

### Reasons for translating the Authorised Version

The English Bible of 1611 was called the Authorised Version because it was translated by the authority of both King and National Church. Objectors to the AV have challenged this truth but the facts speak for themselves. This was undertaken by three major teams of great scholars and churchmen who had worked on it interactively for over five years at England's three major think- tanks at Westminster, Oxford and Cambridge.

The translators' aim was accuracy and clarity conveyed in a high literary style. This new style was nevertheless thought by the godly scholars to be attainable by all English-speaking people through good teaching and preaching. It was a style highly suitable for learning off-by-heart. Such accuracy and high standard of language had not been found in older versions.

The new version was to unite all the positive features of previous versions and do away with their negative aspects, creating a pan-English language to be understood, learnt and used by all English-speaking people of whatever gender, status or social background to which they belonged. The idea was not to render the Biblical message into the language of the streets, as that language was incapable of expressing Biblical truths, but to create a new model language for all based on the language of Sion itself.

Thus Christian linguistics like William Cowper always stressed that the language of the AV was the language for the English nearest the language of Eden and Eden restored. Primarily the translation was also undertaken to put a stop to the large numbers of competing versions which were making joint worship and Bible Study difficult. The AV was a Bible to draw all into the one fellowship of the one flock of the one Church of the Lord Jesus Christ under one Saviour and King of kings.

### Modern demands for colloquial Bibles

Now, though the noble halls of Westminster, Oxford and Cambridge are still standing and still echo the voices of the great, the learned and the renowned, the demand for a dumbing-down of the language, message and uniting Christian factors of the AV in Christian testimony, witness, and writing is now growing.

Version after version of new Christian dialects for preaching, teaching and evangelism are

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emerging making, once again, joint worship and Bible study almost impossible. History is repeating itself and the clock is put back to pre-Hampton Court times when James' and the Church's wish, before the conference, was for a better translation which became a reality in 1611. The need today is not as great as in James' time because of this marvelous translation, though there is, sadly, a need because of new factors.

James had campaigned for a new translation for Scotland, split more by the Babel of languages than England, but he said that was a work for the churches (he meant a pan-Protestant kind composed of the Episcopalians and Presbyterians of his day). Such a situation is long past as each denomination nowadays tears pages out of the AV which do not suit them.

### The New Babel

Once again, it is clear to the traditional (genuine) Bible Christian, of whatever background and learning, that a new and reinforced Babel is splitting the churches as it seeks to alter the solid language and teaching of the Bible as found in the faithful translation of the AV. Sadly, because of their disunited condition nowadays, they just will not come up with a list of well-qualified translators who would be acceptable to all. Perhaps there is no one suitable.

Thus nearly all modern translations reflect an over-simplification of the Greek and Hebrew texts linguistically, theologically and socio-politically, as no denomination has the men or women for the task. We are thus being offered a wishy-washy plethora of versions in the form of easy-readers in the jargon of the streets so that now hardly two Christians in company carry the same Bible version around with them, or, as this practice is also diminishing, have it on their shelves.

We are witnessing a break-up in the unity of the Church caused by quarrelling over versions equal to the rebellious and confused times of the 17<sup>th</sup> century which Trevor Roper thus rightly calls 'the century of crisis'. Indeed, the Bible is being used today as a major instrument in destroying the churches.

What has caused this growing dissatisfaction with a Bible translation which has enriched, established and stabilized the English language for over four hundred years? The quite massive arguments raised against it are proposed on linguistic, technical, social, political, historical, practical, theological, moral, exegetical and expositional grounds. It must be emphasised, however, that the dissatisfaction with the Authorised Version is not primarily the fault of Liberal

Scholarship as so often stated in our circles.

Having majored in Text analysis at university, I am surprised and shocked at the way *Academia* is given the blame for what fanatic evangelical, pseudo-Reformed Bible-shredders are doing with God's Holy word. It is our own evangelical lack of scholarship and our devotion to denominationalism and theological fashions and externals which have rendered us incapable of 'rightly dividing the Word of Truth'.

### **Three ways of making words obsolete**

Looking at the linguistics, that is at the AV's language and style, we are told that it is antiquated, therefore old-fashioned, and therefore of no use to the modern world.

