

The NCC Bible has a tiny footnote (and there are many of them on almost every page) which indicates that the reading here could mean "virgin." The note says, "Or *virgin*." This, however, in no way relieves the responsibility for translating the text itself leaving out the word "virgin."

In the Hebrew the word used is "*almah*" which means "virgin," and is translated in other Old Testament passages in the King James Version as "virgin." It is translated "virgin" in Genesis 24:43 and in the Song of Solomon 1:3 and 6:8. In these instances the Revised Standard Version substitutes "young woman" or "maiden." The context clearly indicates that "virgin" in the Genesis 24 passage has to do with Rebekah before her marriage to Isaac. The Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, made by 70 scholars about 270 B.C., translated "*almah*" by the Greek word "*parthenos*," which means "virgin." Matthew 1:23, written in the first century A.D., quoting this passage, also translated it "*parthenos*," "virgin." The other versions always retained "virgin" — the Latin Vulgate of the fourth century A.D., the English Revised Version of 1881, and the American Standard Version of 1901. If the Revised Standard Version translators had had any doubt about the meaning in Isaiah 7:14, such facts ought to have settled it. Actually the use of "*almah*" to mean "young woman" is a later Jewish interpretation which has gotten into our lexicons.

To break the force of the predictive nature of this passage of Isaiah, written 750 years before Christ was born, in such a way, is inexcusable, and we do not believe the true church will accept such handling of God's infallible Word.

Confusion and contradiction are introduced, for in the new Bible in Matthew 1:23, which is supposed to be a quotation and a fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14, the word "virgin" is retained. Who is right and who is wrong? Thus Isaiah and Matthew do not agree; yet Matthew appears to claim that Isaiah said something which he did not say.

The virgin birth of Christ has been one of the key points at which the whole modernist attack upon the Scriptures can be tested. The late Dr. J. Gresham Machen, author of *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, the most exhaustive and scholarly study of the subject of the virgin birth ever produced in

the history of the Christian church, made this point specifically. Now the NCC's new Bible emphasizes all this afresh.

At the time of the issuing of the new Bible, in my position as president of the International Council of Christian Churches, I released a statement to the press calling attention to this fundamental flaw.

Kenneth Dole, reporter for the *Washington Post*, Washington, D.C., gave my statement in a news story and took occasion to ask Dr. Luther A. Weigle, dean emeritus of Yale Divinity School and chairman of the committee of 32 scholars who wrote the new revision, about my charge. Dr. Weigle, who was attending a mass meeting in Washington celebrating the new Bible, replied, according to Mr. Dole:

"'Young woman' was used simply because that's what the Hebrew means.

"You can take it for granted that whatever is printed there is what the original language said. We can't be influenced by what people like or don't like in the way the words affect their theology."

Mr. Dole continued: "However, a footnote for 'young woman' says 'or virgin.' Asked why this alternative was used when the Hebrew doesn't say it, Dr. Weigle explained: 'Simply because it was the traditional word. We wouldn't put anything in a footnote that was remote from the truth.'"

If "young woman" is what the Hebrew means, to put a footnote in because it was the "traditional word" only confuses, and reflects on the translators themselves.

Thomas Nelson and Sons, printers of the Bible, in their publicity on the inside of the jacket declared: "It contains no changes in doctrine or fundamental concepts." But this removal of the virgin birth from the Old Testament is a basic change both in doctrine and fundamental concept and apparently Dr. Weigle in his confused reply admits this much.

THE HOLY SPIRIT ANSWERS

The Holy Spirit surely anticipated these attacks upon Isaiah 7:14 and He placed His sentinels on guard in such a way that the layman, unfamiliar with