

Edington, Andrew. *The Word Made Fresh*. 3 vols. Atlanta: John Knox, 1975. Paperback, \$13.95.

The translator is a layman, not a professionally trained biblical scholar, and his work is not a translation but rather a paraphrase. It is much freer than Taylor's Living Bible and reminds one at times of Jordan's Cotton Patch Version. It is also an abbreviated version, since a good part of the Bible has been omitted and what is included is often condensed. The language is quite colloquial and pungent. Accuracy is not its virtue, but it provides interesting reading and is down to earth. As I read, I found myself smiling at times and at other times bursting into laughter. Needless to say, one would not read this paraphrase for doctrinal or scholarly purposes.

Chapters are indicated but no verses (it would be impossible to do this because Edington condenses so much). As to be expected, the type is laid out as a regular book in paragraphs. Some of the footnotes are hilarious. Usually they give the biblical name for the name used in the text, which is a modernization such as Tom, Dick, and Harry for Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Some of the features of this paraphrase may be listed and illustrated as follows:

1. *Colloquialisms*. Gen 9:24-26: "When Noah learned of this, he chewed out his younger son"; Gen 19:19: "Lot bucked at this injunction"; Gen 19:32: "when he was too stoned to know what was happening"; Gen 25:39: "Esau came in . . . pooped out."

2. *Modernization of names of people and places*. Judg 1: Scarlotti for Kirjathsepher, Raquel for Achsah, sheriff of Cade County for Othniel, Rotarians for Jebusites; Judg 3: evil king of New Orleans for Eglon, Mac the Knife for Ehud; Judg 4: Jesse James for Sisera, Carrie for Deborah, General Maybe for Barak, Mae East for Jael.

3. *Anachronisms*. Gen 26: "Esau had married two Hippie girls"; Judg 3: "and he concealed it [the dagger] carefully by sticking it to his thigh with scotch tape"; Judg 4: "took a huge hammer and a railroad spike and nailed Jesse's head to the ground"; Judg 6: The angel's reply to Gideon is, "Bring an uncooked TV dinner and place it on the rock before me," and after this was done, fire came out and "cooked the TV dinner as if by laser beam"; Judg 7: Gideon's attack is called planning "the first Halloween"; Dan 1: The food given to Daniel and his companions is described as "caviar and cherry jubilee," and the person in charge is called "the Dean of Student Life"; Dan 2: the king rewards Daniel with "a new Mastercharge card"; Matt 26: "Then Slick, the high priest, started shredding Kleenex."

4. *Remarks in footnotes*. Matt 26: His comment on the passage where the soldiers spit on Jesus is, "If I had been God, this is about where I'd knocked some heads flying." Matt 27: After Judas returns to the elders and priests confessing his wrong in betraying Jesus, they answer, "Tough stuff, man, but you can't unscramble these eggs." His comment is "It can't even be done today. There is no un-mix master." Acts 8: After Philip goes to Atlanta (Samaria), men are healed and there is great rejoicing. His comment is "Better even than the Falcons winning." Acts 9: Commenting on the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch (J. Con), he says, "Sounds like immersion, Presbyterians. Sorry about that." Heb 7: Where the "order of Levi" is mentioned, he comments, "Nothing to do with pants." Dan 3: Regarding the

observance of the three Hebrews not bowing down, he comments, "I've always been puzzled by the ability of people with their heads bowed to see those that aren't." Dan 4: Regarding Nebuchadnezzar's becoming insane and eating grass, he comments, "A bad situation in an election year."

I now present a few complete passages so that the reader will be able to get a flavor of the version:

Gen 25: " 'If I don't eat I'll die; so what's the price?' asked Esau. 'Your right to the ranch,' said Jacob. Whereupon Esau sold his rights to the ranch for a square meal."

Judg 7: "The next day as the terrified gangsters fled helter-skelter, the self-deferred draftees began to come out of the neighboring villages and they joined in the chase and in the slaughter. The Dalton boys themselves, the two leaders, had their heads removed and brought to Gideon's trophy room."

Judg 12: "At each crossing place, the representatives of Big Jake would say to every man that came to cross, 'What number follows thirteen?' Those who said 'fourteen' were allowed to cross but those who said 'foteen' were killed, for their accent betrayed their home country."

Mal 1: " 'What do you do wrong? I'm glad you asked! For one thing, you bring gifts to the church, leftovers to the family night supper, and stale bread for the communion table. How does that grab you?

'What's more, you pay your church pledge with blind animals, or sick doves, and you claim more deductions than you give. You wouldn't try to cheat the IRS, would you? Why then do you try to cheat God?'

Matt 7: " 'There is no point in your wasting good teaching and true inspiration on insensitive and antagonist [*sic*] people. It would be like insisting on putting a pearl necklace on a pig.' "

Matt 18: "It would be better to be one legged than always kicking old ladies in the shin."

John 6: " 'Moses gave you regular sandwich type bread. The bread of God comes from heaven. It is the true bread, and it provides a true life, and is the real heart beat of the world,' said Jesus."

The translator must be a very interesting individual, full of wisdom and original insights, uninhibited and practical. His version is not accurate or scholarly (it is sometimes even wild), but it is always enjoyable and helps to move us out from the ruts of too-familiar Bible passages.

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Gamble, Harry, Jr. *The Textual History of the Letter to the Romans: A Study in Textual and Literary Criticism*. Studies and Documents, 42. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977. 151 pp. Paperback, \$12.00.

This publication marks the beginning of the series, Studies and Documents, under a new editor and publisher. If this first volume indicates the level of quality we can expect for future ones, we can be assured of a first-class series. This volume applies textual and literary critical methodology to the solution of the problem concerning the integrity of the Letter to the Romans. It represents a revision of a dissertation presented to the Graduate School of Yale University.