Now, a language only becomes antiquated when people stop using it. There are three linguistic laws determining historically when such an alteration takes place. ***One is when one word is substituted for another.***

For example, what we call a 'cloud' nowadays used to mean a 'crowd' so when we read in Hebrews 12 that we are compassed about with so great a 'cloud' of witnesses, it means that there is a 'crowd' of witnesses surrounding us. The word for the structures in the air which foretell good weather or storms was formerly 'welkin', as still witnessed in poetry, songs and proverbs. Think of Jean Ingelow's

*Winter Song*

which runs:

*Daughter, my daughter, my girl, I cried  
(Night is the time for the old to die)  
Woe for the wish if till morn ye bide —  
Dark was the welkin and wild the sky.*

If people had kept to 'welkin' there would have been no need for our changing the meaning of 'crowd'. Still, we could have kept both words.

***Another reason for language being altered is when a word has taken on an entirely different meaning merely by usage***

Think of Amos 9:10 where the prophet says that 'evil shall neither overtake nor prevent us'.

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Here 'prevent' means to go before. Nowadays 'prevent' means to hinder, forbid or stop. However, if we learn that 'prevent' has several meanings, we enrich our language rather than impoverish it.

Humour would also suffer if one word had only one meaning and the English pun would die out. Think of Romeo and Juliet as jolly dying Mercutio says 'Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man'. Think of a Finance Minister by rank and his decisions having a rank smell! By dumbing down our language by reserving one limited word to carry one limited meaning, we destroy thought, language, style and versatility in expression.

***The third way a word might disappear is if it has become politically incorrect.*** In 1965 when the Queen was to visit Germany, she was to be greeted with 'Heil Queen Elizabeth' (Heil Königin Elizabeth) just as the ancient Romans said 'Heil Caesar'. Germans thought this inappropriate as this greeting had been used for all national leaders, including Hitler. So it was decided to abolish the word. It is now even illegal to use it in certain connections.

Nowadays, the once familiar Gollywog fondly loved by British and American children has been forbidden for being politically incorrect, and the natural status of women is being eroded by the silly term Ms. So, many campaigning for a new Bible condemn the AV for being politically incorrect as it distinguishes between male and female pronouns. Indeed, it is this idea of 'political correctness' and a levelling down of all things that has become the greatest argument for doing away with the AV.

God is now denied his male appellation of Lord of lords and King of kings, and has become either a mere genderless thingummybob or is given a new gender and we are told that all the Biblical titles representing rank and order in the Church are undemocratic. Thus, titles like bishop and even pastor must go. It is now politically correct to call them 'teamworkers'. We may not treat God as anyone special, He is our 'partner' and we 'you' Him like anyone else.

### **A modern serious plea for the abolition of the AV**

Having lived abroad for over fifty years, I have not kept up with all the changes in evangelical thought and doctrines which have taken place in English-speaking countries. I first became fully aware of the anti-AV campaign of evangelicals just a few years ago when the English-speaking world celebrated the four-hundredth anniversary of the AV. Our Christian magazines, churches and lecture halls produced a mass of pro-AV evaluations which greatly outnumbered negative critical complaints, but I was surprised at the extreme bitterness and misinformed nature of the

AV's professedly 'Reformed' critics.

Three years ago, I gave a lecture on The AV at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, and immediately I received unsolicited material from a pastor by the name of Alan Clifford (*Ed. See A-557 and A-558: reviews of this man's errors*) condemning both my lecture and the AV severely, in the most ill-judged and unqualified terms. One of Clifford's works, with the Hamlet-like title of '*AV or not AV: This is the Question*' with an added plea to go back to the Geneva Bible of 1560, because it was allegedly more accurate and modern in expression, was dealt with very well by J. P. Thackway in two editions of the *Bible League Quarterly*, now also available on the Internet.

I dealt with Clifford's 16 page work entitled '*The Crown, A Conference and its Consequences or King James I, the Hampton Court Conference and the Authorised Version of the Bible. 'THE FORGOTTEN FACTS'*', with 'the forgotten facts' written in Clifford's capitals, for the magazine *New Focus* and allied comments for my web-site.

