

EDITORIAL

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Contributions to the Journal are invited and publication is at the discretion of the editors. Contributors enjoy reasonable freedom in the exposition and defence of the Faith. A writer's guide is available from the editors. The co-operation of publishers of Biblical and Theological literature in supplying books for review will be appreciated.

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General Observations

The New English Bible has emerged from a flood of mixed criticism with both laurels and pastings; and, sad but true, both the adulation and the reproach are richly deserved.

This translation is designed to be fresh, and in no way a revision of older efforts (unlike RV, ASV, RSV). It was produced under the direction of a Joint Committee established in 1947, which represented the major British denominations, plus the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland. The Joint Committee appointed a separate panel of translators for the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Apocrypha. Each panel was required to have its work assessed by a fourth panel comprised of literary advisors, because the Committee recognized that "sound scholarship does not necessarily carry with it a delicate sense of English style" (Intro. p.v.). Final drafts were approved by the Joint Committee.

To the translators goes the highest commendation for attempting a thought-by-thought translation of the sacred Scriptures. This is not to be confused with a paraphrase, although the line of distinction is a fine one. Since reception of the assessment of the present critic will depend on grasping this truth, suffer an illustration. A French-speaking man may say, in his tongue, "I have a cat in my throat." Anglophiles may snicker at such an absurd idiom; but they may rest assured that the Francophile chuckles in return when they substitute "frog" for "cat". Now suppose for a moment that some profound theological truth is inextricably bound up in the noun "cat", yet completely lost in the noun "frog": in such an event, the French-English translator is forced to sacrifice either the deeper truth, or the easy flow and potency of the understood idiom. In short, every translation method brings with it, distinct difficulties. The word-for-word method is most likely to catch the force of the original words; but it may be at the price of losing the power of idioms, of figures of speech, of colorful and telling phrases. For example, the AV rendering of Gen. 22:17, ". . . in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven . . ." is a confusing tautology, although a lucid Hebraism in the original. Compare NEB: "I will bless you abundantly and greatly multiply your descendants until they are as numerous as the stars in the sky . . ." That is an excellent rendering; yet, in the next verse, the NEB is in some difficulty because it persists in

using "descendants" instead of "seed" — and so Gal. 3:16 (where NEB replaces "seed" with "issue"), which refers to Christ as the ultimate "seed" (NEB "issue"), is robbed of Old Testament correlative support.

A paraphrase attempts to convey the gist of the passage being translated, the flow of the argument, without manifesting much concern for the meanings of particular words or even for idioms and entire clauses; but in all fairness to the translators of NEB, they have not worked on that level. They have abandoned the word-by-word and phrase-by-phrase method of AV, RV, and ASV, for a thought-by-thought method, which is itself not evil, especially if it can be supplemented with footnotes carefully defining the original words wherever obscurity is a possibility. (Of course, the AV and the ASV differ with respect to translation theories underlying them, too. The former makes no attempt to translate a given word in the original by a consistent equivalent in English; RV and ASV do make this attempt, with perhaps a resultant increase in precision — as well as in sterility.)

The result of the theory of translation behind the NEB is in some respects excellent; and these positive gains deserve recognition before proceeding to the tragic and deceptive shortcomings of the NEB. The English of this translation is generally excellent. The language flows with ease, and awkward constructions and misplaced modifiers have been virtually eliminated. Obscure prophetic utterances leap to life; Pauline passages misunderstood by the average reader of the AV are often far clearer in NEB. Compare II Cor. 5:16 in the AV and the NEB. AV: "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we him no more." NEB: "With us therefore worldly standards have ceased to count in our estimate of any man; even if once they counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so now no longer."

Paragraphing, quotation marks, and versification of poetical passages, have been handled with care and are of assistance to the reader. Interminable sentences have been broken down into digestible units. Precision of thought is actually enhanced at some points: eg. in Neh. 11:17 cf. AV: "Mattaniah . . . was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer"; with NEB: "Mattaniah . . . who as precentor led the prayer of thanksgiving." The Hebrew word translated "principal" in AV literally means "head"; but apart from the fact that readers from non-liturgical backgrounds may not recognize the term, it would be difficult to find a better word than "precentor," to convey the meaning of the original.

