

THE BIBLE OF MONSIGNOR J. C. ABRIOL, D.P. *

The BIBLE, the greatest book ever written, the Word of God in words of men, must really be proclaimed to the four corners of the world. How often do we find ourselves struck with reverence and admiration the way christians and non-christians alike regard and hold in high esteem the contents and history of salvation so emphatically yet more often mysteriously presented in the Bible. Yet to achieve this christian noble end of having the Word of God reach and penetrate within the grasp of its countless readers, the Bible necessarily has to be translated suited to the general understanding and capacity of all. This has been the long and taxing task of biblical scholars and exegetes from the beginnings of christianity. Fully aware of the significance of general understanding of the Bible and its vital role, they have continuously sought possible means to accomplish this. This is highly intended by them since christian faith is nourished and strengthened by a sound reading and understanding of the Bible.

No wonder then that many translations of the Sacred Scriptures have been written already up to the present. To cite them, they are first of all the ancient versions, viz., Aramaic Targums of the Old Testament, Latin Versions, Coptic Versions. These were made due to the difficulty of reading the original languages of the Old and New Testament. Then in the year 1382 the first complete Bible in English appeared. Later on the non-English medieval and modern versions gradually followed, viz., Dutch Versions, French, German, modern Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Scandinavian, Slavic and Spanish translations. Thus by the middle of the twentieth century, the Bible, or a significant portion of it, had been translated into more than one thousand different languages or dialects.

* *ANG BANAL NA BIBLIA*, Salin ni Mons. J. C. Abriol D.P., IKA-LAWANG. St. Paul Publications: Pasay City: Pp. 1-414.

It is therefore with a feeling of pride, joy and appreciation that Filipino Christians should receive the fruitful result of the labors of Monsignor Abriol. The availability of the second edition of his Bible (1962, Daughters of St. Paul) is indeed a solution to that old problem of Bible-reading Filipinos. There is no more need to mention the difficulties commonly encountered in reading a book. Suffice it to say that the translation of Mons. Abriol would certainly serve as an aid not only to the foreign missionaries in the Philippines but also to our Filipino youth for their understanding of things pertaining to God and man's salvation.

Another reason why we are encouraged to read many pages of the translation of Mons. Abriol was to prove to ourselves the words of praise for his translation dedicated by Paraluman Aspillera in her Tagalog Corner (Manila Times, dated December 15, 1968). She has really given Mons. Abriol his due. For it is even a general consensus of so-called authorities on our language that it would be inevitably difficult for Filipinos to translate a foreign book into our own national language. The employment of Tagalog words which could bring "confusion" or misinterpretation, would be also difficult to avoid. It also holds true that the use of tongue-twisting and deep Tagalog words would be resorted to. In so far as the translation of the Bible by Mons. Abriol is concerned, it is undoubtedly an admirable venture and accomplishment to answer the needs of Filipinos.

In like manner, we give due credit to his translation and more so to his ability as a translator. Upon reading his work, we were able to find only three words which we cannot quite fully understand the meaning: they are "SIKANG, BABAKAY, MAGHAHAPAK," due mainly to the fact that we cannot find the real explanation on the footnotes below the pages. Moreover, it would not consist as a problem for the readers of this Bible to understand the Greek names and places frequently found because even in the "Florante at Laura" of Francisco Balagtas, there are also explanations below the pages.

Before reading Mons. Abriol's translation, we had the impression that this might be similar to the prayer books and Bibles we have already read. We even presumed that we could not fully understand his work. So that we thought another criticism could we bring out

but we were mistaken. For in the simple words and sentences employed by Mons. J. C. Abriol, we could trace his intention that his translation be understood by the majority. Let us, therefore, cite once instance to prove our statement, e.g., as regards the answer made by Jesus Christ when He was accused by the Jews of breaking the Sabbath and of claiming God as His Father and being equal with the Father:

Winika ni Jesus sa kanila, "Tunay na tunay na sinasabi ko sa inyo na walang magagawa ang Anak sa kanyang sarili kundi yaong nakikita niyang ginagawa ng Ama, sapagka't ang lahat ng ginagawa nito ay ginagawa rin ng Anak. Sapagka't minamahal ng Ama ang Anak, at ipinakikita sa kanya ang lahat ng ginagawa niya, at may ipakikita pa sa kanya na lalong dakilang mga gawa kaysa rito upang mamangha kayo. Kung paanong pinababangon at binubuhay ng Ama ang mga patay, gayon din naman ang Anak ay nagbibigay ng buhay sa kanyang maibigan. Ang Ama ay walang hinahatulan, nguni't ang lahat ng paghatol ay ipinagkaloob sa Anak, upang ang lahat ay gumalang sa Anak, katulad ng paggalang sa Ama. Ang hindi gumalang sa Anak, ay hindi gumagalang sa Ama na nag-sugo sa kanya."

San Juan, v:19-24

In these verses, we find no single word we consider as to hinder the readers from grasping what the Speaker intends to communicate. While reading these verses from St. John, we can picture vividly in our minds that Jesus is speaking our own language in a way intelligible to the readers. The simplicity noticeable in these verses, runs throughout the whole book. And it is safe to say that we do not need to recourse to reading the English Bible as in the case of many Filipinos. We are certain that we can understand to a greater extent our vernacular translation. If we praise the Filipino translation of Julius Caesar (Shakespeare) by Dr. Jose Villa Panganiban, we also give credit and admiration for the translation done by Mons. J. C. Abriol.