Oddly enough, though Clifford pleads for a return to the Geneva Bible which was corrected by our AV, he uses the NKJB himself which is far from representing a scholarly, evangelical, Reformed consensus. So, too, it contains many features which Clifford condemns in the AV. He has thus left the frying pan for the fire. Most of Editor Thackway's general comments on *AV or not AV* overlap with mine, so I shall mainly deal with the material not commented on by Thackway, found mostly in Clifford's alleged *Forgotten Facts*, but shall refer to Thackway's good judgement from time to time.

## **A deep misunderstanding of the background to the AV**

Clifford's main attack on the AV is motivated by a deep misunderstanding of the motives behind the Hampton Court Conference from both the King's and petitioners' sides, and what were its findings.

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Put positively, the Hampton Court Conference of 14th January 1604 had a lasting influence on the English Protestant Church and was the means under God of undertaking the still popular 1611 Authorised Version of the Bible.

Put negatively, it was an appeal by the petitioners, who in no way represented the true Puritan section, to invite Caesar to rule the Church and to reject the policy of the Church of England to be responsible for the Scriptures, worship, discipline and order in its own community.

However, contrary to what Clifford writes, all the delegates were Reformed men, the majority of whom wanted the Church to be ruled *by* the Church, but the Millenary Petitioners who prompted the conference preferred to argue directly for state backing rather than follow the Church Convocation which was already pressing through reforms asked for by the petitioners. Indeed, many had already been passed before the petitioners appealed to James.

Archbishop Grindal had shown what a risky state of affairs could arise when the monarch, then Elizabeth, was invited by radicals to rule the Church. I thus say that the petitioners did not represent true Puritan theology because such theology takes its cues from Scripture and the Church and not from the King and Parliament. This Cartwright and Travers had to learn in their appeal to Parliament to replace the Prayer Book by Travers' one-man revolutionary *Book of Discipline*.

It was the frustrated lack of success of those wanting a state controlled Church which eventually caused the Great Rebellion.

The petitioners' campaign was also risky for King James as they first smeared James' mouth with honey to get him on their side, and then attacked him when they became more radical than he. Indeed, it is those who profess to follow the petitioners who fawned on James, such as Clifford, whom we usually find inconsequently condemning James.

These, too, seek to put the clock of scholarship, language and sound theology, back to the chaos before the AV and return to even older versions or 'non-Latinate' translations which Clifford, for instance, believes are nearer modern speech and the language of the common man. However the Geneva Bible for which he pleads as more suitable for modern usage, but, again inconsequently, does not use himself, is based far more on Latin texts than the AV and contains the bulk of 'Latinate' expressions which Clifford would like to remove from the AV.

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Babel always brings chaos. Indeed, if it is simple words that Clifford wants, he should abide by the AV which has far more monosyllabic words than most modern versions. The Sermon on the Mount contains 82 per cent of monosyllabic words, mostly Saxon or Scandinavian. Of the 319 words of the Ten Commandments 250 of the words are monosyllabic and most of the others have no more than two syllables. This author remembers tackling the New English Bible in 1961 and wondering at its clumsy wording and awkward phrases, having to use his English dictionary, let alone his Greek dictionary, far too often. He always checked with the AV to improve his understanding!

*Be this as it may, Clifford's reasons for doing away with the AV are:*

### **1. The AV is the product of a corrupt church**

For Clifford the AV is the Bible of a corrupt Church. He cannot understand why Presbyterians, Strict Baptists, Brethren and Pentecostal Christians love the AV so much, and even complains that some worship it. Using false criteria, Clifford makes wrong conclusions. The AV was not translated by one denomination under an 'anti-Puritan Archbishop', as Clifford argues. Archbishop Whitgift was a staunch Puritan who delighted in preaching the power of God unto salvation. His Doctor's thesis was on 'The Pope is the Anti-Christ'. Whitgift campaigned against Ultra-Precision rebels such as Cartwright who had dropped the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith and joined the Hyper-Lutherans and Hyper-Calvinists in his Heidelberg retreat who thought that Luther and Calvin were too soft in church order and discipline.