The NEB follows AV's custom of translating the tetragrammaton YHWH by "LORD" and "GOD" (in capital letters) except in a few places where the meaning is enhanced by substituting "Jehovah", with an explanatory footnote (eg. Ex. 3:15). The contemporary English form of verbs and of second personal pronouns is used, except where God is addressed in prayer; NEB then reverts to "thee", "thou", "art", "didst", "gavest", etc. (eg. the prayer of the Levites, Neh. 9). For the conservative evangelical, the galling feature here is that the Lord Jesus never merits this distinction. (This will be discussed later in the present review.)

The basic shortcoming of the NEB revolves around the obvious non-evangelical sentiment of the majority of its translators and literary revisors. Theoretically, of course, a man's attitude to the Scriptures should have no bearing on his ability to translate them accurately; whether or not a scholar holds to verbal and/or plenary inspiration should not affect his competency as a translator. But what is true in theory is not true in fact; for in practice, the Bible is not a book about which a man can remain thoughtfully neutral. The heterodox theology of the Joint Committee is apparent in the majority of the sixty-six books. To refrain from throwing mud, the Christian (in the New Testament understanding of that abused term) may charitably conclude that the scholars behind the NEB systematically removed exegetical landmarks not so much out of a desire to deceive as out of an overriding modernistic bias; but even that gracious credulity is stretched unbearably in a few instances, as we shall see later when specific examples are enumerated.

That the translators of the NEB do not regard the historic Canon as being God-breathed and unique is given mute testimony by the inclusion of the Apocrypha in some editions. This retrograde step speaks not so much of a conscious concession to Roman Catholic dogma, as of the low view of Scripture, inspiration and authority taken by the translators themselves. The result, though deeply to be regretted, is predictable.

The Old Testament

Although, as has been stressed, the NEB sheds light on many Old Testament passages, objective criticism certainly discovers much to be condemned. Causes for such negative assessment range from minor literary criticism to fundamental horror at the glaring liberties taken with the text.

The level of English is generally magnificent. Objections to the NEB that stem from the absence of the well-known and felicitous phraseology of the AV are invalid: at one time, those same AV

expressions had to win over a skeptical public likewise harassed with several competing translations. Furthermore, this translation often transforms a thought unintelligible in the AV into a simple and understandable clause. For example, NEB's "Shepherd thy people with thy crook" (Mic. 7:14) is clearer than AV's "Feed thy people with thy rod." In Ex. 28:32, "with an oversewn edge" is more understandable than "as it were the whole of an habergeon"; and "silver filigree" is more accurate than "pictures of silver" in Prov. 25:11.

Yet the NEB still suffers from certain literary anachronisms, British colloquialisms, and occasional stilted style. The expression "must be woken up" (I K. 18:27) needs modernizing: "woken" is an archaic form of the past participle of the verb "to wake". "Trampled into a midden" (Isa. 25:10) will send most North Americans scurrying for a dictionary.

Some passages give the reader the impression that the literary critics became intoxicated by their own verbosity. Consider: "These too are addicted to wine, clamouring in their cups; priest and prophet are addicted to strong drink and bemused with wine; clamouring in their cups, confirmed toppers, hiccupping in drunken stupor; every table is covered with vomit, filth that leaves no clean spot" (Isa. 28:7f.). Compare this rendering with AV, RSV, or any other translation; and the point will be well-made.

Some readers will undoubtedly accuse the NEB translators of pedantry, when, in the interests of precision, "chariot" becomes "palanquin" in Song of Solomon 3:9; or when the "Rose of Sharon" becomes "an asphodel" (Song of Solomon 2:1). It is difficult to conceive of a change in thinking that will enable us to sing, "Jesus, Asphodel, bloom within my heart."

Criticisms raised thus far have been minor in nature — indeed, almost incidental. The core of serious critical assessment must surely revolve around something far more serious: the assumed heterodoxy that rears its head by treating the text lightly.

