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The English Bible From KJV to NIV by Jack P. Lewis. Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1981, 408 pp. \$16.95.

The variety of English versions available today has the salutary effect of producing more Bible readers, since people can more easily find a version that suits them. But most probably choose their favorite translation on the basis of "liking it," whatever that means. Few ever consider what is a proper philosophy of translation or the technicalities involved in producing a good translation.

Several books have appeared in recent years evaluating existing English translations. This one, by Jack Lewis (whose interest in the English Bible is long-standing), is one of the most thorough, if not the most thorough. Though not including as many translation as the book by Kubo and Specht, it does include all the ones significant to evangelicals and examines them more in detail.

It would be impossible, I suppose, for anyone writing on this subject to be totally objective, but Lewis scores well in this area. He does seek to let the evidence speak for itself, and his summaries measure the success or lack of it of each translation against its stated purpose. Of course the author has preferences, stylistic and doctrinal, and these do show sometimes. He is a bit hard on the KJV; fails to consider the anti-Messianic bias of the RSV; is unhappy with the premillennial preference he finds in the NASB and the New KJB; and feels it wrong for the Living Bible to indicate that salvation comes before baptism!

Most chapters include a discussion of the underlying text used by the translation, the vocabulary, success of communication, and notes. There is also an introductory chapter on the pre-KJ English Bibles, and a finally appeal to read the Bible in whatever version appeals. The bibliography is most extensive.

To sum up: detailed data for the serious person to use in comparing and evaluating English translations.

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