A Symposium:
The Bible in the World

New New Testaments in Greek

A new edition of the Greek Testament is always a significant event, but the Bible societies' edition which appeared in May, 1966, is especially noteworthy. It is a critical edition prepared by an international team of New Testament scholars, and providing both a text and a critical apparatus which represent recent advances in manuscript discovery and developments in textual studies. Initiated in 1954 by officers of the American Bible Society (ABS), the project became the joint responsibility of four other well known societies: the National Bible Society of Scotland, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Netherlands Bible Society, and the Württemberg Bible Society of Germany. Approximately twelve years of labor have gone into this project, and it appeared in May of this year, coincident with the 150th Anniversary of the ABS. Four eminent scholars were principally responsible for the editorial work: Dr. Kurt Aland of the University of Münster, Principal Matthew Black of St. Mary's Divinity School, St. Andrews, Scotland, Dr. Bruce M. Metzger of Princeton Theological Seminary, and Dr. Allen P. Wikgren of the University of Chicago. These four men were assisted by special consultants in various technical areas, and by an advisory panel of forty-three well-known scholars.

Readers of the new edition will be pleased with its new format and features. The composing of new type provided opportunity for a change from the old cursive, difficult-to-read type to a new vertical, eleven point Porson type, which greatly improves the appearance and readability. Old Testament quotations appear in contrasting bold type. Poetry and liturgical passages are printed in poetic style with indentation. The English paragraph headings and parallel passage references are those adopted for translators by the United Bible Societies. The project was in-

1Especially noteworthy is the fact that this is the first critical Greek text to be set in the United States. Composed by the firm of Maurice Jacobs, Inc., of Philadelphia, the edition was printed by the Württemberg Bible Society of Stuttgart, West Germany.

2Advance presentation copies have been given to various dignitaries, including copies presented by Dr. James Z. Nettinga of the ABS to the libraries of Hope College and Western Theological Seminary at the recent meeting of the General Synod (RCA) in Holland, June 11, 1966.
The Historical Shape of Faith

By Ralph G. Wilburn. The modern idea of history, and its implications for the understanding of religious faith. $6.00

Atonement and Psychotherapy

By Don Browning. Explores the question: Can we make any positive theological statements on the basis of insights derived from psychotherapy? Published October 17. $6.00

How to Interpret the New Testament

By Fred L. Fisher. This practical "how-to-do-it" book — with many examples — makes clear to students, laymen, and preachers the methods of New Testament interpretation accepted by scholars today. $3.95

Studies in Christian Existentialism

By John Macquarrie. Seventeen lectures and papers by one of the most brilliant and lucid Christian existentialist philosophers of our time. $6.00
initiated, organized, and administered by Eugene A. Nida assisted by two secretaries of the Committee, J. Harold Greenlee and Robert P. Markham.  

Reasons for the new edition.

Two factors account for the decision to present a new edition of the Greek Testament at this time. The first may be traced to the pressure of the ever increasing amount of new manuscript material being discovered and published, and to the resultant advances being made in textual studies. Today’s scholars now work with more than five thousand Greek manuscripts, eight thousand Latin manuscripts, one thousand Armenian manuscripts, and hundreds of others in various languages. While the pressure had been building up for some time, it was the publication of the Bodmer Papyri since 1956 that called for the revision of the existing critical apparatus. An early and complete copy of the Gospel of John (P66) and several portions of other New Testament books (P72, 75) did much to accelerate the need for a fresh restatement of the evidence for the New Testament text. Indicative of this need has been the ten or more new editions or printings of the Greek Testament in the last decade. The time had come to consolidate and incorporate the new information in a new text.

The second factor was the need for a Greek Testament adapted to the requirements of translators and missionaries in the world Christian community whose task it is to give members of the Younger Churches the New Testament in their own languages. The special features of the ABS edition are calculated to meet this need and provide translators with tools for more accurate and intelligible translation. The use of this text by representatives of five of the major Bible societies should provide translators with a beginning point of new accuracy and unity.

Features of the new edition.

The text of the ABS edition is a conservative revision and based fundamentally on Westcott-Hort with a comparison of the text and apparatus of Nestle, Bover, Merk and Vogels. Its special features are four in number, and concern the critical apparatus.

The apparatus or textual footnotes have been drastically reduced in number and for the most part restricted to those variant readings significant for translators or necessary for establishing the text. When compared with the ten thousand variants of the Nestle-Aland edition, the ABS edition numbers about fifteen hundred. The second feature is a most helpful innovation for beginning students of textual criticism and translators, and consists of an evaluation by the editors of the degree of certainty to be attached to each set of variants. The letter "A" indicates the Committee’s certainty that the reading chosen is closer to the original text of the author. The letter "B" means that there is some doubt about the reading chosen. The

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letter "C" indicates considerable doubt, and "D" indicates the Committee's highest possible degree of doubt whether the variant or the text is to be preferred. A companion volume explaining these decisions is now being prepared by Dr. Bruce Metzger and is expected to be published within the next two or three years. The third feature is a full citation of the evidence for and against the fifteen hundred variants selected, drawn from appropriate witnesses in more than five hundred manuscripts and versions and more than two hundred church fathers. The final feature which deserves mention is the new and second apparatus which provides evidence on meaningful differences in punctuation. Some six hundred differences in punctuation affecting meaning are noted, and these were selected and compared in editions of the Greek text and in the principal English, German, and French translations.

More yet to come.

The ABS Greek Testament does not mean the achievement of any definitive, final text which will now replace all existing editions. This edition has obvious limitations owing to its special adaptation to the requirements of Bible translators, and it is the intention of the Committee to revise the work from time to time in order to keep abreast of the new discoveries and fresh evidence. The Nestle-Aland edition so widely used by theological students will continue to be published and, although regrettably delayed, a new edition with a new format and apparatus moves to final stages of completion. According to Professor Aland, its present editor, the text of the new Nestle will be fairly similar to that of the ABS edition. The major differences will be in the more adequate critical apparatus which will give the evidence for variants at every point in the text. Perhaps the new large edition of the Greek Testament, a la Tischendorf, likewise the joint effort of international New Testament scholars, will appear in the not too distant future. And so the future beckons with promise for all readers of the Greek Testament, but meanwhile we greet with appreciation and gratitude the beauty and usefulness of the new ABS edition.

RICHARD C. OUDERSLUYS


The Bible and the College

In a day when much publicity has been given, and far more emotion vented, on the issue of prayer in the public schools, a more unrealized, yet highly significant phenomenon has transpired on college and university campuses. The last two decades have witnessed a tremendous development in the teaching of religion in American higher education. New departments of religion have been established and old ones intensively strengthened. This is not only true of a church-related college such as Hope but of private and state institutions as well. While the fol-