The translators not infrequently abandon the Hebrew text and use the LXX, and in some cases at least, are perfectly justified in so doing; but in others, an explanation is surely required. Furthermore, Prof. S. R. Driver, in his introduction to the Old Testament, comments that when the Hebrew and the ancient versions do not throw light onto the meaning, "the translator may have to arrive at the sense of a word from the context alone or emend what is demonstrably faulty" (p. xvii). The evangelical who understands anything of the difficulty of translating the Hebrew Old Testament could not possibly disagree with the words of such a philosophy. In numerous passages the Hebrew really is obscure. Compare, for

example, half of a dozen translations of Isa. 30:7. At the same time, the philosophy enunciated by Driver opens the door to incredible, unwarrantable manipulations of the text. Consider Psa. 2:12, which reads "Kiss the Son . . ." in the AV. RSV produced "Kiss His feet", and the LXX reads "Accept correction, lest at any time the Lord be angry . . ." Two German scholars suggested the RSV rendering, and Jews still usually support the LXX; but the NEB offers us something else: "Tremble and kiss the king . . ." (with a note that reads: "prob. rdg.: lit. 'tremble and kiss the mighty one'; Heb. obscure"). The problem arises because the original utilizes Aramaic *bar* instead of Hebrew *ben* for "Son". To obtain the rendering suggested by NEB, it is necessary to divide the Hebrew word for *rejoice* in 2:11, reverse the order of two of the consonants, construing them with Aramaic *bar*, in order to manufacture the Hebrew for "the mighty one". Yet, with the reference to the Son in Psa. 2:7, what is so difficult about accepting the obvious reading in Psa. 2:12? The Christian who bows to the integrity and unity of the Word of God is especially disturbed because Psa. 2:7 is quoted repeatedly in the New Testament (Acts 13:23, Heb. 1:5, 5:5) with obvious reference to Christ.

Messianic prophecies as a whole are quietly transformed into unrecognizable bits of nothing, and usually with the same authority just given. Gen. 3:15 and 49:10 now have nothing to say about Christ (the latter passage is admittedly difficult, however). Isa. 9:6 in the NEB reads: "For a boy has been born for us, a son given to us to bear the symbol of dominion on his shoulders; and he shall be called in purpose wonderful, in battle God-like, Father for all time (note: or 'of a wide realm'), Prince of peace." "In battle God-like" is an unbelievable rendering of the Hebrew; and "for all time" mirrors a Hebrew word which the NEB elsewhere does not hesitate to translate "forever" (eg. Isa. 26:4). Naturally the NEB rendering of Isa. 7:14 is, "Therefore, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: a young woman is with child, and she will bear a son, and will call him Immanuel." As is customary among those of modernistic persuasion, Hebrew *alma* is not to be translated "virgin". This scribe, however, has yet to read anything from the modernistic side of the argument as persuasive and objective as E. J. Young's scholarly apologetic for the traditional rendering (*Studies In Isaiah*, Tyndale Press, 1955). One might think that the argument would be settled by the New Testament use of *parthenos* — but as we shall see in the next section of this review, NEB concludes that *parthenos* does not necessarily mean "virgin" either.

The Messiah is not the only One in the NEB Old Testament

who suffers from glory forcibly removed. The translators present quite a surprising array of methods for belittling God Himself. In I K. 18:37, Elijah's prayer now concludes, "Answer me, O Lord, answer me and let this people know that thou, O Lord, art God, and *it is thou that hast caused them to be backsliders*" (italics mine). A footnote acknowledges the possibility of an alternate reading: ". . . thou that dost bring them back to their allegiance" — essentially the rendering of AV, ASV, RSV, etc. The difference is enormous. Is God responsible for the wicked and rebellious backsliding of His people? Or is He responsible for graciously bringing them back to Himself, even when they consistently choose rebellion?

Similar liberties are taken with Isa. 54:7. AV puts it, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee . . ."; and RSV "For a brief moment I forsook you . . ." NEB gives this surprising rendering: "On the impulse of a moment I forsook you . . ." thus making God guilty of capriciousness at best, infidelity at worst.

Again, the Hebrew word ninety-six times translated "worship" in the AV, is translated "worship" only twenty-four times in the NEB. The other seventy-two occurrences are variously rendered "bow, bow down, fall down, make obeisance, make submission, pay homage," etc. This makes for some curious incongruities. Sennacherib *worships* in the temple of his god Nisroch (II K. 19:37); Naaman likewise *worships* before Rimmon (II K. 5:18); Nebuchadnezzar *worshipped* Daniel (Dan. 2:46); and the statue Nebuchadnezzar erects elicits the *worship* of the people (Dan. 3:7); but no longer must believers worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness (Psa. 29:2): we need only "bow down".

These are only a few examples of the sort of denigration of Deity which characterizes a large number of Old Testament passages in the NEB.

