

# THE SPRINGFIELDER

Vol. XXV

Spring, 1961

No. 1

THE SPRINGFIELDER is published quarterly by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

ERICH H. HEINTZEN, *Editor*

J. A. O. PREUS, *Associate Editor*

MARK J. STERGE, *Associate Editor*

## Contents

	Page	
EDITORIALS		
Twenty-five Years of Service.....	1	
<i>Ich war bei Billy Graham</i> .....	3	
Search for Meaning.....	4	
Response.....	7	
THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON IN THE LUTHERAN DOGMATICIANS.....	8	
J. A. O. Preus, Professor, New Testament		
THE DAVIDSMEYER MEMORIAL LECTURES, 1961		
I. WHAT I EXPECT OF MY PASTOR IN THE PULPIT.....		34
Louis A. Menking, Chicago, Illinois		
II. WHAT I EXPECT OF MY PASTOR OUTSIDE THE PULPIT.....		49
John H. Strietelmeier, Valparaiso, Indiana		
THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT— REVIEW AND APPRAISAL.....	65	
Lorman M. Petersen, Professor, New Testament		
BOOK REVIEWS.....	68	

Clergy changes of address reported to Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., will also cover mailing change of *The Springfielder*. Other changes of address should be sent to the Business Manager of *The Springfielder*, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

Address communications to the Editor, Erich H. Heintzen, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

Business correspondence should be addressed to Norman A. Bumby, Business Manager, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

# The New English Bible

—Review and Appraisal

THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT. Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, 1961. 447 pages. Cloth. \$4.95.

IN RECENT years the church has been almost surfeited with English translations of the Scriptures. *The New English Bible* now demands our special attention since it already has become a strong rival of all other versions in the field. It is another British version, as so many great versions have been, published by the major Protestant churches of the British Isles on the 350th anniversary of the King James Version of 1611. Thus the authority of many churches and the best of British biblical scholarship lie behind the NEB. It is significant that Dr. C. H. Dodd, Congregationalist scholar from Oxford, was director of the project which was thirteen years in the making.

No doubt the greatest claim of the NEB for recognition is that it is an exciting and daring *new* version outside the tradition of the Authorized Version, one audacious enough to "tamper" even with the traditional wording of the Lord's Prayer. "What was now needed was not another revision of the Authorized Version but a genuinely new translation." (*Introduction*, vii.) Aside from this, the stated purpose of the version is the usual "a faithful rendering of the best available Greek text into current speech of our own time, and a rendering which should harvest the gains of recent biblical scholarship." (*Introd.*, vii.) "It should be said that our intention has been to offer a translation in the strict sense, and not a paraphrase, and we have not wished to encroach on the field of the commentator." (*Introd.* x.) Translators have always made these claims, so the "proof of the pudding will have to be in the eating," as the British themselves say.

In judging a translation, one must ask four basic questions. The first question: Is the translation based on the best text available? Regarding the NEB, one must answer this question in the affirmative. Whether the committee always translated the best text where there are variant readings is another matter. There are some readings in the footnotes one would like to see in the text. By the translators' own admission (*Introd.*, vii.), their principles of textual criticism are subjective and eclectic. But then we must remember that the matter of an established text is somewhat unsettled today. Nevertheless, Luke 22:19b-20 (the cup of the Lord's Supper) could have been placed into the text. On the other hand, the handling of the ending of Mark (printing it in the text) and of the *Pericope Adulterae* of John 7:53-8:11 (placing it at the end of John's Gospel) is something other versions could well imitate. The Rendel Harris reading ("in Enoch which went") regarding 1 Pet. 3:19 finally got what it deserved—deletion even from the footnotes.

