

to examples; so the New Testament evidence helps but little. Good grammarians may be found on both sides of the question. It really seems to be merely a matter of viewpoint. Burton claims that it is the context which shows whether the statement is actually true or false. Others point out that even the contrary-to-fact statements may be shown by the context not to be untrue. It seems to this writer that Robertson is right that such discussion confuses *fact* with *statement of fact* and that the mood does have to do with the statement of the verb as to reality or non-reality. Many New Testament examples are 'statements for sake of argument' (Matt. 12: 28) or premises in *ad hominem* arguments. Many others are the type used when one accepts a fact just uttered at face value which had not previously been understood, as when the Pharisees said to John the Baptist, 'If you are not the Christ' (as John had just denied) 'then why do you baptize?'

In summary, the review of the whole study and examination of New Testament conditions has led this writer to think that the simple four-class division of Gildersleeve is much to be preferred to that of Goodwin, and to agree with Mr Pritchett in lamenting that Gildersleeve's classification has not met with wider adoption.

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'A TRANSLATOR'S HANDBOOK ON MARK' IN ACTION

We used the United Bible Societies' *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Mark*¹ for our translation of that book of the Bible into Kituba (Kikongo ya Leta), a lingua franca of the south-western region of Congo-Léopoldville and the southern half of Congo-Brazzaville. This is an appraisal of its help to our work.

Praise

This Handbook does indeed provide 'helps for translators', as the series of which it is a part is called.

Probably the greatest help we experienced was the tremendous saving in time and increased efficiency in the preparatory work for the translation. Clear *exegetical help* is provided in a compact way. Hours of searching for the pertinent information in commentaries and lexicons were no longer necessary. When further research was required, we did, of course, consult other works; but much of the material gained previously only by constant, time-consuming research is presented in the Handbook in summarized form. In addition it is helpful because the material is slanted to deal with the translator's specific problems and needs. The *translation section* with its lexical and syntactic help was also a time-saver in a similar way. It presents in a summarized form the experience and suggestions of some of those

¹ For details see under 'Helps for Translators' at the back of this magazine.

who have dealt with the same problems. Much of the work of hunting through books and articles had been done for us.

Another feature of the book was found to be very helpful: all major words are followed at their point of first occurrence by a list of all passages in which they are to be found in the book of Mark. Subsequent occurrences are then cross-referenced back to the first one. In addition, where a major Greek entry has more than one meaning, summaries of usage are given, indicating the passages in which each occurrence appears. These features all serve to ensure a thoughtful treatment of the translation, suggesting consistency of terminology where that is necessary, and different terms from the Greek where that might be advisable. It serves as a built-in word check list. (However, see below for one short-coming in the policy followed with regard to this feature.)

By no means the least among the praiseworthy features of the Handbook is its educational effect. The work we were doing on Mark was our first attempt at Bible translation. However, rather than becoming tied to the guidance of the book, we felt a growing confidence in predicting the solution to problems before looking up the suggestions of others. The approach and procedure of the Handbook had served as a teach-yourself text. A book like Eugene A. Nida's *Bible Translating*¹ gives the theory and examples; the Handbook provides step-by-step practical help.

Those who have not had formal training in Greek will also become familiar with important critical, exegetical, expository and other reference works by a careful reading of the contribution of the ones cited.

The practice of transliterating the Greek words into Roman script did not prove to be awkward. In fact, it was a convenient guide for learning to type Greek words for our files since we did not have a typewriter with Greek letters.

One negative reaction that we had almost immediately, was our feeling of frustration at times after reading the presentation of a great many interpretations and possibilities for resolving the textual problems of certain passages, only to find no conclusive help in the end. This is in keeping with the words of the introduction: 'sometimes preference is given to one over other interpretations, and at times no preference is expressed' (p. xi). Exegetical matters were to 'reflect the majority view of scholarly opinion' (p. vii).

We came to see the wisdom of this approach as we worked through the translation, realizing the differences existing among those who would profit from the book, and also the tentative state of the answers to some of the textual problems.

Criticism

The greatest lack we felt was the failure to give constant and adequate help in interpreting and translating tenses and other grammatical categories of Greek verbs. Again and again we noted a particular tense in Greek, and then were confused to note its various interpretations in versions of other languages. A clear presentation of the implications of Greek tenses,

¹ For details see under 'Helps for Translators' at the back of this magazine.

aspects, modes, and voices is needed if translators unfamiliar with Greek are to understand the problems involved. Then examples of how these tenses are handled in other languages would be helpful. Following the rendering of one particular translation is no clear guide for another language. Help on verbs such as is given in the exegetical sections for Greek *exomologoumenoi* of Mark 1: 5, for *pinō* and *baptizomai* of 10: 38, and verbs in passages of 9: 31 and 15: 19 are much appreciated. We feel it should be given much more frequently.

