

within him in his cultivation of integrity, in overcoming hate against the white man, in his love of truth. Whether he can sustain himself in this feeling as he rubs shoulders with those of us who are still prejudiced in varying degrees, remains to be seen.

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: THREE VIEWS

The New English Bible, With the Apocrypha (London: Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, 1970, xxi + 1166 [Old Testament] + 336 [New Testament]).

The English Bible has always been important to Latter-day Saints, and as Our Articles of Faith indicate, we are concerned about the matter of translation. Traditionally Latter-day Saints have preferred the Authorized or King James translation, the version defended by President J. Reuben Clark, Jr. in WHY THE KING JAMES VERSION? (1956). With the recent publication of the long anticipated and widely heralded New English Bible the questions of translation and versions again arise.

DIALOGUE presents here three views of the New English Bible. Ellis T. Rasmussen, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies at BYU, reviews the NEB Old Testament; Richard L. Anderson, Professor of Greek and New Testament Studies at BYU, reviews the NEB New Testament; and Karl Keller, Professor of English at San Diego State College, who teaches courses in the Bible as Literature, discusses the NEB as literature.

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: THE OLD TESTAMENT

Ellis T. Rasmussen

The New English Bible was produced to enhance modern readers' understanding of the Bible's content. The recommendation of the multidenominational committee that initiated the translation project in October of 1946 was "that a completely new translation should be made rather than a revision, . . . and that the translators should be free to employ a contemporary idiom rather than reproduce the traditional 'Biblical' English." (The New English Bible: The Old Testament [Oxford and Cambridge, 1970], p. v, preface.)

A degree of that recommendation has undoubtedly been accomplished; how well it has been done cannot well be assessed, for every critic must evaluate it according to his own understanding. A perfectly just judgment could be rendered only by a reader who had the triply unusual capacity to understand all of the English idioms employed, all of the Hebrew idioms behind the English, and all of the spiritual concepts out of which the Hebrew words arose.

It is still true, as Paul said, that man understands the things of man

by the spirit of man that is in him, just as he understands the things of God only by the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:11). All any translator can do is to express in the new language what he thinks the original language meant. Therefore, whatever any translator does with a given work will be done differently by other translators in some particulars. The capacity to understand the things of man and the things of God is different with every translator. It is expected, therefore, that the Latter-day Saint reader, or any other reader, who looks at Biblical passages in the New English which he thinks he has understood (and has either liked or has disliked in the Old English of King James) will react favorably or unfavorably. If he understands a bit of Hebrew and if he enjoys a modicum of inspiration, he will like some of the new better and some of it not as well.

This review will neither attempt to repeat nor to elucidate any facets of the excellent critical review of Cyrus H. Gordon, published in *Christianity Today* (March 27, 1970). Dr. Gordon with his linguistic expertise has pointed to some of the obscure idioms of the Hebrew and has evaluated the English rendition of the Hebrew idiom. He has indicated the dissatisfaction a Hebrew scholar well schooled in Biblical lore has with what he calls the "fast and loose" use of the Hebrew text in many places. Also, he has lamented the translators' evident lack of cognizance of much learned literature on certain controversial passages.

This review will not presume to do more of what Charles F. Pfeiffer of Central Michigan University has done in his review (*Christianity Today*, March 27, 1970). He found and cited detailed examples to indicate that "conjectural emendation is an acceptable principle" in the work of the translators of the New English Bible. On the positive side of the ledger he notes that "the publishers wanted to produce a readable Bible and they have succeeded."

Another reviewer, Dr. Keith R. Crim, an Old Testament specialist and a member of the TEV Old Testament Committee, statistically examined the footnotes in Genesis as a sampling of what the new translators have done in making departures from the literal rendition of the Hebrew Masoretic text. He found that there are "more departures from the masoretic text than in the RSV, the Jerusalem Bible, or the New Jewish Version." Unfortunately, says Dr. Crim, the reader "has no way of knowing where these new interpretations have been introduced." (Keith R. Crim, "The New English Bible," *The Bible Translator*, 21:3, July 1970, p. 149.)