Whitgift called Cartwright and his followers 'Rome under a new name' and trained Puritan preachers via Bullinger's *Decades* and Nowell's *Catechism*. He promoted the highly Calvinistic *Lambeth Articles*

. The AV was translated by the representatives of a united Church seeking further Reform, at a time when England was one of the most Reformed countries in Europe. This was, of course, four decades before the Second Babel of denominational disunity which broke the Reformation.

The AV was also built on great Reformed English translations such as those of Tyndale and Coverdale, followed by The Great Bible, The Bishops' Bible and the Geneva Bible. It is, however, based more on a reliable Greek and Hebrew text rather than the use of Latin texts, and is more consistent and expressive in its language. The old versions were aimed at different classes and societies of people like most of the new ones of today; but, Ian Paisley points out: '*The Authorized Version was aimed at being a Bible for all the people. It spawned a middle language which bridged the king and all his subjects.*'

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All that was good in the old translations, however, was kept. The translators' aim was to make good translations better. The Hampton Court Conference ended in unanimous agreement. The fact that so many denominations nowadays favour the AV, which Clifford bemoans, shows that if they had been around at the time, they would have joined hands with the AV translators. The King James Bible is therefore not the Bible of one denomination only but the Bible of the majority of English-speaking Christians world-wide who are not subject to Clifford's restrictive and closed-shop, myopic denominational bias.

### **2. The AV is the product of a corrupt King.**

Clifford would have us believe that he bases his views four-square on William Barlow's 1604 work *The Summe and Substance of the Conference*, which is only one of several contemporary reports on the conference. Barlow does, indeed, make for good reading and he writes honestly, 'Rede me and be not wroth. For I say no thyng but trothe,' and agrees with Fuller, Strype and most other earlier sources.

Clifford's use of Barlow is, however, make-believe. He hides behind a good name, but merely uses Barlow as a shield of straw, disagreeing radically with Barlow's honest report, claiming he is following what Barlow 'seems to suggest', not what Barlow actually says. This is, sadly, most typical of Clifford's attitude to, and use of, his 'proof texts'. He thus replaces Barlow's words with what he feels Barlow *ought* to have said.

Barlow, however, unlike Clifford's way-off account, writes objectively, relating accurately how all the members behaved and how impartially James treated all sides. *The Summe and Substance* can be consulted online and reveals Clifford's travesty of it. Clifford, leaning on supposed 'FORGOTTEN FACTS' (Clifford's capitals) which he has forced between Barlow's honest lines, claims that James was intolerant, two-faced, intimidating, humiliating, snivelling, frivolous, inept, unsavoury, cruel and 'highly enamored of his own performance' throughout the conference. Hardly anything of this is to be found in Barlow or any other report for that matter.

Again, quite contrary to Barlow, Clifford's main argument is that James was bisexual and thus something of a freak. He thus throws much obscene tabloid scandalmongering of his own concoction to poison Barlow's gentlemanly, honest account, and then exclaims: 'Can we be happy that such a King is so closely identified with the word of God?' Happily, it is obvious from Barlow's report that even the strongest critics were given a fair hearing and James shared the bulk of their concerns and was praised by all sides.

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Thackway comments on this: *'It is not certain that King James was bisexual. Historians differ on James' morals, and there is a tendency to look at his actions through the prism of today's obsession with these things. However, what he was like does not affect the AV. He did not raise the idea of the new Bible translation – the puritan-minded Dr. Reynolds did – James only agreed to the proposal and urged the project on. He was not even one of the translators, this he left to the six companies of 47 scholars, better men than he was. God can bring forth pure things through impure instruments, without approving the sin nor sully His holiness (Judges 14:2; 2 Chronicles 11:4; Isaiah 10:5; 45:1,7; Matthew 1:3,5,6). If James' being behind the AV is a problem, then so is David and his adultery being the background to some of the Psalms.'*

Having read widely through numerous contemporary documents on the subject besides new works praising James' integrity which are free from denominational bigotry, I find Clifford's treatment of James's alleged bisexuality and what his mind concludes from it, quite shabby. Needless to say, Clifford is totally and utterly in error as the wish for the AV came from the Puritan section but was immediately endorsed by the King, for reasons given above, who had especially invited the Puritans and Nonconformists to the colloquium with whom he stood in close friendship. He even invited Thomas Cartwright personally.

