

Robinson, John A. T. *The Difference in Being a Christian Today*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972, 92 pp. \$1.50.

Bishop Robinson presents us here with another provocative book which has been preceded by works that dealt with the same aspects of the theme discussed in the book under review: *On Being the Church in the World* (1960), *Honest to God* (1963), *The New Reformation?* (1965), and *Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society* (1970).

Robinson has popularized the changes taking place in theology and the church by polarizing the new over against the old: the Ground of our Being versus the God Up/Out There, the new versus the old morality, and in this book the Christian humanist versus the religious Christian, the new laity versus the old laity, and the new priesthood versus the old priesthood.

The traditional form of Christianity that Robinson wishes to overhaul is described as peculiar and exclusive. It draws lines of demarcation between itself and the non-Christian world in terms of "a body of doctrine, a code of behaviour, a pattern of spirituality, a religious organization . . ." (p. 17). His contention throughout the book is that "it would be truer to say that we find our identity by losing it in identification, that we are *distinctive precisely as we are not distinct*" (p. 17, emphasis his).

The Christian must first identify himself with all men. He cannot move and have his being in his own exclusive circle. He must ally himself with all the forces which seek to make life humane. Robinson affirms that there is a difference between a Christian and a non-Christian even though the latter is also found working together for the same end. Second, the truth must be experiential. People are not asking, "Where may I find a gracious God?" but "Where may I find a gracious neighbor?" The real danger is not the heresy of docetic Christology as much as in docetic Christianity, a Christianity absent from the arena of life.

Tomorrow's layman is not one who will spend all his time keeping the machinery of the church running but one who will exercise his laymanship more and more through secular rather than religious groups. Tomorrow's priest is not one who stands opposed to the laity but one who serves as the "focus and intensification of what it means to be a layman" (p. 76). He will be a specialist in a secular calling (medicine, engineering, etc.), self-supported, but ordained as one who "stands openly for a God of love in a place of suffering" (p. 80).

Robinson is easy to read, always uses the appropriate quotation, and is interesting. His ideas are not always original, he is quite repetitious and lacks discipline in following through ideas to their proper end. As he wrote in one of his books, "I am essentially a man of movement, of exploration. I am usually thinking of my next book before I have finished the last." The book is loosely put together. There is no real essential difference between Chaps. 2 and 4, and Chaps. 5 and 6 could easily have been included in the previous chapters. The whole could have been put together in one chapter of less than 50 pages.

While Robinson needs to be heard, still in spite of his cautions he tends to stress the lack of difference rather than the difference. One gets the feeling that humanism as such becomes more important than Christian humanism. The evangelical purpose of the church is toned down, and its social activity

emphasized to the extent that one wonders whether the church will not simply become another social organization and lose its distinctive function and identity.

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The Translator's New Testament. London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1973. xi + 579 pp. \$2.75.

The United Bible Societies (UBS) published their *Greek Text* in 1966 with translators primarily in view, especially in the format of the apparatus. *The Translator's New Testament*, based on this text, has the same objective, but is for those translators who must depend on English for access into the text of the NT. To fulfill this purpose the translation must be in a universal English familiar to those who translate into languages which have no translation or only poor ones. Nevertheless, there are no arbitrarily established vocabulary limits as in some versions for people with limited English background. Instead a more practical approach based on the experience of linguists was used.

This translation is the culmination of the work of thirty-five scholars including seventeen NT specialists and eighteen missionary linguists who began their work in 1954. Among those on the committee were W. D. McHardy, A. S. Herbert, and William Barclay.

The Glossary and Notes at the end are an important part of this publication. The former explains words and expressions, indicated by asterisks, which the committee felt would be helpful for the translators; and the latter deals with problems, indicated by daggers, which constantly arise in translating the NT. To illustrate the use of these two helps, we take examples from Mt 1. The words "messiah," "angel," and "people" are explained in the Glossary, the last because the same word is used to translate the Greek "hagioi" in this version. The words dealt with in the Notes are "husband" (v. 19) and "wife" (v. 20). The choice of these is obvious in this context.

While the UBS is generally followed, there are some deviations which definitely are not improvements. Some of these which have been noted in the major variants are: the inclusion of Jn 5:3-4 and Acts 8:37 in the text, with brackets without any notes, which UBS had relegated to the apparatus; the inclusion of "Ephesus" in Eph 1:1 without brackets, which UBS had included in brackets; the placing of Jn 7:53-8:11 in the traditional location, which UBS had placed at the end of the Gospel; the placing of the shorter ending of Mk in the footnotes, which UBS included after the longer ending in the text. This version follows UBS in adding "Jesus" within brackets in Mt 27:16-17, and in the note the translators regard it as authentic.

The translation itself is simple, direct, and clear. It is not as free as Phillips' or the NEB but is not without interpretive elements. These latter will be applauded or rejected depending on whether they agree with one's own interpretation of the passage. As examples of simplification, "scribes" is translated "those who taught them the Law" (Mt 2:4), and "justifies" is rendered "puts man right with himself" (Rom 1:17). Examples of interpretation are: "as a sign of your repentance" for "unto repentance" (Mt 3:11); "shared