A feature of the NEB which is, perhaps, even more troubling, is the underlying current of evolutionary assumption which fosters the notion that Genesis must be mythological at best, a collection of fables at worst, and which gives the reader the impression that man has risen out of the prehistoric ooze to invent gods according to his current needs; and that in due course the "one god" concept took over because of its inherent superiority. Such a view leaves no room for the transcendent and eternal God who has graciously chosen to reveal Himself in time and space to us who are now sinners by nature and by choice. Anyone familiar with radical Old Testament criticism will recognize the examples about to be enumerated as symptoms of this chronic and perfidious disease.

It does not take long to emerge. Gen. 1:1f. now 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 reader is given the impression that the Gen. 1 narration pictures God beginning his creation out of materials already present; creation *ex nihilo* does not enter into the picture. A footnote acknowledges the plausibility of the rendering "In the beginning God created heaven and earth . . ." The philosophical and theological distinction between those two renderings is enormous, and it is not a question of reader's choice, as the NEB implies. The question is too complicated to be handled within the scope of this article, but the reader is referred to the convincing technical paper of E. J. Young in his book, *Studies in Genesis One* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1964).

In Gen. 6, we now read that "The sons of the gods saw that the daughters of men were beautiful." Probably the AV expression "sons of God" means the men who were God-worshippers, those who professed to know God; and the passage then teaches that even these had illicit intercourse with women, notably women who did not profess allegiance to the one true God. In any case, there is certainly no warrant for pluralizing "God", as the NEB does in both Gen. 6:2 and 6:4. It is well-known that the Hebrew plural word *Elohim* habitually stands for God. The expression "sons of God" occurs at three other places in the Hebrew Old Testament: Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7. In Job 1:6 and 2:1 the NEB translates *ben-ha-elohim* by "the members of the court of heaven". Note the presence of the article, which also occurs in Gen. 6:2 and 6:4. In Job 38:7, where the article is omitted, NEB renders *ben-elohim* by "the sons of God". In other words, the Hebrew in Gen. 6:2, 4 is made even more obvious than that of Job 38:7 because of the inclusion of the article; but it is the latter verse only which is correctly rendered "sons of God". Even the LXX uses "sons of God (sing.)" in Gen. 6:2, 4. In short, the NEB rendering makes Gen. 6 sound not unlike the fabled sexual orgies of the mythical pagan gods of the Ancient Near East.

Gen. 11 tells the history of the infamous Tower of Babel. NEB opens this chapter, "Once upon a time, all the world spoke a single language and used the same words." "Once upon a time" is simply a monstrous translation of the Hebrew *wah*. Even if the words used by the NEB are themselves a fairly accurate rendering — a debatable point — nonetheless, any English-speaking person beyond the age of three is well acquainted with the fact that "Once upon a time" inevitably introduces a fairy tale. Desire to deal fairly with the

NEB panels and the Joint Committee prevents the assertion that this is premeditated perversion of Scripture; but it is impossible to be so naive as to accept such a glaring fault as a minor error which accidentally slipped through the hands of the scholars. The only alternative is that the translators operated from within a heterodox framework of incredible strength, a mould which colored their decisions and distorted sound scholarship into a tragedy of preconceived notions.

Another alleged "translation" deserves equal reproach. In Dt. 4:19, the NEB reads, "Nor must you raise your eyes to the heavens and look up to the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be led on to bow down and to worship them; the LORD your God assigned these for the worship of the various peoples under heaven." The knowledgeable Christian is surely so shocked at seeing such nonsense that he may at first forget that this is purported to be the word of God. A footnote in the NEB acknowledges the plausibility of the rendering, ". . . the LORD your God created these for the various peoples under heaven." That is essentially the rendering of AV, ASV, RV, LXX, etc. The notion that the celestial bodies were created to be worshipped is not found in any text. The obvious meaning of the passage is that the heavenly bodies were created to provide light for all peoples without distinction; and, therefore, by implication, how can they be construed as national deities. Apparently the translators inserted the words "for the worship" because they believed they were completing what was to them an obvious grammatical parallel. That is the kindest possible interpretation of the NEB rendering.

In Nehemiah the Levites are made to pray, "But thou art a forgiving god (sic) . . . thou art a gracious and compassionate god" (sic.; Neh. 9:17, 31). The significance of the non-capitalized "g" seems to be that the Levites are implicitly acknowledging the deity of other gods.