The second question: Is the translation accurate? Does it represent the thought of the original Greek? A reading of the entire translation reveals that, as a whole, the NEB is accurate enough. The deity of our Lord and His Virgin Birth are not questioned. (Cf. Luke 1:27, "girl," and Matt. 1:23, "virgin.") In many places the translation is brilliant; for example, the rendering of the Good Shepherd Chapter, John 10. Some renditions are questionable, however, if not wrong (sometimes interpretation for translation): "see the right prevail," Matt. 5:6; "test" for "tempt," Matt. 6:13; "the Son of Man has the right on earth to forgive sins," Matt. 9:6; John's baptism is "a baptism in token of repentance," Mark 1:4; "Advocate" for Comforter, John 14:16,26; "in virtue of their faith," Rom. 3:30; "remedy for the defilement of our sins," 1 John 2:2;4:10 (we prefer "means of expiating sin" found in Rom. 3:25, but awkward as it is, there still remains to be found a good substitute for "propitiate"). Addressing Christ as "Sir" sometimes is out of place. Why should God be addressed as "thou" (John 17:2) and Christ addressed as "you" (John 6:69)? See also Matt. 5:17, 32;6:33;16:18. Mark 15:39. John 1:1-3;3:5;3:16; 10:35. 1 Cor. 7:36. Gal. 4:3. 2 Tim. 3:15. No doubt the committee will receive some criticism for the interpretive paraphrase in Romans 1:17—"God's way of righting the wrong" for "righteousness of God"—especially in the light of the rendition ("justice") of this important phrase in Rom. 3:21. It is difficult to conceive of God's justice *apart* from Law.

The third important question is, Does the version communicate? Does it speak the mind of God in the language of the people? This is the reason we have versions in the first place. Without a doubt this is NEB's strong point. It is good contemporary English. It reads well and is easily understood. Even the format and major division headings invite the reader to read long sections with ease. Idiomatic fresh English—the original Greek was very idiomatic—is in abundance: "They have been drinking," Acts 2:13; "stay awake" for "watch," Matt. 26:40; "day's wage" for "penny," Matt. 20:2; "tax-gatherers and prostitutes" (?), Matt. 21:31; "donkey" for "ass," Matt. 21:2; "big dinner party" for "great supper," Luke 14:16; "God and money" for "God and mammon," Luke 16:13; "he began to feel the pinch," Luke 15:4; "in truth, in very truth," for "verily, verily," John 10:7; "I never sponged upon you," 2. Cor. 12:13.

For the American reader, however, there are some less fortunate renderings. Some are distinctively British, some are ambiguous, and some are both British and ambiguous: "Jesus whom you had done to death, by hanging him on a gibbet," Acts 5:30; "cornfields," Matt. 12:1; "fall foul" for offend, Matt. 13:57; "scheme," Matt. 26:4; "trying to catch me out" for "tempt," Matt. 22:18; "shoot the net to the starboard," John 21:6; "straining off a midge, yet gulp down a camel," Matt. 23:24; "the day of Pentecost was running its course," Acts 2:1; "the words are yours," Matt. 26:25; "alas!" for woe, Matt. 23:13; "servant" for slave, John 15:15. Readers will debate whether they prefer "Messiah" (45 times) or "Christ" (only once in John 20:31) as the name of our Lord. In 1 Tim. 3:2 we find "faithful to his one wife."



The final question: Is the version suitable for public worship? How much will the church use it? Of course, only time will tell. The English is not only contemporary but dignified. Shorter, clipped sentences often enhance the force and beauty of the message. Sometimes one finds new "punch" in old familiar passages. We like the flow of Mark 16:15: "Go forth to every part of the world, and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation."

Final judgment will have to wait until NEB-OT appears. In the meantime we are grateful for this provocative and catchy translation in modern English. Bible students will want it on their shelves as a fresh approach and as an aid to better understanding of the New Testament. But we predict it will not easily win popular acclaim and general usage in our country. It is a little too bold and British. For American readers, the most difficult part of the NEB's journey to success will not be from Greek to English but across the Atlantic. We doubt that it will replace RSV or KJV in America.

*Lorman M. Petersen*