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Two Modern Versions Compared

by Victor Perry

In the following pages Mr. Perry presents a careful and selectively detailed comparison of the New Testament sections of the New English Bible and Today's English Version. The interval since his study was accepted for publication in our pages (the delay is entirely the editor's responsibility) has witnessed two material developments: the publication of the third edition of the United Bible Societies' edition of the Greek New Testament (UBS³) in 1975 and the publication of the complete Bible in Today's English Version (the Good News Bible) in 1976. Editorial footnotes draw attention to a few places where UBS³ differs from the earlier edition quoted by Mr. Perry, and to quite a number of places where the New Testament rendering in the Good News Bible (British edition) deviates from that in the 1966 edition of Today's English Version. Despite Mr. Payne's warning words about abbreviations in his review of the Good News Bible in our last issue, we have for this particular purpose distinguished the 1966 edition as TEV and that of 1976 as GNB.

The articles by Dr. R. G. Bratcher to which Mr. Perry refers appeared in The Bible Translator, vol. 17, no. 4 (October, 1966) and vol. 18, no. 4 (October, 1967).

When the NEB and TEV are quoted for comparison, the NEB comes first, followed by the TEV rendering. When the TEV is quoted immediately after the NEB, it is given in brackets with the reference.

THE NEB became the most widely sold modern version of the New Testament on its publication in 1961. Wide news coverage had brought it to everyone's notice, whether church-goer, Bible-reader or not. The TEV, *Good News for Modern Man*, was published in America in 1966, and when it was published over here by Collins at the beginning of 1968, we were told that it had "already sold 8 million copies in under a year since publication". There are, then, presumably more copies of the NEB and TEV in circulation than of any other modern translation of the New Testament, the RSV excepted. This article will present some comparisons between the NEB and TEV. No attempt will be made at any sort of completeness; e.g. the format of the TEV, its section headings, illustrations, useful word list and index are passed over. Even in the matters discussed it is clear that only a few points can be covered, but it is hoped that enough will be said to make judgements possible.

The article will deal first with the text underlying the two versions and then with the translation. The latter part is sub-divided into General Considerations, Paraphrastic Interpretation, Theological Terms and Style, but it is admitted that this division is somewhat arbitrary and some examples could be assigned to more than one section.

I. TEXT

Two quite different methods of deciding on the text to translate were adopted by the translators of the NEB and TEV. The NEB text was decided on by the translators as they proceeded, whereas the TEV is based on the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. The TEV method of basing a translation on one of the modern editions of the Greek text has been considered the better, though, of course, translators always have the right to differ from their basic text. The TEV gives no variants, but the NEB gives variants in footnotes. However, its method of presenting these has been open to criticism. "Witness" is used in too wide a connotation, and "some witnesses" can mean anything from a few Latin manuscripts to a considerable number of important Greek manuscripts (at Acts 2: 16 it includes all the Greek manuscripts except D).

A widely criticized feature of the UBS Greek New Testament is its use of brackets. Single brackets "are used to enclose words which are regarded as having dubious textual validity", and double brackets "are used to enclose passages which are regarded as later additions to the text, but which are retained for their evident antiquity and their importance in the textual tradition". This leads to inconsistency in practice. Many variants which have "dubious textual validity" and which are "regarded as later additions to the text" appear in their right place, the apparatus. If the words are thought to be part of the original text, they should appear there. Otherwise they should get no further than the apparatus. The TEV method of dealing with bracketed passages increases the confusion. Passages bracketed in the Greek text are translated without brackets in the TEV except Mt. 21: 44¹ and Lk. 22: 19b-20,² which are printed in double brackets in the Greek text and in single brackets in the TEV. Acts 3: 13 seems to be an exception where the bracketed words are not represented in the TEV, but this might be for stylistic reasons.³ (The ending of Mark and John 7: 53-8: 11 are special cases and will be discussed below.) The TEV, however, also includes in brackets "clearly secondary material" omitted from the Greek text, when a whole verse or more is involved. (At Acts 15: 34

¹ This verse is omitted in the GNB text.

² GNB prints this passage without brackets.

³ The bracketed words are the repeated *ho theos* before *Isaak* and *Iakōb*.

the shortest reading is translated.⁴) The preface to the TEV states, "Verses marked with brackets [] are not in the oldest and best manuscripts of the New Testament". Presumably the procedure described above also results in some other passages "not in the oldest and best manuscripts" appearing in the TEV without brackets, when they appear in the Greek text in brackets. Besides the passages mentioned above Dr. Bratcher lists seventeen passages which appear in the TEV in brackets: Mt. 17: 21; 18: 11; 23: 14; Mk. 7: 16; 9: 44, 46; 11: 26; 15: 28; Lk. 17: 36; 22: 43-44; 23: 17; Jn. 5: 3b-4; Acts 8: 37; 15: 34; 24: 6b-8a; 28: 29; Rom. 16: 24.⁵ All the passages bracketed in the TEV are omitted from the NEB, but given in the footnotes except Lk. 22: 43-44, which is printed in the text with a note that it is omitted by "some witnesses".