A very common footnote in the NEB is: "prob. rdg.: Heb. obscure (or) Heb. om." Of these there are something in excess of a thousand. But it has been pointed out that of the first 315 conjecturally emended passages in the RSV (1952), NEB disagrees significantly with RSV in 136 places, agrees with AV in fifty-nine others, and produces a novel rendering in seventy-seven others. Most of these are of minor importance; but the unlearned reader is well-advised to beware. In addition, there are over one hundred conjecturally emended transpositions (eg. Isa. 5:24f. moved to follow 10:4; Zech. 3:1-10 to follow 4:14; etc.).

There are two other major areas of weakness in the NEB Old

Testament. The first concerns the loose manner in which theologically important words are handled. Some may object that such a criticism is irrelevant in a review of a Biblical translation, inasmuch as theology is born of Holy Writ, and not vice-versa. But that is just the point: conservative theology has taken its form from the words of Scripture; and when these words are deprived of the meaning they once had, the death knell is sounded for Scripture, theology, and even a meaningful concept of truth.

Let one or two examples suffice. The word "atonement" in Hebrew is a plural noun meaning "coverings"; the verbal form means "to cover". (This is not to be confused with the use to which theologians sometimes put the term "atonement" — namely the entire Cross-work of Christ. Such use is extra-biblical. The word "atonement" is not found in the New Testament, for Christ's death was expiatory and propitiatory, and not some mere "covering". The AV use of "atonement" in Rom. 5:11 is a mistranslation of the Greek *katallage*, which should be rendered "reconciliation".) NEB sometimes maintains the AV rendering of "atonement", but more frequently uses the noun "expiation". The two terms are not synonymous, and therefore should not be used synonymously. Again, the expression "the Tabernacle of the Tokens" is used by NEB to replace "the tabernacle of the testimony" in AV, ASV, and RSV. The Hebrew word behind "testimony" means "appointed, determined, prescribed"; and thus the reference is to the Law of God. By "Tokens" NEB seems to be referring to the symbols, and not to the Law; yet elsewhere, NEB translates the same Hebrew word by "solemn precepts" (I K. 2:3); "solemn warnings" (Neh. 9:34); "solemn charge" (I Chron. 29:19); "testimonies" (II Chron. 34:31); "instruction" (Psa. 19:7); bounden duty" (Psa. 122:4); "teachings" (Jer. 44:23). Again, the "mercy" of God is now replaced by so many synonyms that it is a waste of space to enumerate all of them, even though one Hebrew word underlies all.

The second area of weakness revolves around renderings that seem pointless, indefensible, careless — yet about which there is no doctrinal position at stake. Perhaps some of these passages really have been correctly handled by the NEB translators; but this writer, for one, cannot fathom their reasoning. For example, in II Sam. 15:8, Absalom says, according to NEB, "If the LORD brings me back to Jerusalem, I will become a worshipper of the LORD in Hebron." The words "in Hebron" appear to have been introduced into the text from Lagarde's edition of the LXX. They do not occur in Hebrew. Such a criticism is scarcely crucial; but this reviewer finds his curiosity painfully titillated when new renderings are introduced

with hardly a scrap of apparent support, nor with a footnote justifying them. A similar pointless change is introduced in Judg. 13:5, where Samson now becomes a "Nazirite consecrated to the Lord from the day of his birth" instead of "from the womb" (cf. Judg. 13:3). A similar Hebrew expression is translated "from my mother's womb" in Psa. 22:10, NEB. The change is not pivotal in importance, merely mystifying.

The New Testament

The NEB New Testament was the first part of the Bible to be completed by the Joint Committee. First published in 1961, approximately seven million copies were distributed before the Old Testament joined it in 1970. Since, therefore, the NEB New Testament has been reviewed many times, the comments of this critic may be kept to a minimum.

The 1970 edition of the NEB New Testament has undergone considerable revision. Well in excess of two hundred changes have been introduced in an effort to improve the 1961 edition. Most of these are minor in nature: eg. "recalcitrant" has become "defiant" in Rom. 10:21; "perceive its drift" gives way to "grasp its meaning" in Lk. 9:45; and in Mt. 20:31 "the people told them sharply" has replaced the earlier "the people rounded on them". Some changes are inconsequential, but not a few are decided improvements, some of which involve doctrine and not just delicacy of phraseology. NEB 1961 had "This was in fulfillment" in Mt. 4:14; in 1970 the rendering is "This was to fulfill", a more teleological and certainly more accurate translation. In Lk. 1:34 "I am still a virgin" rightly replaces the earlier "I have no husband"; and the "eclipse" of Lk. 23:45, found in the 1961 New Testament, is now replaced with "the sun's light failed".