The present review will, therefore, touch only incidentally upon departures from the Hebrew text, marginal readings, versions versus Masoretic text, and the rendering of Hebrew idioms.

In this brief review of what a thoughtful Latter-day Saint reader may find good or bad in the New English Translation, it may be well for us to take examples in four or five categories:

1. Some familiar passages.
2. Some of the well-known doctrinal gems.
3. Some controversial passages.

4. A sampling of some obscure but important passages.
5. A few of the beautiful poetic passages of the Bible.

1. FAMILIAR PASSAGES

The most familiar passage of all, the first few verses of Genesis, Chapter 1, will give the conservative reader some dismay when he reads, "In the beginning of creation when God made heaven and earth, the earth was without form and void, with darkness over the face of the abyss, and a mighty wind that swept over the surface of the waters." The King James Version reads, "and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The New English Bible, like several other recent translations, interprets *ruah Elohim* to be "a mighty wind" instead of "the Spirit of God." The word *ruah* can indeed be justifiably rendered "spirit," "breath," or "wind"; but to render Elohim as an adjective meaning "mighty" is rather rare and unjustifiable. To render the Hebrew *m'rachephet* as "swept" is to portray almost nothing of the colorful connotation of a word which describes the actions of birds incubating eggs, hovering over and guarding the nest. This verb suggests the Spirit of God exerting creative force upon the materials of which the earth was being formed.

In Genesis 2:18 of the NEB God says, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will provide a partner for him." Though it sounds different from the familiar "help meet for him," no one should object to this loss of an old English phrase. There are many such changes; this sort of thing reflects the intent and purpose of the New English translators.

In Isaiah 5:26, for instance, "hoist a signal" replaces the King James phrase, "lift up an ensign." The meaning is clear; indeed it may be clearer than the older phrase. But many such renditions lead one to wonder whether all style and diction need be "common." There may be no esthetic or practical reason why there should not be some uncommon poetic language, romance language, religious language. This point may well be kept in mind throughout the remainder of the categories to be considered.

2. SOME WELL-KNOWN DOCTRINAL GEMS

The doctrinal implications of the new rendering of Genesis 1:1-2 have already been considered above. A few other passages in the creation story are probably less objectionable in their doctrinal implications. In Genesis 1:28, for instance, "fill the earth" in place of "replenish the earth" is good, and correctly renders the Hebrew. Genesis 3:1 is also good in the new rendition: "The serpent was more crafty than any wild creature that the LORD had made."

Genesis 12:1-3, however, in presenting the significant call of Abraham, leaves something to be desired in the new wording. God's words according to the new rendition are, "I will bless you and make your name so great that it shall be used in blessings:

Those that bless you I will bless
and those that curse you I will execrate.
All the families on earth
will pray to be blessed as you are blessed."

To one who realizes that the call of Abraham and his descendants and their followers is to bear the name of the true and living God unto all nations, that all nations may be blessed by knowing and partaking of the salvation of the Lord, the sense of the new rendition is too shallow. Of course, one would have to be aware of the ramifications of the call as seen throughout the rest of Genesis, the passages that bear upon it in Exodus and Deuteronomy, the Prophets, and the Gospels, and the writings of Paul to see the desirability and accuracy of the literal KJV rendering of the last clause of Genesis 12:3, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The Latter-day Saint who knows Abraham 2:6-11 will be all the more discontent with the NEB rendition of Abraham's call.

Christians, including Latter-day Saints, may also find Genesis 49:10 bereft of some of its Messianic significance:

The sceptre shall not pass from Judah,
nor the staff from his descendants,
so long as tribute is brought to him
and the obedience of the nations is his.