Both the "longer ending" and the "shorter ending" of Mark are printed in the UBS Greek Testament in double brackets and are so headed. In the TEV they are printed in single brackets with the headings "An old ending to the Gospel" and "Another old ending". The NEB unsatisfactorily prints the shorter ending and the longer ending in that order without heading or brackets, with footnotes summarizing the textual position. Consistency would demand that both endings appear in footnotes only. The UBS Greek text prints Jn. 7: 53-8: 11 at the end of John in double brackets, but the TEV restores it to its usual place within single brackets. The NEB gives the passage at the end of John.

It was said earlier that if translators base their version on a published edition, they naturally have the right to disagree, and Dr. Bratcher gives fifteen places where the TEV differs from the UBS Greek text. In eleven of these passages the NEB agrees with the TEV. In the following list we give the reference, the TEV rendering, the underlying Greek text, and finally the UBS text: Mk. 6: 20, he became . . . disturbed (*ēporei/epoiei*); Mk. 6: 22, the daughter of Herodias (*thugatros autēs tēs Hērōdiados/ thugatros autou Hērōdiados*—the NEB text reads *thugatros tēs Hērōdiados*, but the translation naturally agrees with the TEV); Lk. 21: 19, you will save yourselves (*ktēsesthe/ ktēsasthe*); Acts 7: 46, for the God of Jacob (*theō/oikō*); Acts 12: 25, from Jerusalem (*ex Ierousalēm/eis Ierousalēm*); 1 Cor. 13: 3, to be burned⁶ (*kauthēsomai/kauchēsōmai*; the NEB text reads *kauthēsōmai*, but Tasker's note shows that this is a misprint for *kauthēsomai*); 2 Cor. 8: 7, your love for us (*tē ex humōn en hēmīn agapē/tē ex hēmōn en humīn agapē*); Heb. 4: 2, they did not receive⁷ it with faith (*sunkekerasmenos/sunkekerasmenous*); Jude 5,

⁴ This verse is omitted in the GNB text.

⁵ All these passages are omitted in the GNB text except Lk. 22: 43-44, which appears unbracketed.

⁶ Spelt "burnt" in GNB.

the Lord (*Kurios/Iēsous*); Rev. 14: 3, a new song (*ōdēn kainēn/ [hōs] ōdēn kainēn*); Rev. 21: 3, people (*laos/laoi*). The four passages in this group where the NEB disagrees with the TEV are as follows. At Acts 10: 19 the UBS text has [*duo*],⁸ the TEV reads "three men" (*treis*), while the NEB omits a number. At Rom. 8: 28 where the UBS text has *panta sunergei*, the TEV reads "in all things God works" (adding *ho theos*). Here NEB follows the same text as the UBS Greek Testament, but takes *sunergei* as transitive like the TEV and translates "he [the Spirit] co-operates". At Heb. 10: 34 the TEV translates "for yourselves"⁹ (*heautois*), while the UBS text and the NEB read *heautos*. At 2 Peter 3: 10 the TEV accepts the reading *aphanisthēsontai*, translating "will vanish". The UBS and NEB texts have *heurethēsetai*, and the NEB paraphrases "will be laid bare". The TEV reading is not mentioned in the NEB.

The above lists show a few of the differences between the text underlying the NEB and TEV. A full collation is not possible here, but in order to remove some haphazardness a comparison was made of the two versions of Mk. 1-10 and Acts 1-10 to discover textual differences that showed in translation. This limitation was adopted because this article is mainly concerned with NEB and TEV as translations, and because free translation can hide differences in the underlying text. The omission or inclusion of *eis to ploion* in Mark 8: 13 or of *legontes* in Mk. 8: 16, for example, need make no difference to the translation. Again at Mk. 10: 6 both the NEB and TEV read "God made", although *ho theos* occurs in neither the NEB nor the UBS text. A list of such differences follows. Sometimes the manuscript evidence is complicated, but reference to the UBS text will show full evidence for the various readings. NEB is quoted first, followed by TEV in brackets with the reference. "John the Baptist appeared" ("John appeared . . . baptizing", Mk. 1: 4; the NEB is supported by B 33 892 cop.bo); "in warm indignation" ("was filled with pity", Mk. 1: 41; the NEB follows D a d ff² r¹); Mk. 3: 14 where NEB omits but TEV translates *hous kai apostolous ōnomasen*, bracketed in the UBS text; "It is the same with those" (Mk. 4: 16; the TEV omits *homoiōs* with the UBS text); "Why are you such cowards?" ("Why are you frightened?", Mk. 4: 40; the NEB reading is supported only by W, but other manuscripts and versions include *houtōs*); "what people were saying about Jesus" ("about Jesus", Mk. 5: 27; the preponderance of support is for the UBS/TEV reading); Mk. 6: 23, where TEV translates [*polla*] of the UBS text; Mk. 6: 41, where TEV translates [*autou*] of the UBS text; in Mk. 6: 47 NEB translates "the boat was already" and one suspects