There is no clinical evidence of James being bi-sexual and the claims from Clifford's corner that James lived a life of sexual perversion contradict contemporary sources that he was the most chaste of monarchs. When John Durie Senior told the teenage King that he should be having thoughts of marriage, he answered that he would only marry a woman who loved the Lord and followed the Gospel. Such a gem he found in Anne of Denmark who bore him nine children. Indeed, James was treasured in Scotland for his chastity.

If James were twin-sexed as Clifford claims, and so lascivious as Clifford believes, we would have expected him to have mothered children from his own womb, too. One searches Buchanan, Calderwoode, Spottiswoode, James Melville and even John Knox, but one never finds a word indicating that James' actions were reflective of Clifford's words.

James strove more than most sovereigns to give an ear to the Nonconformist cause at a time when the more Ultra-Puritan of the Nonconformists like Cartwright and Travers would not even give fellow Nonconformists a fair hearing. A case in point is the Lancastrian itinerant preachers whom James allowed to dispense altogether with vestments, but the alleged 'Puritans' wanted them rigged out in Turkish robes such as Reynolds wore.

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Another sound Puritan move of James in recognising Non-Conformists as co-workers in the Christian ministry was his 1583 thrust in the Scottish Parliament for a pan-Protestant and international union of Reformed churches which did not bow to what he called the 'bastard Christianity' of Rome.

James, despite opposition from Parliament, gave the Protestants of Europe moral and financial support, especially at the start of the Thirty Years War. He was also instrumental in organizing the Synod of Dort. There was no criticism concerning a 'bisexual' King in Scotland when the Scottish Presbyterians followed the Confession of Faith drawn up by James, and used it until well into the Cromwell era.

If James were truly bisexual, that is having both masculine and feminine organs, for which there is no evidence whatsoever, why should Clifford condemn this? Does he then consider James a freak of nature who should have been put down? (I have been told that some use the term 'bisexual' loosely and faultily to describe promiscuity in general but again, we must ask for evidence which, as yet, is not forthcoming). If we compare James' known moral life and affection for his most chaste wife with those of other British kings such as William III who is the doyen of many Protestants, James' life was obviously exemplary. (*Ed. Please read my short Outline, O-027, which defines what is generally meant by 'bisexual'*)

Indeed, the general criticism of James amongst today's 'Reformed' people is based on a variety of misunderstandings. Even Iain Paisley, to keep in league with James' unfair critics in his otherwise fine book on the AV, tells us that the translators did not allow James to twist their translations. What an idea! James was probably as good a Greek and Hebrew scholar as the bulk of the AV translators. It was James, a sound scholar and man of letters, who appointed these men and gave them every encouragement in their work. All the suggestions he made concerning the organization of the translation were good, noble and God-honouring. He was a well-trained Classicist and theologian who had sat at the feet of Scotland's well-qualified Scholastics and Humanists, and though George Buchanan had beaten him mercilessly as a child, one could not deny that Buchanan had given him a thorough-going humanistic education.

Ratcliffe Barnet, in his book *The Makers of the Kirk*, helps us to understand James' suspicion of the motives of the anti-monarchical, Hyper-Presbyterian party to a high degree, by commenting on Buchanan's methods of teaching James. He says of Buchanan's methods:

*'He taught him many things right well, but he did not teach him to love the Reformer's faith. He*

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*was, however, a very perfect dominie, for the little rascal of a king soon found out that Master Buchanan was his master indeed.*

*In those days, when a boy-king was learning his letters, another boy, called "the whipping boy," was always at hand to take a whipping, by proxy, for the King when the royal rebel misbehaved. It was a bad prerogative. George Buchanan did away with the whipping boy, and made young James Stuart the Sixth suffer like the lave.'*

Ratcliffe Barnet, after telling several tales out of school concerning Buchanan ear-boxing and thrashing James, tells us, "*In later years James always looked afraid when anyone who reminded him of Buchanan came near him.*"

### **3. The AV is a 'corrupt translation'**

Clifford finds Puritan Reynolds, who suggested a new translation, 'quite tame' in his criticisms of the older translations, though Clifford still prefers them to the AV which did away with nearly all of their faults. Indeed, Reynolds is universally but wrongly made a speaker of the Puritan cause at Hampton Court but his performance at the conference was indeed weak, so that Fuller says he was far below himself or what one might have expected of him.