The KJV presents practically a metaphor of the Hebrew:

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
until Shiloh come;
and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

In difficult passages there is much to recommend the metaphor in preference to the paraphrase; the translator thereby avoids the role of exegete in his uncertainty about the passage in question, and any reader who is knowledgeable in Hebrew idioms can make his own exegesis. The New English for Genesis 49:26 may also be a case in point:

... the blessings of your father are stronger
than the blessings of the everlasting pools
and the bounty of the eternal hills.
They shall be on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the prince among his brothers.

Emendation and paraphrasing seem indeed to have been accepted principles.

Like all translators the New English committee apparently struggled with Exodus 3:13, finally rendering it "'I AM; that is who I am. Tell them that I AM has sent you to them.'" Neither this wording nor the alternate suggested in a footnote to it — "'I will be what I will be'" — seems as appropriate as the KJV "I AM THAT I AM," enigmatic though it may be still. Perhaps no one knows yet fully the meaning of the Hebrew, "*Eheyeh asher Eheyeh*."

Turning to the Prophetic literature, one may find many doctrinal gems among the writings of Isaiah with sound and meaning quite different from the familiar phrases of the older English version. Isaiah 2:1-4 will be found by most Latter-day Saint readers to be no improvement over the King James Version:

In days to come
the mountain of the LORD'S house
shall be set over all other mountains,
lifted high above the hills.
All the nations shall come streaming to it,
and many peoples shall come and say,
'Come, let us climb up on to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in his paths.'
For instruction issues from Zion,
and out of Jerusalem comes the word of the LORD.

In Isaiah 5:8, 11, 18, 20, 22, etc., the exclamation "Shame on you!" lacks the vigor and the implications of the KJV English "Woe unto them that . . ." It seems that here also the KJV communicates the letter and the spirit of the Masoretic text.

According to Isaiah 6:8, in the KJV as well as in the Hebrew accounts, Isaiah is said to have heard the voice of God saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" The New English makes the last pronoun singular, in spite of the plural used in the Hebrew: ". . . and who will go for me?" the plural was left in the New English of Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image and likeness." Also in Genesis 3:22: "The man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." No explanation (as in a footnote) is given for the singular usage in Isaiah 6:8. In all of these examples the Latter-day Saint would understand that the dialogue reported is between members of the Godhead, and the plural would be taken as literal and significant — not as a mere rhetorical device.

The context as well as the wording of Isaiah 7:14 are wholly non-Messianic in the New English Bible: "A young woman is with child, and she will bear a son, and will call him Immanuel. . . ." This rendition is followed by statements that make it evident that the translators interpreted the passage as simply pointing to the fact that Israel was then (in Ahaz' time) in imminent danger of destruction by Assyria.

The New English paraphrase of Isaiah 9:6 remains somewhat anticipatory of the Messiah, but it is at the best a paraphrase of the Hebrew Messianic prophecy. It reads: ". . . and he shall be called in purpose wonderful, in battle God-like, Father for all time, Prince of peace." The Jewish Publication Society rendition simply transliterates the words indicating what the child shall be called, and the Soncino (Jewish) commentary explains,

The meaning of the Hebrew words is 'Wonderful in counsel is God the Mighty, the Everlasting Father, the Ruler of Peace.' The child

will bear these significant names in order to recall to the people the message which they embodied. (*Soncino Books of the Bible, Isaiah*. London: The Soncino Press, 1966, pp. 44-45.)

It should be noted in passing that the Latter-day Saint reader will find Isaiah 9:3 in NEB slightly more harmonious with the Book of Mormon version as found in II Nephi 19:3 than is the King James Version. The pertinent lines follow:

KJV: Thou has multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy.

BoM: Thou has multiplied the nation, and increased the joy.

NEB: Thou hast increased their joy and given them great gladness.

The well-known gems on resurrection in Isaiah 25:7-8 and 26:19 do indeed still anticipate resurrection; but the New English says, "But thy dead live, their bodies will rise again," whereas the King James has "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise." The Hebrew words of the Masoretic text, translated with nothing added or taken away, are: "Thy dead shall live, my dead body they shall arise." Admittedly the Hebrew is a little obscure, but the KJV has much to recommend it both textually and doctrinally.