The following is a sampling of passages in which assistance would be helpful in dealing with verbs. Each case cited in the R.S.V. has conflicting interpretations in other translations.

Mark 9: 9. The English 'should have risen' is difficult to handle. Nor does it help to look up other English translations—Goodspeed: 'should rise'; Knox, Schonfeld: 'has risen'; Williams: 'had risen'; etc.

Mark 7: 37, 'he even *makes* the deaf hear. . . .' A question of interpretation arises here for languages where a clear distinction must be made between progressive and habitual aspects.

Mark 10: 35. Here a problem of tense might arise: ' . . . do for us whatever we *ask* of you'.

Mark 11: 28 f. ' . . . by what authority *are you doing* . . . by what authority *I do* . . . ' Other translations have conflicting interpretations.

In *Mark 16: 16* the discussion on the verbs is not adequate to clear up the exact interpretation of 'he who *believes* and is *baptized*. . . .'

Although by far the greatest number of problems that we encountered were anticipated, it is not surprising that some questions have not been treated. We felt that some problems needed explanation; other translators will no doubt look in vain for help on other points. For example, in Mark 9: 19 we would have appreciated an explanation about the exclamation 'O' (R.S.V.), which Knox gives as 'Ah'. The difference in translation among various versions of the Greek word *doulos*, 'slave, bond-slave', is confusing, and guidance is not adequately given: in Mark 12: 2 why do R.S.V. and others read 'servant', while Williams and Goodspeed, for example, read 'slave'? We also felt that examples of the translation of 'tender' (Mark 13: 28) into other languages would have been helpful—it happened to be a difficult term to express in Kituba.

The exegesis and translation sections for each portion dealt with are usually co-ordinated very well. A few places, however, give the impression that the writers had not read each other's material. For Mark 11: 19 the exegesis section gives:

'*opse* (cf. 11: 11) "late", "evening": presumably towards sunset'.

Immediately following, the translation comments:

'*Evening* refers to the first quarter of the night, indicating after sundown.' Which one is to be followed? The comments on Mark 9: 42 can also be included here. The exegesis section notes that the R.S.V. and Synodale translations give the wording, 'cause to (fall into) sin'. The translation section begins by saying that this phrase 'is only rarely translatable in a literal manner', and then suggests a translation very close to the R.S.V.: 'whoever causes that one of these little ones come into misfortune through sin. . . .'

In this connection, we also noticed a few instances of clear overlapping of sections. The comments of the exegetical section of Mark 12: 8 in parentheses, beginning 'If the cultural context of the language . . .', seem clearly to be translational material—especially since the same comment occurs there. Again in 16: 7, the exegesis gives unnecessary detail on translation problems ('If in a given language the connective "and" should be exclusive . . .') which are taken up adequately in the translation discussion. The reverse seems to be true in 14: 48 where the translation section gives a detailed explanation of *lēstēs*, which would seem to be more appropriate in the exegesis discussion. These thoughts are offered as impressions that came while working with the book. They in no way detracted from its usefulness in providing the way for a clear translation.

While the list of all passages given at the point of first occurrence of a major word was greatly appreciated, it was most disconcerting to find that a great number of the most frequent ones are brushed over. For example, in dealing with the translation of *paradidōmi* under Mark 1: 14, it does not help much to read that it occurs '20 times in Mark', or that *krazō* (Mark 3: 11) occurs '11 times in Mark', or that *amēn* (Mark 3: 28) occurs '13 times in Mark'. The 'built-in concordance' (p. xii) breaks down in usefulness when such short cuts are used.

We could think of no reason for this treatment of these and other words. Many other entries have 10–15 passages listed, so it does not seem to be the number of passages to be shown. These passages could be looked up in other reference works, but if this is supposed to be a feature of the Handbook, no exceptions should be made for such important words.

Finally, additional careful proof-reading will be required to take care of the sprinkling of erroneous references throughout the book. It is frustrating to try to trace down a reference, but find it to be a wild-goose chase.

Caution

We found that there was a tendency, at first, towards over-use of the suggestions made, especially those from the translation sections. In looking for an equivalent in the target language, if caution was not exercised we found that the African assistant was prone to accept the first suggestion we made from the material in the Handbook.

In conclusion, a word of caution to those who feel that the exegesis sections, based on the Greek text, are unnecessary. Some translators have expressed the opinion that as many mistakes can be made translating from the Greek text as from another version. While this can be true (depending on the degree of competence of the translator), work based on the Greek at least begins at the right level. Our experience leads us to appreciate greatly the fact that the Handbook uses the Greek as its basis. Many times in the translation work into Kituba, following only the text of other translations would have led us away from the intended meaning of the Greek. Some vital translation decisions are overlooked unless the Greek is followed. The Handbook makes this approach accessible to those who have little or no knowledge of Greek.