7 GNB "accept".

8 UBS³ *treis* (unbracketed).

9 For TEV "you still had for yourselves" GNB has "you still possessed".

the inclusion of *palai* with p45 D fam 1 etc., but Tasker omits it; in Mk. 7: 3 NEB translates neither *pugmē* nor *pukna*, an omission supported only by Δ syr.sin cop.sa and DiatessaronP; Mk. 7: 4, where TEV translates [*kai klinōn*] of the UBS text; “to maintain” (“in order to uphold”, Mk. 7: 9; here NEB and TEV seem to presuppose the same text, but the NEB text reads *tērēsēte* and the UBS text *stēsēte*); “Do not tell anyone in the village” (“Don’t go back into the village”, Mk. 8: 26; the NEB text is derived from k “on the ground that it best accounts for the rise of the numerous variants”); “mine” (“my teaching”, Mk. 8: 38; Tasker only cites W k cop.sa in support of the omission of *logous*); “and of the holy angels” (“with the holy angels”, Mk. 8: 38; only p45 W syr.sin cop.fay arm support the NEB text); in Mk. 9: 42 TEV translates [*eis eme*] of the UBS text; “The question was put to him” (“Some Pharisees came to him etc.”, Mk. 10: 2: the NEB text omits the words *proselthontes Pharisaioi* bracketed in the UBS text¹⁰); “beggar” (“begging”,¹¹ Mk. 10: 46; the evidence is involved—see the UBS text); “the twelve apostles” (“the eleven apostles”,¹² Acts 1: 26; NEB follows the reading of D d Eusebius, and the NEB note is rather misleading); “the prophet” (“the prophet Joel”, Acts 2: 16; the only Greek manuscript to support the omission of *Iōēl* is D); in Acts 2: 18 NEB does not translate *en tais hēmerais ekeinais*, an omission supported by D d gig r, but Tasker includes the words; “the apostles” (“the other apostles”, Acts 2: 37; Tasker cites D 241 d gig Augustine in favour of the omission of *loipous*); “by his holy prophets” (“by means of his holy prophets of long ago”,¹³ Acts 3: 21; only D h gig Tertullian are cited in support of the omission of *ap’ aiōnos*); “The Lord God” (“the Lord your God”, Acts 3: 22; *theos* is read by p74 vid B etc. and *humōn* is added by n^c AD, a number of other Greek manuscripts etc., but there are other variants); “the chief priests” (“the priests”,¹⁴ Acts 4: 1; the only support for *archieis* comes from B C 4 arm eth); “Jonathan” (“John”, Acts 4: 6, D is the only manuscript to read *Iōnathas*). Acts 4: 25 presents real confusion. Tasker reports, “It was decided to place in the text a rendering giving the general sense of D, and to note in the footnote the chief difference of the Byzantine text, viz. the omission of *dia Pneumatōs Hagiou*”. But NEB does not mention the words *tou patros hēmōn*, which are read in p74 n BE etc., followed by the UBS/TEV text; “they wanted” (“they decided”, Acts 5: 33; here NEB adopts the reading of AB etc. in preference to

¹⁰ The words appear unbracketed in UBS³.

¹¹ GNB “beggar”.

¹² For TEV “added to the group of the eleven apostles” GNB has “added to the group of eleven apostles”.

¹³ GNB “through his holy prophets who lived long ago”.

¹⁴ GNB “some priests”.

that of \aleph DP etc.); Acts 10: 19 has been discussed above; "He sent his word" ("the message he sent", Acts 10: 36; *hon* is read by p74 \aleph^* CDE etc., and omitted by \aleph^a AB etc.); Mk. 7: 16, 9: 44, 46 and Acts 8: 37 are translated in TEV in brackets in accordance with the principle described above.¹⁵

It is perhaps rash to attempt to draw any conclusions from so short a survey, but some things do become clear. The "eclectic" nature of the NEB text is obvious, and it can be seen that NEB is willing to adopt poorly attested readings, including Western readings, when other considerations, such as style or content, have influenced a decision.