Latter-day Saint readers of Isaiah 29, especially if they are familiar with II Nephi 27, will find much lacking in the New English; for instance, the "sealed book" passage expresses strictly a simile, and cannot be interpreted to anticipate prophetically any real and objectively identifiable incident pertaining to a particular "sealed book." And the promise of the Lord in Isaiah 29:14 to proceed to "do a marvelous work and a wonder" (KJV reading) comes out in the new version, "therefore I will yet again shock this people, adding shock to shock."

Of course, even the extant Masoretic text seems to have lost much of what the original text had from which the Book of Mormon, II Nephi 27, was translated; but the New English text seems to have lost some more "plain and precious parts."

While looking at the prophetic literature of the Old Testament in the New English Bible, the LDS reader will also wish to check familiar passages of doctrinal significance in Ezekiel, Hosea, Zechariah, Malachi. He will likely be disappointed in Ezekiel 37. Information in verses 1-14, concerning the resurrection, may be quite satisfactory; but the material found in verses 15 and 16 seems to contain emendations and paraphrases with no textual justification. For example, the Hebrew word *'etz*, meaning tree, stick, or wood, becomes in modern English "a leaf of a wooden tablet." The "two sticks" which according to Hebrew and King James' English shall "become one," shall, according to NEB, "become a folding tablet in your hand."

Hosea 13:13 is no longer an anticipation of the resurrection. And Zechariah 12:10 and 13:6, while still somewhat Messianic, have suffered some vital changes. The old version said, "What are these wounds in thy hands? And he shall answer, those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Readers of the Doctrine and Covenants 45:51-54 know of the dra-

matic identification of the resurrected Savior anticipated by that prophecy in Zechariah. They will be disappointed in the New English of Zechariah 13:6: "What, someone will ask, are these scars on your chest? And he will answer, I got them in the house of my lovers."

Malachi 4:5-6 will also be most disappointing to many Latter-day Saint readers. The quite literal rendition of the Hebrew in KJV seems much richer than the NEB:

Look, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. He will reconcile fathers to sons and sons to fathers, lest I come and put the land under a ban to destroy it.

The old version:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD, and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The LDS reader will remember that Moroni gave the last verse thus:

And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

3. SOME CONTROVERSIAL PASSAGES

There are many phrases in the Bible which are difficult to render from the Hebrew and which have long been controversial so far as translation is concerned and in which the modern translator can take advantage of the studies in ancient literatures cognate with the Hebrew to gain new insights. While Dr. Cyrus Gordon regretted that this avenue had not been used in many cases, it may be observed that in some spots it does appear to have been employed. In Genesis 1:21, for example, "great sea monsters" may be a quite satisfactory translation of the Hebrew *tanninim ha-g'dolim*. In Genesis 6:3 however, "My life-giving spirit shall not remain in man forever," becomes simply a prediction of man's death at age 120 years as the passage continues. It lacks the sense of the Hebrew and King James English, viz., that the Spirit of God will not ceaselessly strive to guide rebellious man. The Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price confirms and elucidates the KJV rendition (Moses 8:17). There are many other such passages, but perhaps this brief sampling will suffice.

4. SOME OBSCURE BUT IMPORTANT PASSAGES

In the New English Bible some meaningful readings seemingly harmonious with the Hebrew sense may be seen in Genesis 1:6-8, 3:16, 4:7, 4:26, 5:2, 6:16 and in many other passages fairly obscure in other translations. A case in point is I Samuel 15:29: "God who is the Splendour of Israel does not deceive or change his mind; he is not a man that he should change his mind." "Change his mind" is a better rendering of the Hebrew word *nicham* in this

particular context than the King James, which speaks of God not "repenting" and then in the 35th verse of the same chapter says God "repented" of having made Saul King over Israel. Both versions would have done well to render *nicham* in its primary sense, "he sighed," in the context of this latter verse; but here both assert that God repented!

