

published in 1926, continues the use of honorifics and court language.

There is a good deal of discussion taking place and many would like to break away from the usage if it were possible. Most Burmans feel, however, that they prefer to think of Jesus as rather above them and point out that a translation without honorific would be unacceptable to Buddhists.

In a question like this no decision can be made by a missionary or by any foreigner. However, it does seem to me to be the place of the missionary to ask questions and to go on asking questions until he is sure they have been faced squarely and discussed fully by nationals in the Churches. Some of the questions would be these:-

1. Does the use of court language and honorifics hinder the intimacy of the contact of Jesus with people? This intimacy and directness make an essential part of his authority as well as of His love.
2. In a story like that of Lazarus referred to above, is there not some loss of the reality of the sympathy Jesus felt for his friends?
3. Does not this usage take away something vital from the incarnation? Unless it is quite plain that Jesus became what everyman is, there cannot be any real gospel for everyman.
4. Is there not a theological weakness in the Churches which might be traced to this usage?

READERS' CORNER

From Russell Reed, Mindoro, Philippines:

We have a problem for which we are hunting ideas and solutions. Since there are so many names of people, towns and other cultural features which must be introduced into a Bible translation as borrowed or transliterated words, there appears to be a fertile area for the use of local words in the plant (and animal?) names of the Bible. As with all "primitive" peoples, the tribe in which we are working lives in intimate contact with their environment and we realized from the beginning that the only way to understand their lives was to appreciate their knowledge of the plant world. It has only been since the publication of the two book reviews in *The Bible Translator* on Bible plants,¹ however, that we have seriously been trying to equate the two plant groups. Because neither the Biblical names nor the local names are what would be called "scientific" (i.e. for only one species) it would seem reasonable to use one for the other, if we feel fairly certain that a Biblical

¹ *TBT*, 10:43-47 (Jan. 1959). The letter from which this extract is taken was written in December 1960, but was not then published since plans are afoot to produce a "Help for Translators" on Flora and Fauna in the Bible. However, since the completion of this project is not yet in sight, we are not holding up this letter any longer.-Ed.

person would classify the local plant with the parallel Biblical one, or conversely, if the native would classify the respective Biblical plant with his own.

The choice is quite easily made when there is a close parallel in both form and cultural significance as is the case with the Biblical *almug* and the Philippine *narra*. Not only are they classified as belonging to the same genus of plants but they are both noted for their valuable reddish wood and both are known for the dye that can be extracted from the wood. The slight difference in their leaves becomes less important when we realize that, since the wood was imported into Palestine, few of the Bible characters would have known what the foliage of the tree looked like anyway. The big problem seems to be just how far the translator is justified in departing from the specific plant in choosing a local equivalent. There are no cedar trees in our area; however, there is a tree which has a wood that is quite like cedar in texture, color and odor, and is recommended by the Bureau of Forestry here for use as a cedar substitute. I have not yet studied the pertinent Biblical references to know if the tree itself is the important aspect or if it is the wood obtained from the tree that occupies the thoughts of the reader, but supposing it is the latter, would the translator be justified in using the local name for this entirely different tree which has similar wood?

We have found a fruitful way to search for equivalent plants is to take the scientific name of the Biblical plant and then go through the existing literature of plants in the Philippines for plants classified in the same genus. Because the basis of scientific classification is sameness of structure, these are the local plants most like the Biblical ones. From the description, pictures and cultural uses the possible suitability of the local plant can be determined.

I would appreciate hearing the experience of others in dealing with this question.

BOOK REVIEWS

BLACK'S NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES

Many individual commentaries of varying value have been written on the different books of the New Testament, according as their writers believed that they had something to say on some particular book. But perhaps a larger contribution has been made by publishers or other organisations which have planned a series covering the New Testament as a whole. One calls to mind Macmillan's series, the International Critical Commentary, the Century Bible, the Moffatt Commentary, the Clarendon Bible and various others.

Adam and Charles Black, the London publishers, have in recent years revived this valuable practice with the beginning of a new series, under the General Editorship of Dr. Henry Chadwick, Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford.