

“The policy of many reviewers of *The New Testament in Basic English* has been to take the pen in one hand and the Authorized version in the other and to proceed immediately in an attempt to show how the Basic English translation differs from, is less adequate, less beautiful or in some other way less satisfactory than the translation of 1610. This, it seems to me, is exactly

contrary to the hope of the producer of Basic English, Mr. C. K. Ogden, The Orthological Institute, Professor S. H. Hooke's Committee, and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press, all of whom have expressly pointed out that the Basic English version is intended in no sense to take the place of the Authorized Version or to come into competition with it. . . . Basic English is English that remains astonishingly flexible; that remains nervous, delicate, and yet muscular; a language which if correctly used gives the impression of having a far greater word content and variation than it actually has. . . . In short the only objection to Basic English is prejudice. Once that is broken down, Basic English becomes a salutary educational force whose effect may be, and I hope will be, as great as that of the Authorized Version for the last three hundred years."

H. E. Bates, in *Books of the Month*.

"Sometimes a reviewer receives a book which makes him want to stand up and sing; such is the strange effect of this newest translation of the New Testament. . . . Why should anyone be pleased with a New Testament reflection of our verbal asceticism and confined to a vocabulary of 850 words? Well, this apparent parsimony has in fact the effect of vivification. The effect is almost comparable to the cleaning of an Old Master: meaning leaps to the eye in the very act of removing what has been its preservation. . . . This review has resolved itself into eulogy and thanks: thanks to the patient and self-restraining scholars who made the translation, and praise of the service they have done to us all. Readers over-familiar with the language of Holy Writ, in whose heads the familiar phrases are only too apt to reverberate like peals in a belfry, are well advised to buy this book in quantity (both editions are value for money as books) and give away spare copies to friends who have also had the good (and bad) fortune to be brought up on the Bible. It will give them the chance of renewing their youth."

Max Plowman, in *The Adelphi*.

The Basic *New Testament* (Cambridge University Press, 3/6) appeared in 1941, and the above extracts were taken from the first reviews. The publication of the complete *Basic Bible* (8/6) in 1949 was the occasion for an equally instructive series of reactions, which we hope to analyse in due course. Meanwhile we note the following:

"Who wants this book but the people who made it? Who they are is a secret. . . . Basic English, the Preface tells us was 'produced by Mr. C. K. Ogden of the Orthological Institute.' Everybody knows all about the Orthological Institute, the present reviewer alone excepted."

H. W. G. in *The Oxford Magazine*.