Another point of interest that we wish to mention is this. We saw a movie about a character in the Bible "Solomon and Sheba". We have read several books and Bibles but we always read the name Solo-

mon. We wonder why in this book of Mons. Abriol, Salomon instead of Solomon is used. Which one is correct, or ought to be used?

We can truthfully say that very rare we observe translations of foreign books into our own language which carry a true flow of our national language, distinctively our own. We are certain that the easy and simple words used by Mons. Abriol will render a beautiful example to many others who intend to translate other foreign books, aside from the Bible. We are also certain that his translation of the Bible will serve as food and drink for Filipino minds hungry and thirsty for the knowledge of God.

Once again, we extend our deep appreciation and congratulations for the initiative and executive ability of Mons. Abriol, D. P. May his tribe increase not only among the clergy but also among the laity.

● REV. AMADITO V. CLENISTA, JR

ONE DIMENSIONAL MAN by Professor Herbert Marcuse.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.

Professor Marcuse in his book presents to us a rather unique position of man in today's world. He wrote that man is guided by a single pattern of living, both in the material order and in the intellectual order. This single pattern according to him is brought about by the progress in technology. Man seek to acquire those material objects that are continuously becoming the unending desire of man for comfort and to lessen his sufferings, like automobiles, television, electrical appliances, comfortable furnitures, stylish clothings, fashionable entertainment and many others. In the intellectual life, opinions are formed through the media of communication and that these opinions are imposed upon the people. He nevertheless accept that still the concepts words that express the thought are of various number. Commenting on the philosophy of the Anglo-Saxon countries which is predominantly positivist

and empirical, he said that man in that philosophy is no longer treated as a universal concept but rather treated in its concrete form. So that if ever they treat man, man is seen in his particularity, this man in this particular situation and avoiding to mention the what he is not", "but what might be? and "what should be." Isolating man, therefore, as a prisoner of what the author called "fiat accompli". Consequently, liberty is lost and man is dominated and subjected to various depressions.

He affirmed that man of the olden times and man of today are always subjected to dominion. In the olden times there was the dominion of the masters over their slaves, the dominion of the lords over the serfs, now, in our time today we are witnessing the dominion of technology over man. A dominion much different to that of the ancient time. The difference lies in that, during the past, the masters and lords have the fear of rebellion of the subjects if unfavorable treatment to the subjects were to be given, but in the dominion of technology, the reverse happens, the subjects themselves embrace such dominion whatever happens. The people finds comforts, dress better and suffer less and had the pleasure of life. Professor pointed out that today this technological civilization is at a moral, threatening and dangerous situation. Technology had produce objects that could vanish or better still annihilate man and all other things in just a twinkling of an eye, like for example the atomic bomb, the missiles. So that given the stimulus, man may use these weapons against another. But because of multiple production and possession of these objects, man fear to dare use these objects.

However if such thing would happen, Professor Marcuse said that those who would survive this catastrophe, have to change systems or they would have the same fate. It is the system of the technological dominion that must be changed. A change that is of a great challenge to man. Who would deny himself of the technological progress comforts? However, Professor Marcuse was quick to point out that what should be changed was not to remove the technological progress but rather to keep its benefits doing away with the dominion.

Professor Marcuse concluded that man would remain in the same condition because limits are set for the enjoyment of the earthly good

for the good of the community. Man would always be subjected to his passion if he does not hope for the better, if he does not believe in God the Father and Judge of all men, if he does not imitate or follow Christ. He would be the same old man and will never find contentment, freedom and peace.

● FROILAN A. ZALAMEDA

RENEWAL IN RELIGIOUS LIFE, by Elio Gambari, S.M.M. St. Paul Publications, Pasay City Philippines: 1967, 392 pags.

In our fast-moving times, when almost all Religious families—not to find themselves *grouping* in the dark, in the midst of so many conflicting theories and practices, in search of an otherwise necessary renewal, which may infuse new vitality into their Religious entities, the present book comes very opportunely to lend them a helping hand in the accomplishment of such a difficult and transcendent task.

Writing in plain and clear language, and without losing sight of his guiding star, the decrees and documents of Vatican Council II, specially that of "Perfectae caritates", the author offers to the would-be Religious lawmaker a multiplicity of solutions in his effort to update the Constitutions and Religious life to the requirements of the Council and to the conditions of our day.

"The aim of this work—we are told in the *Foreword*—is to contribute to the intense, sustained efforts being made by individual institutes to give concrete expression to the rich heritage of Vatican II in their own set-up and in their own lives."

To achieve this aim, the author has gathered a good number of suggestions, which in part have been the result of encounters with other religious men and women in Rome as well as in other parts of the world, more especially in the United States.

Through its 392 pages the book deals with such varied and inter-persons and institutions involved; process of renewal through the special General Chapters; criteria and directives for renewal and adaptation citing topics as the reason for the decree "Perfectae Caritatis"; to nature, principles, norms and extent of the ideas "adaptation and renewal"; of the Constitutions in the light of the decree "perfectae caritatis"; formation and adaptation of the Religious person throughout the Novitiate and the Religious life; preparation of the personnel responsible for the training of the young; program and plan of formation; current problems and experiments, etc.

From all this it is easy to conclude how helpful the book will be not only to the very few on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of the adaptation and renewal of their Institutions, but also to the religious men and women in particular, who have also to adapt themselves to the new trends and renew their religious lives, so as to become a living testimony of Christ and a sort of a spiritual mirror reflecting the life and spirit of their Fathers and Founders.

● FR. PABLO FERNANDEZ, *O.P.*