II. TRANSLATION

1. General considerations

We shall consider first in this section some Synoptic parallels. At Mt. 5: 25-26 // Lk. 12: 58-59 neither NEB nor TEV is careful to reflect similarities or differences in the Greek. So the NEB has "constable" and the TEV "police" in both gospels, although Mt. uses *hupēretēs* and Lk. *praktōr*. Again, although both Mt. and Lk. have *ou mē exelthēs*, NEB has "you will not be let out" in Mt., and "you will not come out" in Lk., while TEV has in Mt. "you will stay" and in Lk. "you will not come out".¹⁶ A similar variety of rendering can be seen in Mt. 18:6 // Mk. 9: 42 // Lk. 17: 1-2, and if TEV is more faithful to the Greek, it is only by a small margin, although it is more idiomatic English. Thus *skandalisē* is translated in NEB "is a cause of stumbling" (Mt. and Mk.) and "cause to stumble" (Lk.), while TEV has "to cause to turn away from me" (Mt. and Mk.)¹⁷ and "to cause to sin" (Lk.). Both translations have "it would be better" for Mt.'s *sumpherei*, Mk.'s *kalon estin* and Lk.'s *lusitelei*. (We might note that RV varies the translation.)

NEB is inconsistent in its translation of *nomikos* and *grammateus*. The former is always translated "lawyer", but the latter becomes "lawyer", "teacher", "teacher of the law" and "doctor of the law", and variation occurs even in the same section. TEV goes to the other extreme by translating both words on all occasions "teacher of the law". It would not have been difficult to distinguish between these words. TEV is, however, sometimes more consistent. It has "wind" for *anemos* in Mt. 14: 24, 30, 32,¹⁸ whereas NEB has "wind", "gale", "wind". In Mt. 9: 10-13 // Mk. 2: 15-17 NEB inconsistently translates *hamartōloi* in its first occurrence as "bad characters" and in the following two instances "sinners". TEV here quite consistently

¹⁵ See p. 208, n. 5 above.

¹⁶ GNB "you will stay".

¹⁷ GNB "cause . . . to lose his faith in me" (Mt. 18: 6; Mk. 9: 42).

¹⁸ In Matt. 14: 30 GNB has "strong wind" for TEV "wind".

translates "outcasts". On the other hand, NEB translates *phōnē boōntos* in Mt. 3: 3; Mk. 1: 3; Lk. 3: 4 and Jn. 1: 23 consistently, if rather unidiomatically, "a voice crying aloud", while TEV has the more idiomatic rendering "someone is shouting" in the Synoptics but drops this for the literal translation "the voice of one who shouts"¹⁹ in Jn.

Two final examples of similar Greek being translated differently. In 1 Jn. 4: 4, 6 TEV reads "you belong to God . . . we belong to God", but NEB hides the similarity of the text with "you are of God's family . . . we belong to God". The words *lithos proskommatos* and *petra skandalou* are quoted from Is. 8: 14 in Rom. 9: 33 and 1 Pet. 2: 8. Here NEB translates "a stone to trip over, a rock to stumble against" in Romans and 1 Peter, while TEV has "a stone that will make people stumble, a rock on which they will trip" in Romans and "the stone that will make men stumble, the rock that will make them fall" in 1 Peter. TEV is slightly better English, but also somewhat inconsistent.

Consistency is apparently one of the translators' aims, because the new (1970) edition of NEB has removed some of the inconsistencies of 1961, but on the whole it still seems slightly less "faithful" than TEV.

When we turn from this type of passage to general accuracy in translation, it must be said at once that all modern translations should in theory be equally accurate when taken as a whole. Differences should be attributable to style, although theological tendencies, significant even if they appear slight, might affect the translation. We shall consider these questions below. Here we merely list a number of passages where NEB and TEV differ slightly. The selection is random, but tends to show that the TEV is often the preferable version, even if at times only because of its plainness. NEB is sometimes to be preferred, e.g. "the root of all evil things" ("a source of all kinds of evil", 1 Tim. 6: 10), but in the following list we prefer TEV in all cases: "he [Jesus] added" ("[the Creator] said",²⁰ Mt. 19: 5) "which he blessed" ("Jesus gave thanks for these", Mk. 8: 7); "Truly this man was a son of God" ("This man was really the Son of God!", Mk. 15: 39); "among you" [mg. "within you, within your grasp"] ("within you", Lk. 17: 21); "it is spirit that gives birth to spirit" ("Spirit gives birth to spirit",²¹ Jn. 3: 6); "God is the source of my being, and from him I come" ("I came from God and now I am here", Jn. 8: 42); "You . . . claim to be a god [mg. 'God']" ("you are trying to make yourself God", Jn. 10: 33); "shall come to life" ("will live", Jn. 11: 25); "Advocate"

¹⁹ GNB "the voice of someone shouting".

²⁰ GNB "And God said".

²¹ GNB "A person . . . is born spiritually of the Spirit".

