

When Schillebeeckx was approaching his 60th birthday, an ex-student who knew him well was asked how he thought Schillebeeckx, if left to himself, would spend this anniversary. His first thought was that 'the master' would probably spend his birthday writing: 'the man does hardly anything else' (A.R. Van de Walle, in *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* 14, 1974, 463). No wonder, then, that the recent series took up nearly 4.000 pages. And yet it covers only about 60 percent of all Schillebeeckx had published; officially it is called just Collected Works (CW), not 'The Collected Works'. The remaining 40 percent of his work included, in addition to the nearly 700 pages of his 'Sacramental economy of salvation' of 1952 (recently translated into French, at last), his books on marriage, on Mary and on the second Vatican council, two volumes with sermons and volumes two and four of his collections of published studies, 'Theological Soundings', as well as several smaller works. For various reasons all these were not included in CW, even though of most of them an English translation was available, and neither were his many contributions to the journal *Concilium*, which were re-published separately.

Still, the texts included called for plenty of work before the publication in CW. For this undertaking scanned texts were used, unfortunately put together by means of a somewhat creative programme, which at times made 'different' into 'difficult', 'repaganising' into 'repagination', 'member' into 'number', '*clementia*' into '*dementia*'. We can only hope we spotted most of such alterations.

As the translation of the earlier volumes of CW (one to five) had already been checked in the early sixties and seventies, 'only' some 2.600 pages remained, a number which may explain why it took almost ten years to complete the re-publication. Most of the editorial work for it went into volumes six (*Jesus*) and eight (*Interim report*), but a special effort also had to be made in volume nine (on ministry in the church), which asked for specialized knowledge of the Roman-Catholic-theology and practice on this theme, which anglican translator John Bowden could not be expected to possess; with the result that, for instance, he had used 'consecration' in stead of 'ordination' for the Dutch term *wijding* (German 'Weihe').

The procedure for all this checking usually consisted in reading the English text till I suspected something had gone wrong and a specific check was called for, in some parts sentence by sentence. This check was primarily directed at the adequacy and accuracy of the translation, though at times it also was somewhat adapted to achieve greater clarity. When special problems emerged, co-editor Bob Schreiter was asked for assistance. which was always given promptly.

From this procedure it became clear that the various *translators* each had their own approach and style. In the first volume, *Christ, the Sacrament*, several translators have been at work, supervised by Cornelius Ernst, a dominican from Sri Lanka I had been with at the Oxford studium, who had taught himself Dutch in order to be able to read Schillebeeckx in the original and who contributed a special introduction to the book. For volumes two through five David Smith had been a very accurate and sensitive translator, of vast experience, from his stay in Holland after the war and through private study. The South-African Marcelle Manley had extensive experience as well, and proved to be open to constructive co-operation on specific points with the person (me) she called, to my surprise, the 'author', apparently a custom she had adopted in her translation work. She translated most of the articles in volume XI, with newer texts, and later re-worked the translation of volume six of

CW, *Jesus*, which had been done fairly accurately but rather laboriously by Hubert Hoskins, in such a way that she may be called a co-translator of the text. Unfortunately she died recently, before the series was published

Of the translation work of John Bowden, who also took care of the the original publication of volumes 7 through 10 as publisher, the conclusion after a check of the voluminous volume *Christ* could only be that on the whole it was not just correct, but also creative: he completed elliptic sentences, was not afraid to reconstruct complicated phrases and thus clarify the text, without overlooking shades of meaning, in other words: he kept thinking of the reader. Usually editorial questions about his translation only were about terms, sometimes about an expression or (small) part that had gone missing. He was said to have translated at great speed, sometimes during his daily journeys in the London underground, where a dictionary was not at hand. More obscure or popular terms, anyway, sometimes eluded him: a Dutch *kan* ('jug') became a 'cane', and he used 'bowls' in stead of 'seals', and 'subtle' once became 'subjective'. For a time he mixed up two Dutch words which were identical but for the first letter ('tegelijk' and 'degelijk'), but fairly different in meaning, namely 'at the same time' and 'positively' or 'certainly' respectively, both used frequently by Sx.

Somewhat more problematic was Bowden's translation of the Dutch pair of words for salvation or its absence (*heil/onheil*), terms which are, in Dutch, fairly neutral, but ended up in the earlier translation as 'salvation' (which is too 'active') and 'disaster' (which - referring to a 'catastrophe', really) is far too negative. Bob Schreiter suggested 'weal and woe' as the nearest equivalent, but these can only be used as a term, so elsewhere various other terms had to be used. In other places a negative had been left out, either simply 'not', or the negative prefix of terms like 'unimportant' or 'unredeemed'. In the section on 'Israel and the New Testament church' one could not quite dismiss the feeling the Schillebeeckx' nuances in this sensitive question could have been rendered more explicitly.

In the denser parts of Schillebeeckx' analysis of New Testament data one could not overlook that Bowden used the Standard Revised Version of the Bible too easily in places where Schillebeeckx' text called for a different translation of the significant nuances he proposed for quite a few texts. When checking these parts, in *Christ* especially, it became clear to me that, even more than I had always suspected, Schillebeeckx at his Jesuit secondary school (in Turnhout, Belgium) had acquired a quite formidable knowledge of Greek; at this school the students had had to master composing verse in Greek. This acquired mastery in Greek Schillebeeckx could apply to his analysis of many scriptural data, in such a way that, as his New Testament colleague Bas van Iersel maintained, Bible scholars accepted Schillebeeckx as their colleague. Unfortunately in the earlier translations many of his nuanced new interpretations were often lost sight of by the quotation of traditional RSV-translations. With some doubts and difficulties such places have now been touched up on the basis mostly of the New English Bible.

While doing this analytical work Schillebeeckx always kept sight of the whole context. One of his great assets was his ability to reach a synthesis of the many, often varying partial insights he had acquired. The power of concentration needed for this he displayed, quite unintentionally, when I had given him Max Secklers (then) new historical study on the function of the 'light of faith' in the work of Thomas Aquinas; next morning he not only had read this work completely ('the best book on the subject', he declared) but had proved it by covering the pages with his usual crosses and underlinings. In this way, even till the end of his life, Schillebeeckx put into action what he had sketched as a programme in his 1958 inaugural lecture in Nijmegen: to submerge himself to the very depth of (historical and

human) data wherever they might be found, and then return to the surface with all sorts of new insights in connections and, on this basis, new interpretations.

It must be admitted that Schillebeeckx' way of arriving at these new interpretations resulted in a great deal of text, in which he tended to formulate, ever again, all he had found in a 'filled out' synthesis. This showed itself also in his typical use of 'pleonasm', for instance a 'creed of faith', or 'God is no deputy substitute' at the service of humankind. In this way he tried to avoid every kind of ambiguity in what he had to say.

While doing this Schillebeeckx proved himself to be not really a writer, but a lecturer, or preacher: When he does not approve of a text he has written, he does not try to improve it by crossing out parts or even the whole of it, but he adds a new sentence he considers to be better or more comprehensive, till all has been formulated, albeit not in very few words. Readers will do well to keep reading: a later sentence may provide a clue to the earlier ones. For this reason people think especially his 'public speaking' to be rather (too) 'robust', or too explicit, while in personal contact he turns out to be rather defenceless, ever ready to explore new interpretations or new projects, even if he could hardly spare the time for them. He hated to say 'no' to people he was talking to. These two sides of his personality together seem to me to explain why he still has much to offer to later generations.

Ted Mark Schoof o.p.