Nonetheless, Clifford's own reasons for abandoning the AV and returning to the Geneva Bible and other versions are far more 'tame' than Reynolds, and are scarcely worth mentioning. For instance, Reynolds asked that Psalm 105:28 which had been rendered 'they were not obedient', should be corrected as the very opposite is meant, so ridding the old translations of a glaring error. The AV thus translated this correctly to 'they rebelled not against his word.'

Clifford has no such fundamental errors to offer, never mind their corrections. Indeed, he fails to point out the times the translators bent over backwards to include Non-Conformist teaching for the sake of peace and unity amongst the churches. He believes the AV is corrupt because it does not reflect his own peculiar view of Church Government and Reformation, bemoaning that only one quarter of the AV translators were men of his views. This is happily not true, as not one single translator had departed so far from Reformed teaching as Alan Clifford has done.

Fuller shows the folly of individualistic definitions of the term 'Puritan', by explaining that 'Puritan' in Cromwell's days meant merely Anti-Episcopalian and was thus misused. But, this

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quite erroneous definition has persisted in Clifford's circle. Clifford is so anti-episcopal himself that he cannot imagine true Protestant Puritans pre-dating 17th century anti-episcopalian Levelers' revisionist thinking by a hundred years. So, too, he forgets that nearly all Britain's Reformers and most of the great Puritan preachers of the following Evangelical Awakening were Episcopalians. Inconsequently, Clifford sides with the faction that called for James' interference in Church matters, though he castigates the King unmercifully. However, in criticising such as Reynolds and James, Clifford saws-off the 'Puritan' branch on which he professes to sit.

### **The office of a bishop**

What, then, does Clifford suggest are 'corrupt translations'? First, Clifford objects to the English word 'bishop' as a translation of the Greek New Testament word 'episcopos'. Now, such a translation can hardly be called archaic or old fashioned or having fallen out of use, as it is a word most people recognize today, even if they do not use it. So, too, as it is the very word used in the New Testament, one would or should hesitate to exchange it for another. This would be like the word 'baptise' which certain sectarians say is a non-English word and should be dropped for 'immerse'.

'Baptise' is the original Biblical word and has been in the English language for hundreds of years longer than the term 'immerse', which the Roman Catholics used in the fourth century to depict a covering of water which cleansed from all sin. Early Bible texts in Latin also use the term 'baptise'. However, there are no words in the AV or any other version, which are basically English as English is a mixture of many different languages.

Clifford wants the alleged Anglo-Saxon term 'overseer', which he feels is more English and 'appropriate contemporary language.' However, according to the reading of this author, the Saxon term for a bishop was 'biscop', not 'overseer'. The term 'bishop' is far more common than the word 'overseer' today, and the AV uses 'bishop' in its right place. So does Clifford's alleged theoretically favourite version, the Geneva Bible, for that matter.

It is true that there were bishops who misused their title as even the title pastor is misused at times but, as Richard Hooker who died three years before the Hampton Court Conference showed, this misuse was mostly amongst bishops set up by private patrons and not the Church. Indeed most of these hirelings were those whom Clifford would call 'Non-Conformists' and so support!

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Clifford will not have a monarchical bishop but one can have monarchical elders as well as monarchical overseers or monarchical bishops should one want them. Hooker, a Church of England clergyman, was far more thorough in his reforms of the bishopric than any Non-Conformist whose major reform was merely to change titles. John Knox, for instance, reformed the Roman Catholic diocese by keeping them, but giving their bishops another name. He also kept the seven-tiered church hierarchy but under seven new titles.

This is why our Reformers rightly pointed out that the rebels and Separatists were Romanists under new names. Cartwright, for instance, accepted the term 'bishop' but placed it below that of an elder. Andrew Melville, the true father of Presbyterianism, certainly believed in monarchical elders! The Baptists also kept the title for decades but used it for 'messengers'. Indeed, there is now a movement amongst Baptists to re-introduced the term.