("Helper", Jn. 14: 16 etc.); "God's mercy" ("God's many mercies",²² Rom. 12: 1); "conviction" ("faith", Rom. 14: 23); "on their way to ruin . . . on the way to salvation" ("are being lost . . . are being saved", 1 Cor. 1: 18); "you have been through the purifying waters" ("you have been cleansed from sin",²³ 1 Cor. 6: 11); "It is a good thing for a man to have nothing to do with women" ("A man does well not to marry", 1 Cor. 7: 1); "consolation . . . comfort" ("help . . . help", 2 Cor. 1: 3f.); "moral weakness . . . weak men . . . as such . . . merely human" ("worldly motives . . . in the world . . . worldly motives . . . the world's", 2 Cor. 10: 2-4); "You started with the spiritual" ("You began by God's Spirit", Gal. 3: 3); "the power which is at work among us" ("the power working in us",²⁴ Eph. 3: 20); "since Jesus was delivered to you as Christ and Lord" ("Since you have accepted Christ Jesus as Lord", Col. 2: 6); "use argument" ("convince", 2 Tim. 4: 2); "we have the faith to make life our own" ("we have faith and are saved", Heb. 10: 39); "it keeps the wheel of our existence red-hot" ("It sets on fire the entire course of our existence", Jas. 3: 6); "hallowed to his [God's] service by the Spirit, and consecrated with the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ" ("to be made a holy people by his Spirit, and to obey Jesus Christ and be made clean by his blood",²⁵ 1 Pet. 1: 2).

2. Paraphrastic Interpretation

The old bogey "paraphrase versus translation" does not now haunt discussions. All good "translations" must be to some extent "paraphrases". The question at issue is rather to what extent it is justifiable to add words of explanation or comment not represented in the original, whether these show a theological motivation or not. (In the examples in this section words added will be italicized.)

For example, in Mk. 4: 11 NEB adds "*as the Scripture says*", and in 2 Cor. 13: 1 TEV adds "*as the scripture says*", but in both cases the other version does not make the addition. In Acts 9: 2 NEB reads "*the new way*" and TEV "*the Way of the Lord*". Other passages where NEB and TEV both make interpretational additions, are: "*no less than the Gentiles*" ("*as much as the Gentiles are*", Gal. 2: 17); "*Gentiles and Jews*" ("*the Jews and Gentiles*",²⁶ Eph. 2: 14); "*with the help of the Holy Spirit*" ("*through the power of the Holy Spirit*", 2 Tim. 1: 14); "*scoff at religion*" ("*make fun of you*",²⁷ 2 Pet. 3: 3); "*the hour of fulfilment*" ("*the time . . . when all this will*

22 GNB "God's great mercy".

23 GNB "... purified from sin".

24 GNB "his power working in us".

25 GNB "and were made a holy people by his Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be purified by his blood".

26 GNB omits "the".

27 GNB "mock you".

happen",²⁸ Rev. 1: 3). These examples show that neither NEB or TEV is averse on principle to adding explanatory words. However, in NEB such additions are much commoner, and the following list contains examples, to which exception may be taken on the ground that they are commentary rather than translation: "guardian angel(s)" ("angel(s)", Mt. 18: 10; Acts 12: 15); "Passover hymn" ("hymn", Mt. 26: 30); "you may go home content"²⁹ ("you may go home", Mk. 7: 29); "every man living" ("every man", Rom. 3: 4); "does everything help the building of the community?" ("not everything is helpful", 1 Cor. 10: 23); "tongues of ecstasy" ("gifts of speaking",³⁰ 1 Cor. 13: 8); "In a word, there are three things that last for ever" ("Meanwhile these three remain", 1 Cor. 13: 13); "such is the influence of the Lord who is the Spirit" ("coming from the Lord who is the Spirit", 2 Cor. 3: 18); "godless world" ("world", 1 Jn. 2: 15).

Finally in this section we might note the anachronistic addition of "Christian", which occurs in both versions, but much more frequently in NEB. For example, in 2 Cor. 12: 18 NEB weakly translates "our friend", while TEV has "the other Christian brother". But in the next verse where NEB has "as Christian men", TEV reads "as Christ would have us speak".³¹ Some other examples where NEB adds or substitutes "Christian" are: "The Christians" ("The brothers",³² Acts 28: 15); "non-Christian public" ("people outside the church", 1 Tim. 3: 7); "the Christian teaching" ("our teaching", 1 Tim. 6: 1); "Christian brothers" ("brothers", 1 Tim. 6: 2). Compare also Acts 19: 23, 30; 28: 14; Gal. 1: 2; 1 Thess. 4: 16; 1 Tim. 5: 16.

3. Theological Terms

The theology of translators will inevitably leave its mark on their translations. Also theological implications might be read into translations, which were intended to be innocent of them, either because of the translators' carelessness or the readers' own beliefs. So some object to "You are Peter, the Rock" ("you are a rock, Peter",³³ Mt. 16: 18), because they think this rendering sells the pass to Rome. On the other hand the NEB translation "lower nature" ("human nature", Rom. 7: 5, etc.) is surely due to carelessness and not a misunderstanding of the Pauline view of man. Here we will deal rather briefly with some types of passages, where theological considerations might genuinely affect translation.