The English of the King James Version of Isaiah 1:5 is obscure: "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." The New English has, "Where can you still be struck if you will be disloyal still? Your head is covered with sores, your body diseased." This seems to be a suitable paraphrase for the Hebrew, which if rendered literally apparently says, "Upon what can you be smitten if you continue rebellion? Every head is unto sickness and every heart is unto disease."

The New English paraphrase of the Hebrew idiom found in Amos 1:6, 9, 11, 13 seems satisfactory. The King James Version has translated the Hebrew words literally, "For three transgressions and for four . . ." the nations about Israel shall not be forgiven; NEB shows the idiom to mean, "For crime after crime" they shall not be forgiven.

In summary on this point, it is safe to say that every reader will find many passages in which the sense of what was not quite evident in the KJV seem satisfactory in the New English; only if the reader too can read Hebrew can he decide whether he thinks such a passage is translated correctly in being left obscure or in being rendered plainly.

5. *RENDITIONS OF POETRY*

It is not well known to some readers of the Bible that three-fourths of the prophetic literature is poetry, and that virtually all of the wisdom literature (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, etc.) is poetic. The New English Bible, like several other recent translations, has sought to preserve something of the various poetic characteristics of the Hebrew. In many ways the new translations have succeeded well, as in the poetic prophetic passages from Isaiah already cited above. There are many other passages that are genuinely beautiful. The millennial picture in Isaiah 11 may be taken as a good example (Isaiah 11:1-4):

Then a shoot shall grow from the stock of Jesse,
and a branch shall spring from his roots.
The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
a spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what he sees
nor decide by what he hears;
he shall judge the poor with justice
and defend the humble in the land with equity;
his mouth shall be a rod to strike down the ruthless,
and with a word he shall slay the wicked.

CONCLUSION

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Tim. 3:16). New renditions of the Bible can be helpful in accomplishing what Paul thus commended. And the admonition given in Doctrine and Covenants 91:4-6 with reference to the Apocrypha is applicable also here: "Therefore whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth; and whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom; and whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited. . . ."

"We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly. . . ." ("The Articles of Faith") That principle holds for the New English as well as for the old English. The King James Version will likely remain for many years to come as the official Bible of the LDS church, and it will continue to be tolerably well understood by "study and also by faith."

The prophet Joseph Smith once said, "You can get your 'longitude and latitude' better in the original Hebrew than in any of the translations of the Bible." Until we learn enough Hebrew to do so, however, it may be that all of the translation efforts will help us in our study.

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: THE NEW TESTAMENT

Richard Lloyd Anderson

Over a score of years ago a committee of English Protestant scholars planned a major Bible translation, conceived in concern for their age of apathy and dedicated to the proposition that contemporary language was essential. Millions of copies of the New Testament of the New English Bible (NEB) have been sold since its 1961 publication. It is appropriate to reconsider the NEB New Testament as now published in the complete new English Bible. Actually, the New Testament is the 1970 "second edition," though retention of the 1961 paging shows that relatively few changes have been made. In imitation of Voltaire's negation of the triple name of the Holy Roman Empire, the New English Bible may be portrayed as New, indeed English, and less consistently Bible, at least as it relates to the New Testament.

All will agree that the NEB is innovative, and it was planned that way. The New Testament preface remains defensive on the point of paraphrase versus translation, stressing that the NEB is the latter: "free, it may be, rather than literal. . . ." To understand the goal behind what the preface calls "natural vocabulary, constructions, and rhythms of contemporary speech," one has to go to the committee directives. The masses of inactive church members in England and the young could only be reached by modern language. Even church attenders needed this change, for the familiar King James English glided through "their minds almost without stirring a ripple." If practicalities loomed this large, there is bound to be more than one conflict of inter-