

## BOOK REVIEW

### A HEBREW CONCORDANCE TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

by

S. P. Re'emi\*

In introducing the first Hebrew Concordance to the New Testament it seems essential to begin with a brief historical survey.

As early as the 17th century there appeared Concordances to the Scriptures in their *original languages*, e. g. those edited by J. Buxtorf for the Hebrew Old Testament and by H. Estienne for the Greek New Testament. Before the end of the 19th century the main Scripture Concordances now available, e. g. by Mandelkern for the Hebrew (and Aramaic) Bible, and by Moulton and Geden for the New Testament, had been thoroughly compiled. The main requirements we expect from a Concordance – completeness, exactness and handiness – have been adequately met.

Another stage was undertaken by compiling Concordances for the famous Bible translations into classical languages: the Septuagint, i. e. the first authorised Jewish translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, and the Vulgate, the translation of both Testaments into Latin which was adopted by the Western Church. Here too the first compilers worked during the 17th century, and present editions stem from scientific revisions made during the last century.

Thus theologians had been provided with first class work tools. Very soon, however, the need was felt to produce Concordances of various translations of the Bible into modern languages, since laymen who were familiar with one or other of the translations longed also to achieve greater accuracy in understanding the Holy Scripture. For instance, a Dutch Concordance was already in use in 1672. Of course, a Concordance of this type fits only to a specific translation into one language, and usually is intended for only one Christian denomination. Perhaps, moreover, after a limited period of time a more modern version supersedes the earlier translation. It can be said that the more popular and useful such a Concordance is at a given time and place the less it will be universally accepted.

\* Analytical Concordance to the Delitzsch Hebrew Translation of the New Testament, containing 90,000 entries from the NT with equivalents from the Greek original, compiled by S. P. Re'emi. Published by NUR Press, Jerusalem, vols. 1-2 (1973), vol. 3 (1974).

Why now this *Analytical Concordance* to the New Testament in Hebrew? And does it fall into any of the above-mentioned categories?

Hebrew as spoken in this country today can, for instance, be considered as but one living tongue among thousands, to which no greater importance would be attached than to any other spoken language. One would simply expect those chapters of the Bible which are written in Greek (most Old Testament Deuterocanonicals, New Testament) to be translated into modern Hebrew; then a New Testament Concordance could be compiled from such a translation. But the fact is that there does not exist at present any acceptable translation of the whole New Testament into modern Hebrew. Thus, this new Concordance has to be based on that Hebrew version which is most widely used and recognised in Israel, the version of Prof. Franz Delitzsch which was completed in 1877, and the twelfth edition of this work has been chosen as normative.

Although the syntax and even lexicography of Prof. Delitzsch's translation are in many respects different from contemporary language, his version provides a double advantage which is far from being negligible. If one takes into account the evolution of language within the Hebrew Bible, Delitzsch's translation, better than any other, allows us to read the New Testament in a language fairly homogeneous with that of the Hebrew Bible, as if modern times had completed in relation to Hebrew the process achieved during Antiquity with regard to Greek and Latin; thus both Testaments can now be read together in any of the three classical languages, their reader being equipped with a Concordance in each case. Of course the modern translator of the New Testament adhered as closely as possible to its received text, and his version in no way pretends to introduce a tradition of its own, as do the Septuagint and the Vulgate -

Not only will Hebrew-speaking Christian believers and New Testament scholars in Israel be grateful for this Concordance, but also exegetes and theologians throughout the world. It is probably true to say that one must have some acquaintance with the New Testament in the language of the Hebrew Bible if one would experience the link between both Testaments, e. g. for exploring the meaning of New Testament statements from the comprehensive depth of their biblical and Jewish roots. A Concordance used for this purpose will doubtless help the beginner as well as facilitate and further the work of the advanced scholar.

Finally, a word about the practical features of Dr. Re'emi's Concordance. Its appearance is good. Its "90,000 entries" are arranged in alphabetical order; moods of verbs, grammatical forms of nouns and adjectives, and many specific phrases supply further help in grouping the entries. Most verse quotations are quite long. In every case, one glance indicates the Greek original of the entry. The third volume comprises an alphabetical index of

the Greek terms, by means of which every Hebrew translation of these can immediately be found. The volumes include a few printing errors; these, however, in no way prevent this important work from being a fully "vital and valuable" tool.<sup>1</sup>

Review by Fr. Gabriel Grossmann, op

*Dr. Re'emi is a minister of the Church of Scotland, living in Tiberias.*

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. vol. 1. Foreword by Prof. David Flusser.