²⁸ GNB "when all these things will happen".

²⁹ GNB "go back home".

³⁰ GNB "gifts of speaking in strange tongues".

³¹ GNB "as Christ would wish us to speak".

³² GNB "The believers".

³³ GNB "Peter: you are a rock".

(a) *The church and church government.* In Acts, when *ekklēsia* refers to a local group of Christians NEB translates it "church" when it is in Jerusalem, and "congregation" elsewhere. So, for example, we have "congregations" in Antioch (11: 26), Syria and Cilicia (15: 41) and Ephesus (20: 17). The distinction is even maintained in successive verses in 15: 3, 4. Similarly, Paul addresses his letters to "congregations" (e.g. 1 Cor. 1: 2; 1 Thess. 1: 1), and we read of "congregations" in houses (e.g. Rom. 16: 5; cf. also vv. 1, 4, 16; Col. 4: 15). In 1 Cor. 6: 4 *ekklēsia* is translated "community". TEV has consistently "church". The distinction in translation in NEB seems to reflect confusingly a modern view of the church, but it is hard to decide what. Inconsistently, even NEB has seven "churches" in Asia (Rev. 1-3).

The NEB may also show ecclesiastical bias in the matter of church government. So we have "bishop" (Phil. 1: 1; Tit. 1: 7), and "leader or bishop" (1 Tim. 3: 2) to parallel "leadership" in the previous verse. Again "deacon" occurs in Phil. 1: 1; 1 Tim. 3: 8, 12, though in Rom. 16: 1 we have "who holds office" ("who serves"). TEV adopts the more satisfactory translations "church leader" and "church helper".

(b) *The wrath of God.* This term is quite intelligible, and so need not be changed on grounds of idiom or usage. It can be argued that the translation "judgement" is an accurate interpretation, as in "God's dreadful judgement" ("God's wrath",³⁴ Col. 3: 6) and "the terrors of judgement to come" ("God's wrath that is to come",³⁵ 1 Thess. 1: 10). However the word "retribution" ("wrath",³⁶ e.g. Rom. 2: 5) and the phrase "divine retribution" ("God's wrath",³⁷ Rom. 1: 18) can be objected to on two grounds. First, stylistically, "retribution" is not a word in common use, and secondly the word or phrase can be seen to reflect the view that *orgē* describes not "the attitude of God to man" but "an inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe", as C. H. Dodd wrote in his commentary on Romans.

(c) *The hilaskomai word-group.* The translations in NEB and TEV are as follows: *hilastērion* "the means of expiating sin" ("the means by which men's³⁸ sins are forgiven", Rom. 3: 25), "the place of expiation" ("the place where sins were forgiven", Heb. 9: 5); *hilaskomai* "to expiate the sins of the people" ("so that the people's sins would be forgiven", Heb. 2: 17); *hilasmos*, "the remedy for the defilement of our sins" ("the means by which our sins are

34 GNB "God's anger".

35 GNB "God's anger that is coming".

36 GNB "anger".

37 GNB "God's anger".

38 GNB "people's". (GNB is very sensitive to sex-discriminatory renderings.)

forgiven", 1 Jn. 2: 2; 4: 10). It can be seen that TEV consistently translates this word-group by the idea of forgiveness, a simple, but weakened, rendering. NEB accepts "expiate" rather than "propitiate" except in 1 John, where the translation is very clumsy. One cannot be satisfied with either version here, but, if something must be lost in translation, then TEV is preferable because of its simplicity.

(d) *The "righteousness" word-group.* The translation of words in this group will be illustrated briefly from the early chapters of Romans where they are so important. When Paul summarizes the gospel in 1: 16, 17, NEB misses the point with "here is revealed God's way of righting wrong". Luther would have approved the TEV translation, "the gospel reveals how God puts men³⁹ right with himself". This happy formula is also used by TEV in 3: 21, where NEB mistakenly has "God's justice", and in 3: 26, where NEB falls back on "justifies". Again in 3: 5 TEV is clear with "our doing wrong . . . God's doing right", while NEB has "our injustice . . . God's justice". In 4: 5 TEV correctly translates "declares the guilty to be innocent", which NEB parallels with "acquits the guilty". These few examples will show how the TEV translations make Paul's teaching clear.

