especially oriented to meet the fears which these people have of the spirit world and the power of the witch doctor; and their pagan custom of killing animals in sacrifice to the spirits is made a point of departure for bringing to them the message of Christ.

It was fascinating to hear the Reverend Edesio Sanchez, an ordained minister whose native language is Maya, tell of the way in which the gospel among the Maya Indians of Yucatan bears fruit when they hear it and read it in their own language. Mr. Sanchez is a member of the committee which has just completed the translation of the New Testament into Maya, which the Bible Society expects soon to have available for these descendants of the old Maya civilization.

Hearts were warmed in listening to the account by Sr. Venancio Hernandez, a converted Otomi Indian from one of the perennially drought-stricken areas of Mexico, as he told of the effects of the Bible in the lives of his fellow countrymen, and of the way in which among them there has sprung up a truly indigenous church movement in which men and women who formerly lived in ignorance and abject poverty have now begun to work together as Christian brethren for their mutual strengthening and for the application of the Bible message to every aspect of their lives, material and spiritual. Here, as in other areas of Mexico, the Scriptures in the language of the people have been an important means of bringing about this all-pervading change in their lives.

With regard to Indian affairs in general, Mexico has actually taken the lead and is setting a pace for other countries of Latin America; but this emphasis has heretofore been more outside the church than within it. It was possible at this gathering to bring to the attention of Mexican church leaders some of the advances that have been made by anthropologists and educators within their own country. Dr. Gonzalo Aguirre Beltran, head of the University of the State of Veracruz, kindly made himself available for lecture and discussion during one afternoon of the meeting and presented a most fascinating account of some of the work that is being done. Dr. Nida, in another of the sessions, discussed ways in which many aspects of this approach can be brought to bear upon the work of the evangelical churches as they endeavor to discharge their responsibility of getting the message of the Bible to the Indians of their own country.

Such was the interest of those who were gathered at the meeting that the Bible Society has now gone ahead with the formation of an evangelical committee on Indian problems in Mexico, which is to function as an unofficial advisory body made up of persons from the churches and missions who have responsibility for different aspects

of Indian work in the country. This committee is to seek various ways of making available to church leaders, and to others in Mexico, information about the work that is being done and which needs to be done in achieving a more effective use of the Bible among Mexico's Indians; at the same time the committee is to help the Bible Society discover how it can best serve the churches in this important task by making available to them the Scriptures in the form that will be most useful for each of the different situations that confront them.

A New Edition of the Greek New Testament

For the first time in the history of Christendom it has been arranged that a committee of New Testament textual scholars should undertake to study all the available evidence and prepare a new Greek text, which would represent the latest discoveries, a careful evaluation of existing data, and the presentation of relevant evidence on all points involving significant exegetical problems. The text, apparatus, and supplementary volumes, which will accompany the text, are designed to provide the student, pastor, scholar, and translator with hitherto unavailable resources to aid in the study and understanding of the New Testament.

It is hoped that this project, sponsored by the American Bible Society with the co-operation of the National Bible Society of Scotland and the Württemberg Bible Society of Germany, will help to meet the growing demand for a more satisfactory text of the Greek New Testament.

REASONS FOR A NEW TEXT

New Manuscript Evidence

During the last fifty years there have been a number of significant manuscript finds, especially papyrus fragments of the New Testament from the rubbish heaps of ancient Egypt, as well as many manuscripts in Greek and other ancient languages which have been discovered in libraries of churches and monasteries of Europe and the Near East. Though the evidence from some of these papyrus fragments and manuscripts has been cited in footnotes by several editors of New Testament texts, such materials have not been fully or systematically incorporated into existing editions of the Greek New Testament. In fact, for the most part the editions of the Greek New Testament which are in use today reflect almost entirely the results of 19th century textual studies. The Westcott and Hort text, still widely employed, was published in 1881. The Nestle text, first issued in 1898, is based upon a consensus of agreement among the texts of W-H, Weiss (published in 1894-1900), and Tischendorf (1895). In later editions, especially those which reflect the work of Prof. D. Kurt Aland, some modifications have been made, principally in the apparatus, but the text itself is predominantly 19th century in