

Dale L. Morgan (1914 – 1971)

Everett L. Cooley

A descendant of Orson Pratt, Dale L. Morgan was blessed with the same keen intellect and inquisitive mind as his illustrious ancestor. And although Dale had an early and abiding interest in the church of his birth, he will be best remembered by his admirers for his numerous books and articles on the West and near definitive work on Jedediah Smith and William Henry Ashley.

This, however, in no way detracts from Dale's significant achievements in Mormon historical writing and Mormon bibliography. Being first introduced into historical writing when employed in the W.P.A. Historical Records Survey, Dale soon became aware of the great vacuum in Mormon bibliography.

For the next ten years, he directed his considerable talent in the search for all printed works on Mormons and Mormonism. This search led him to all the great libraries in the United States and resulted in the collection of approximately 15,000 titles on or about the Mormons written in the first century of their history. His first publication resulting from this research was the meticulously prepared *A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ Organized at Green Oak, Pennsylvania, July, 1862*, a bibliography of the divergent sects. Dale's Mormon collection forms the basis of the monumental *Mormon Bibliography* completed by Chad Flake and to be published soon by the University of Utah Press.

But Dale Morgan's *magnum opus* on the Mormons, unfortunately, was never completed. For years there existed in more than outline a three volume history of the Church. In one of his last letters to me, Dale said that he expected soon to return to his abiding interest in the church of his birth and family heritage.

We are all the poorer that Dale Morgan's life was ended so soon — at only 56 years of age.

Another View of the New English Bible

Robert Smith

Robert Smith, a non-Mormon, has studied at Brigham Young University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (Departments of Egyptian and Archeology). His response here is to a review of the New English Bible by Karl Keller in the Winter 1970 issue of Dialogue.

Under an apparently cavalier assumption that form and substance do not go well together, Karl Keller has heaped undeserved praise on the New English Bible. In so doing, his mood seems similar to that of those who have insisted all along that profundity is the necessary equivalent of obscurity, that East and West are forever twain, or who have held any other of a host of demonstrably false "common sense" notions.

As one who has had decreasing use for the KJV in recent years — owing to the inevitable inaccuracies produced in a 17th century translation — I

would hardly recommend the NEB as a substitute; for to do so would be not merely to recommend a wildly dynamic version over a more literal one, but really to recommend the wool of a goat over that of a sheep! It is certainly not enough to advise everyone who might desire to know at first hand of the fine literary form and concomitant (if unfamiliar) substantive qualities of ancient works to study the ancient texts, but it is entirely appropriate to note that there are several good translations available to laymen.

The lover of the Bible as literature will find great satisfaction in the available volumes of the partially completed Anchor Bible series (Doubleday, 1964-). The series consists of translation-commentaries by the foremost Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish scholars, and is, thus far, a remarkably beautiful literary achievement — whether one examines the first volume to appear (*Genesis* by E. Speiser), or the latest (*Psalms*, 3 vols., M. Dahood). * *Job*, treated by M. H. Pope (1965), is particularly well done and deserves far more than the selective and shoddy plagiarism of the NEB. Moreover, Pope's notes are indispensable and throw the difficult passage of 19:25 into correct perspective (pp. 134-5, 219) by defining the "vindicator" as a non-human mediator who (like a Sumerian personal god acting as an "advocate and defender in the assembly of the gods") is closely associated with the concept of "vicarious expiation" (cf. Isaiah 53). Several books of the New Testament are available in the series. However, in lieu of the rest, and perhaps as much because he achieves singly what the NEB translators could not do in committee, I would recommend use of the J. B. Phillips modern English translation. For example, I much prefer his rendition of James 2:26 to that of the prolix NEB:

Phillips

Yes, faith without action is
dead as a body without a soul.

NEB

As the body is dead when there
is no breath left in it, so faith
divorced from deeds is lifeless
as a corpse.

So too for his translation of I Corinthians 15:29 against the unclear KJV:

Phillips

. . . [I]f there is to be no resur-
rection what is the point of
some of you being baptized for
the dead by proxy? Why
should you be baptized for
dead bodies?

KJV

Else what shall they do which
are baptized for the dead, if
the dead rise not at all? Why
are they then baptized for the
dead?

Phillips evidently found that accuracy and esthetics go well together. There are other points, however, upon which we might like to haggle with Phillips, and no translation should be accepted without reference to the latest critical literature and biblical dictionaries. Laymen must not consider themselves exempt from this requirement, and even the most poverty-stricken local libraries usually have important material available. Finally, we must observe that Mormon doctrine makes it imperative that, following careful study, we seek the true meaning of the scriptures in prayer (Mat. 16:17, I Cor. 2:11, II Pet. 1:20-1). Such an approach might be useful in evaluating the chiasmic parallel structure of the final bicolon in Isaiah 2:3 (= II Nephi 12:3): "For

*At this writing (July 1971).