4. *Style*

There are many factors that contribute to a translation's readability and intelligibility. Our experience is that TEV is much more readily understood than NEB by both teenagers and adults. We shall examine first a longer section to show how the two versions attempt to simplify a complicated original, then quote one or two verses to illustrate the greater directness of TEV, and finally give a longish list of words and phrases, where the NEB departs from ordinary usage or occasionally goes to the other extreme of using slang, which has the habit of quickly dropping out of fashion. If ministers or teachers find some of our examples hypercritical, they must remember how much more limited are the vocabulary and general reading ability of the average and sub-average person than their own. In fact, a careful study of the style of TEV might lead to more intelligible sermons.

The section we have chosen for comment is Eph. 1: 3-14, where it is clear that some restructuring of Paul's long sentence is demanded. NEB broke this sentence into eight shorter ones and divided them into two paragraphs. It has, therefore, been praised for its simplification. TEV, however, has fourteen sentences in four⁴⁰ paragraphs. The greater clarity of TEV may be illustrated from vv. 4-6. NEB is given first. "In Christ he chose us before the world was founded,

³⁹ GNB "people".

⁴⁰ GNB divides the passage into five paragraphs.

to be dedicated, to be without blemish in his sight, to be full of love; and he destined us—such was his will and pleasure—to be accepted as his sons through Jesus Christ, that the glory of his gracious gift, so graciously bestowed on us in his Beloved, might redound to his praise” (“Before⁴¹ the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his in Christ,⁴² so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love, God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would bring us to himself as his sons⁴³—this was his pleasure and purpose. Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son!”). This is a not unfair example. TEV’s removal of the initial inversion in NEB, its simplification of vocabulary (“founded”/“made”, “blemish”/“fault”, “destined”/“already decided”, “glory of his gracious gift, so graciously bestowed”/“glorious grace . . . free gift”, “redound to his praise”/“Let us praise”), and its brilliant closing formula, which it repeats in vv. 12 and 14, all make the meaning of the passage much more readily accessible and its impact more immediate. (We might ask who today would connect “gracious” and “graciously” with the idea of “gratuitousness”.)

Two verses which illustrate the greater clarity of TEV, are as follows: “Do not give dogs what is holy; do not throw your pearls to the pigs: they will only trample on them, and turn and tear you to pieces” (“Do not give what is holy to dogs—they will only turn and attack you;⁴⁴ do not throw your pearls in front of pigs—they will only trample them underfoot”, Mt. 7: 6); “Formerly you were yourselves estranged from God; you were his enemies in heart and mind, and your deeds were evil” (“At one time you were far away from God and made yourselves his enemies by the evil things⁴⁵ you did and thought”, Col. 1: 21). The first verse shows how a rearrangement can clarify the meaning, and the second how details, in themselves small, can add to or detract from the readability of a translation. TEV has paid particular attention to the English usage followed, as a comparison of almost any section in the two translations will show.

Finally, we give without comment a list of words, phrases and an occasional larger quotation to illustrate the different vocabularies and styles of NEB and TEV. (Where an example occurs more than once, only one reference is given for the sake of simplicity.) “Ascertained” (“found out”, Mt. 2: 7); “calumny” (“evil lies”, Mt. 5: 11); “Thy name be hallowed” (“May your name be kept holy”,⁴⁶ Mt. 6:

