

THE GOD WHO IS OVER AND WITH US:

THE 1983 "PROTESTANT LECTIONARY" ----- ELLIOTT #1750

In the "inclusive language" department, some current goings-on are more fruity than fruitful. Little girls are being taught to hate God and English--both the Bible and their native tongue being ineradicably sexist, i.e., "male-oriented" and so essentially alienating of females from their spiritual and literary heritages and thus from the institutions severally promoting both, viz., church (including synagogue) and school. Ironically, one result is a new sexism rooted in hatred for "the exclusively male Deity" and titles thereof and for the generic use (for deity and humanity) of the generic pronouns and pronominal adjectives: the Bible, literature, and our language itself belong to boys and men. Efforts to "scrub the Scriptures" (112 NW 24Oct 83 title), our literature, and our language of this male pollution are and will remain as pathetic and embarrassing as Victorian efforts to float dirty-talk-less editions of Shakespeare (eliminating body parts and functions between the tummy button and the legs--excuse me, "limbs")....This thinksheet gives one instance of the resulting loony perversities, viz., the translation of the tetragrammaton YHWH in the 1983 "Protestant Lectionary."

FACT #1: The PL (1983 Prot. Lect.) crudely rubs out the Bible's distinction between God-as-over-us (Adonai, "Lord") and God-as-with-us, God-as-our-God (Yahweh or YHWH, "LORD").

FACT #2: The history of the English Bible shows almost no exceptions to the rule that this vital biblical distinction be observed recognizably by the print-distinction between "Lord" and "LORD." The Jerusalem Bible preserves the distinction by transliterating the tetragrammaton: "Yahweh"--a rendering offensive to Jews, though the monks decided it while sitting in Jerusalem (in the Ecole Biblique)! Moffatt did so by translating YHWH "the Eternal," defective because it's cool English for the warm name of God: "the Lord" thus exclusively represents Adonai.* Curiosum: Since Latin, and thus the Vulgate, does not have this distinction, a translation only from Latin will obscure the distinction--instance Ronald Knox's translation as "Lord" for both YHWH and Adonai (and Ex.23.17, I just noticed--16Oct83--, where Vulg. has "dominus deus" for Adon-YHWH, not "Lord-LORD" but "the Lord thy God"--a rendering the Latin does not justify, but which reaches back to the Hebrew for the warm "thy": YHWH is our God by first his and then our choice (grace + covenant). NIV here: "the Sovereign LORD"; NEB: "the Lord GOD"; TEV: "the Lord your GOD"; AT: "the Lord GOD." NB: All find a way to preserve the distinction.)

1. In both OT and NT quotes, PL treats "Lord" as masc. (which it is, the fem. being "Lady") and "God" as neutral (which it isn't, since the fem. is "Goddess"). Worse, all instances of both Adonai and YHWH are considered offensive in the "Lord" and "LORD" translations, as the Eng. word is on the inclusive-language blacklist as signaling over/under--in spite of the fact that YHWH-"LORD" is over-with (expressive of both the cool and the warm dimensions of the relationship, as does "Father,"** which is inclusive language's most evil word except when "Mother" is eisegeted). Another factor in this mess is that Elohim ("God") and Adonai ("Lord") are synonyms, one writer preferring the one and another the other.

2. PS's wooden, word/word rendition of "Lord" and "LORD" as "Sovereign" is doubly "misandrist" (i.e., male-downputting, as "misogynist" means female-downputting): (1) The linguistic and historic maleness of Adonai and YHWH is revisionized out of existence in the interest of unisex, and (2) The warm masc. witness loses to overness.

* Adonai, which became a name, is structurally warm as title: "my Lord." So surrogate for YHWH, which carries Ex.3 warmth.

** On "Father," see also #982 and #1739.

#Functional, not formal.