

person plural was to be used as an honorific for Jesus Christ, both when addressed by his disciples and when referred to in narrative by the evangelists. In the case of the apostles, any one apostle referred to as absent should be given the honorific if actually named. In the case of God, the committee was at first inclined to use the second person singular "Thou" and "Thee", but when objection was raised that this implied the inequality of the Persons of the Holy Trinity—since the honorific plural was being used for Jesus Christ the Son—the committee decided to use the honorific plural for God the Father also. However, the honorific forms seemed very out of place when the Father or the Son addressed each other. So, in keeping with the altogether unique relation which the Persons of the Trinity bear to one another, it was decided that the second person singular should be used within this relationship. Thus, when God the Father speaks to Jesus, as at the baptism, or when Jesus prays to his Father, as in John 17, the second person singular is used. On the other hand, when any ordinary human being prays to God, the honorific plural is used.

These working rules have proved to be fairly satisfactory. Yet they have not solved all problems. It has seemed very artificial to refer to the Holy Spirit with the honorific plural, as also to the pre-incarnate Word in John 1. So the committee have recognized that their working rules cannot be followed rigidly. But perhaps they can claim as great a measure of consistency as may be found in the Hindi language itself.

It should be added that the committee decided not to use the honorific suffix *-ji*, much as this was desired by some of the consultants. It was felt this form of expression, while fitting for hymns and personal witness, was somewhat in excess of what should be expected in a faithful translation.

It remains to be seen how the Christian church will welcome the use of the honorific forms in the forthcoming Hindi revision of the New Testament. There is every reason to believe that the revision will be greatly welcomed by non-Christians with a Hindu cultural background and by evangelists who are interested in placing the Scriptures in their hands.

IN THE BENGALI NEW TESTAMENT

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In Bengali, the personal pronoun "you" has three forms, each having its own inflexions for number and case: they are *tui*, *tum*, and *apni*. The foremost is used to small children, who soon learn to reply in it, but as they grow older it will usually be discarded; it is sometimes also used to address inferior or despised persons and sometimes in anger. The old Bengali versions have kept it in one or two places (e.g. where the soldiers mocking Christ say, "Prophecy you, who it was who smote you!") but it will not appear in the new version.

The next is not only the ordinary, intimate term used in conversation with persons of lesser standing and with one's close friends, but is used also when man prays to the Deity.

The last is the honorific form which courtesy demands in addressing superiors or those with whom one's relationship is not considered so close.

There are also ordinary and honorific forms for the third person, "he" or "she" and for "who", and these, like all the pronouns in the second person, have their own inflexions for number and case, and the verbal endings are also all subject to appropriate inflexion.

We are thus saved in Bengali from that confusion that can arise in, for example, Marathi, where it is difficult to distinguish an ordinary plural usage from an honorific singular. For us the translator's problem is mainly concerned with the decision as to which form to use, and such points as the following arise, some in conversation, others in the narrative.

(1) The old Bengali version, perhaps in order to do honour to the authority and supremacy of Christ, shows Him using, in conversation with any and every one, the ordinary, intimate word and never the honorific. This, we now agree, is improper. His attitude in addressing dignitaries like the High Priest and Pilate would certainly not have been lacking in courtesy, and we should expect the honorific to be used. We may, however, consider that, in the case of others of not so exalted a rank, He would use the more intimate form, and certainly when He or His apostles are called upon to pronounce judgements as from God Himself, the honorific would disappear. (Acts 23:3 and 5 illustrate this—the former ordinary, "God shall smite thee"; the latter honorific, "I did not know that *he* was the High Priest").

It will be clear that there is no honorific, naturally, in the first person; but what is to happen when Christ is the speaker and when He either adds a relative clause introduced by "whom" or uses a name or title by which to indicate Himself? Will the relative pronoun in the one case, or the verb ending in the other, be of honorific form? The reader may consider such passages as Mk 10:45; 13:35; Lk 9:58; Jn 5:19-21 and 13:31. All Bengalis would agree that no speaker would presume to use the honorific to refer to himself. The practice in the Bengali N.T. hitherto has been to apply the honorific in such cases as we have given, seemingly overlooking the *oratio recta* or because the ordinary form would be derogatory.

While appreciating that there may be different views on this we shall hope not only that this may be changed, but that the simple, not-so-discerning reader of the N.T. may come to realise that in such cases, even when Jesus uses "the Son" or "the Son of Man" in place of "I", the ordinary form rather than the honorific is proper.

We should expect that the common people addressing Christ, or

speaking of Him, will use the honorific as for a *guru*, but such courtesy is not shown Him when His critics and enemies are hot in their displeasure (Jn. 7:20, "Thou hast a devil"; cf. Mk. 3:22) nor when He stands before the judgment-seat or in the hall or becomes the object of the crowd's outcry, "Crucify him!"

(In the Epistles, the opening salutations are formal and the honorific is used to address the saints, but thereafter the language follows the more intimate form.)

(2) As to narrative, the N.T. writers would no doubt agree to the translator's use of the honorific in speaking of the more important persons who appear, and always, of course, in speaking of God, of Jesus, of His mother and His disciples, as well as of the patriarchs and prophets of former days and of the leaders and respected members of the Church and at times of the saints in glory.

An important point arises in translating the Gospels. Does there come a stage when, co-incident with their now openly displayed enmity towards Christ, the Pharisees and Scribes and Elders must forfeit their title to the honorific in the narrative? This certainly seems legitimate and even necessary. (To take Mark's gospel as an instance, this stage seems to be reached at 12:12.)

TRANSLATION NEWS

First one-volume diglot of the Bible

For the first time in its history the British and Foreign Bible Society announces the publication of the first of many Diglot Bibles in one volume. It will be appreciated that great difficulties confronted the Society in meeting the demands for these two special editions. To produce two Bibles alongside each other (one in Mbundu vernacular, the other in the Portuguese language) within one binding case and maintain a volume which would be convenient to handle has only been made possible after much research between the Society's Production Department, and its Printers and Binders. Some idea of the task involved, may be captured when it is realised that these Bibles required the setting up of over 15,000,000 letters.

The Mbundu language is spoken specifically in the districts of Benguella, Huambo and Bie in Angola, but also considerably in outlying areas. The approximate number of people who speak the language is given as 500,000. There is a Christian community of 100,000 about half of whom are literate. The Pentateuch, the Psalms and the New Testament have been revised and the remaining portions of the Old Testament translated by a Committee.

Version in Pidgin English

The B.F.B.S. in Australia announces the publication of the Four Gospels in New-Melanesian (Pidgin English). A representative committee of missionaries, in touch with the B.F.B.S. (London) Translations Department, prepared the manuscript. Its predecessor was St. Mark's Gospel, first published in 1956, and republished in revision in 1961, making a total printing of 25,000 copies. The Pidgin committee is proposing eventually to submit a manuscript of the whole New Testament. Already several of the books are in manuscript or draft form.