41 GNB “Even before”.

42 GNB “through our union with Christ”.

43 GNB “he would make us his sons”.

44 GNB starts a new sentence with “Do not throw . . .”.

45 GNB “were his enemies because of the evil things”.

46 GNB “May your holy name be honoured”.

9); "took to their heels" ("ran away", Mt. 8: 33); "Be off" ("Get out, everybody", Mt. 9: 24); "has become gross" ("is dull", Mt. 13: 15); "darnel" ("weeds", Mt. 13: 25); "it was all leavened" ("the whole batch of dough rises", Mt. 13: 33); "one flesh" ("one", Mt. 19: 5); "embellish" ("decorate", Mt. 23: 29); "unclean spirits" ("evil spirits", Mk. 1: 27); "you . . . truckle to no one" ("You don't worry⁴⁷ what people think", Mk. 12: 14); "virtuous people . . . sinners" ("respectable people . . . outcasts", Lk. 5: 32); "steward" ("manager" Lk. 16: 1); "one dot or stroke" ("the smallest detail", Lk. 16: 17); "in Holy Spirit" ("with the Holy Spirit", Jn. 1: 33); "hailed" ("called", Jn. 2: 9); "vessels"⁴⁸ ("dishes", Jn. 4: 9); "This is more than we can stomach" ("This teaching is too hard", Jn. 6: 60); "sovereign over all mankind" ("authority over all men",⁴⁹ Jn. 17: 2); "endue with" ("pour out on", Acts 2: 18); "extirpated" ("separated and destroyed", Acts 3: 23); "This touched them on the raw", ("they were so furious", Acts 5: 33); "of human origin" ("man-made",⁵⁰ Acts 5: 38); "his family connections were disclosed to Pharaoh" ("Pharaoh⁵¹ came to know about Joseph's family", Acts 7: 13); "invoke" ("call on",⁵² Acts 9: 21); "hatched a plot" ("made plans", Acts 9: 23); "without demur" ("without any objection", Acts 10: 29); "You swindler, you rascal" ("you are full of all kinds of evil tricks", Acts 13: 10); "obdurate" ("stubborn", Acts 19: 9); "divine pre-eminence" ("greatness", Acts 19: 27); "machinations" ("plots", Acts 20: 19); "laid an information" ("made their charges", Acts 24: 1); "anxious to ingratiate" ("wanted to gain favour", Acts 25: 9); "rapacity" ("greed", Rom. 1: 29); "evoked by" ("stirred up by", Rom. 7: 5) "the gracious gifts of God and his calling are irrevocable" ("God does not change his mind about whom he chooses and blesses", Rom. 11: 29); "loose livers" ("immoral people", 1 Cor. 5: 9); "fornication" ("immorality" 1 Cor. 6: 18); "if distress be our lot" ("if we suffer", 2 Cor. 1: 6); "You bore the smart as God would have you bear it" ("That sadness was used by God", 2 Cor. 7: 9); "I never sponged on you" ("I did not bother you for help",⁵³ 2 Cor. 12: 13); "I crave forgiveness" ("Please forgive me", 2 Cor. 12: 13b); "you take the shape of Christ" ("Christ's nature is formed in you", Gal. 4: 19); "God's rebel subjects" ("the people who disobey God", Eph. 2: 2); "incorporate in Christ Jesus" ("who believe in Christ Jesus",⁵⁴ Phil. 1: 1); "for

47 GNB "without worrying".

48 GNB "cups and bowls".

49 GNB "all mankind".

50 GNB "of human origin".

51 GNB "the king of Egypt".

52 GNB "worship".

53 GNB "financial help".

54 GNB "in union with Christ Jesus".

endless ages" ("for ever and ever", Phil. 4: 20); "incorporate in Christ" ("in Christ",⁵⁵ Col. 1: 2); "be consolidated in the faith you were taught" ("become ever⁵⁶ stronger in your faith", Col. 2: 7); "parricides and matricides" ("men⁵⁷ who kill their fathers and mothers", 1 Tim. 1: 9); "inculcate abstinence" ("teach that it is wrong . . . to eat", 1 Tim. 4: 3); "breaking their troth" ("breaking their first promise",⁵⁸ 1 Tim. 5: 12); "deny himself" ("be false to himself", 2 Tim. 2: 13); "the refractory" ("his opponents", 2 Tim. 2: 25); "add lustre to the doctrine of God" ("bring credit to the teaching about God", Tit. 2: 10); "When he had brought about the purgation of sins" ("After he had made men clean from their sins",⁵⁹ Heb. 1: 3); "ministrant" ("who serve God", Heb. 1: 14); "It is not angels, mark you, that he takes to himself" ("it is clear that it is not the angels that he helps", Heb. 2: 16); "arrogates to" ("chooses for", Heb. 5: 4); "the stigma that rests on God's Anointed" ("to suffer scorn for the Messiah", Heb. 11: 26); "intractable evil" ("evil and uncontrollable", Jas. 3: 8); "You, no less than they, are among the initiated; this is the gift of the Holy One" ("you have had the Holy Spirit poured out on you", 1 Jn. 2: 20); "contaminated with sensuality" ("stained by their sinful lusts", Jude 23); "heed" ("obey", Rev. 1: 3); "Behold" ("Look", Rev. 1: 7); "to sweep her away with its spate" ("so that the flood of water would carry her away",⁶⁰ Rev. 12: 15); "whore" ("prostitute", Rev. 17: 1); "conflagration" ("burning",⁶¹ Rev. 18: 9); "bedizened with" ("cover herself with", Rev. 18: 16); "translucent" ("transparent", Rev. 21: 21) "scion and offspring of" ("descendant of the family of",⁶² Rev. 22: 16).

The above examples from NEB display a wide range of strangeness or difficulty for many readers. Some are simply unidiomatic, others unintelligible. Many who bought NEB thinking it was in "modern" English, must have asked themselves, "Whose modern English?", if they read it.

We consider that evidence has been given, which shows that NEB is, in several respects, inferior to TEV but, even if this last section were to stand alone, TEV would be preferred, because it can bring God's Word so much more simply, directly and clearly to so many more people.

Rhuddlan, Clwyd

55 GNB "in union with Christ".

56 GNB omits "ever".

57 GNB "those".

58 GNB "breaking their earlier promise".

59 GNB "After achieving forgiveness for the sins of mankind".

60 GNB "(poured out a flood of water after the woman,) so that it would carry her away".

61 GNB "the flames that consume her".

62 GNB "descended from the family of".