The basic format, style, and level of English prose parallels the corresponding features of the Old Testament translation. The strengths and the weaknesses, the good points and the glaring faults of the NEB Old Testament, are found in the New Testament, with perhaps one or two original turns. If anything, the diction of the New Testament is at a higher level than that of the Old. As a consequence, some of the gains made by increased readability, coherence, and modern flow of grammar and thought are lost by a significantly increased and occasionally esoteric vocabulary. This may make reading a pleasure for the well-read student, but it does nothing for the average person who reads far too little. Compare the following examples of pairs of words, the NEB rendering occurring first, the AV in brackets: machinations (lying in wait), in-

voke (call upon), arrogates (takes), refractory (oppose themselves), extirpate (destroy), calumny (speak evil falsely). Peculiarly British expressions are rare, but not eliminated (eg. Whitsuntide, I Cor. 16:8).

Many words significant to conservatives are nowhere to be found in the NEB new Testament. Among the missing are: elect, justify, impute, propitiation, redemption, regeneration. If modern equivalents of identical meaning were at hand, there should be no mourning the loss of anachronisms. But "remedy for defilement" will never replace "propitiation"; beside the latter, the former is desperately insipid in meaning.

The flavor of many Pauline passages somehow rises from the text with a decidedly Arminian flavor. "Receive" is now often rendered "accept" (eg. Lk. 18:17; Jn. 10:38; Acts 2:36, 41; faith now needs only to be "awakened" (eg. Acts 3:16; Rom. 10:17). John 1:12 now begins, "But to all who did receive him, to those who have yielded him their allegiance . . ."

Undoubtedly the severest weakness of the NEB New Testament is precisely that of the NEB Old Testament: the translators and revisers obviously did their work from within a framework of heterodox theology and this modernistic bias colours terribly what otherwise could have been a magnificent piece of work. The Deity of Christ is neatly suppressed in passage after passage. Readers must still master obsolete but traditionally respectful *thou, thee, art*, etc., for God is always so addressed, even when the one praying is the Christ (eg. Jn. 17); yet Christ Himself is never so addressed. Hence the Apostle Paul, in relating the narrative of his conversion, testifies that he said, "Tell me, Lord, who you are" (Acts 26:15).

In Mt. 1:23, the NEB translates *parthenos* as "virgin"; but for the two occurrences of the same word in Lk. 1:27, likewise referring to the mother of our Lord, NEB uses "girl". Let there be no mistake: *parthenos* means virgin, nothing more, nothing less. Disputes may continue concerning *alma*; but in the case of *parthenos* there is nothing to dispute.

Perhaps the one thing about the NEB New Testament which is most repugnant to this reviewer is the footnote associated with Mt. 1:16. The text speaks of ". . . Jacob of Joseph, the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus called Messiah." The footnote states: "Some witnesses read, 'Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary, a virgin, who gave birth to . . .'; one witness has 'Joseph, and Joseph, to whom Mary, a virgin, was betrothed, was the father of . . .'" This is the only place where the rendering of one witness was deemed of sufficient importance to warrant inclusion in a

footnote. The implication for the reader who is unable to verify what that "witness" is, may be put thus: whether or not Joseph was Christ's real father is a question of reader's choice, since even the early witnesses were divided. Little would he know that the "one witness" is a corrupt Syriac version, of virtually no value in determining the original of the passage when placed beside literally thousands of other witnesses, many of distinguished reliability. The implicit and depressing deceit of the NEB translators in including such a footnote cannot do otherwise than to reduce greatly their credibility as objective scholars.

Conclusion

Ranting attacks on the NEB overlook the value of the work, especially the hundreds of verses which become far more intelligible than they are in the AV. Furthermore, the thought-by-thought translation method holds promise for the future, if utilized by those with deep reverence for the Word of the Living God. Certain it is that the NEB version can undoubtedly be used with great profit and little danger by knowledgeable students of Scripture.

The tragedy of the NEB lies in the heterodox bias that is so strong, and served with such fervor, that enormous distortions and perversions of great significance are manifest on every hand. These could certainly serve as pitfalls for the unwary, and lines of defence for the aggressive modernist. In short, if the NEB is to be used at all by the untutored Christian layman, such usage should be with pronounced reservations.