Today, if used at all, the term 'overseer', does not depict a bishop or superintendent, but an over-boss on the shop-floor telling people what to do. This is the Roman view of a Monarchical Bishop! Clifford will have the Geneva Bible but not the AV... but the former *also* uses the term bishop. Lastly, anyone dealing with the sufferings of slavery will find that those who murder, disfigure and torture those under their care, were called by the tormented ones, 'our overseers'.

Furthermore, the AV distinguishes clearly between the titles of church officers and the various overseeing functions they perform as either bishops or elders as in Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2. So, too, the verb 'to oversee', with its noun connotations, has a variety of meanings in the Bible as illustrated by Genesis 43:12, whereas the office of a bishop is clearly defined in such passages as Philemon, I Timothy, II Titus 1 Peter and Acts I. Neither bishop nor overseer are used often in the New Testament, but there is a four to one frequency in favour of 'bishop'. So, too, the term 'overseer' pre-dates the AV and is neither modern nor the language of the streets, nor even the 'common man'.

### **When is a congregation not a church?**

Next, Clifford wants to replace the word 'church' with 'congregation', thus likening the gathered church to the mixed gathering of believers and unbelievers in National Israel. Again, the word 'church' is anything but obsolete, but Clifford will have it abolished. Most of the early Separatists, including Presbyterians and Baptists, sought to model the Church on secular Jewish lines which caused them to alter the Biblical, spiritual, covenant into a political, national one, especially in the days of the Solemn League and Covenant of the Presbyterians. As the idea of 'church' is derived from Hebrew and Greek words meaning the people of God, I would think it far more appropriate than 'congregation', which basically means any gathering. Anyway,

'congregation' is Latinate and Clifford tells us he is against 'Latinate' words.

### **Love or charity**

Clifford also wishes to substitute 'charity' by the word 'love'. That word in Anglo-Saxon meant 'promise' or 'praise' or even 'worship', a word Clifford thinks is scandalous when applied to men promising to worship (worthship) their wives. However, 'charity' has not lost its meaning of 'Christian love' and if Clifford is unaware of this, he can, through correct teaching, learn its true meaning. However, 'love' has changed its meaning these days, and needs to be supplemented by the more accurate Bible, practical meanings found in 'charity'.

### **Preferring Old Testament terms to their New Testament counterparts**

Clifford prefers Old Testament Hebrew to Greek and wants to erase the name 'Elias' from Mark 15:35 because it is Greek and not Hebrew. Surely we would expect Greek to be used in the Greek New Testament! If Clifford wants to Hebrew-ise Elias, then he must call Jesus 'Yeshua' or 'Joshua', and stop using the 'Latinate' words he uses for the Christian Seasons etc.. 'Elias' is the name commonly used for the prophet in sister European languages as also in Clifford's beloved Anglo-Saxon and Middle High English.

This is also the case with the name 'Jesus' in Hebrews 4:8. The reference is to Old Testament Joshua who is called Jesus in the New Testament Greek. The New Testament Church used the Greek Septuagint Old Testament which also calls Joshua 'Jesus'. We do not call Jesus 'Joshua', because we know Him primarily through His New Testament name. This can be easily explained when preaching and teaching if anyone queries it.

Clifford objects strongly to the Greek word 'mitre' used in Exodus 28:4 to depict the headwear of the High Priest. He wants it replaced by the Turkish/Muslim word 'turban' which came into the English language through the Turkish raids on Europe in the seventeenth century, and was worn by high-ranking Turkish officials and Mulahs. However, ancient pictures of Eastern priests such as in Persia depict the mitre as a conical hat. The Hebrew word refers to such a hat adorned by a brow-band or tiara.

Indeed, the Greek New Testament word 'mitre' translates the Hebrew 'mitsnepheth' used to denote an article of clothing which is girded or girted, that is 'put round', and thus used as a royal head-covering or tiara. It is also the very word used in the current Greek Old Testament.

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In the Septuagint, used in New Testament times, kidaris is used, which means the same. The AV translators described meticulously how the forehead of the High Priest should be covered with a plate of pure gold so as to show the distinction in rank between the 'mitre' of the High Priest and the 'bonnets' of the priests of lesser rank. All the garments of the High Priest are wrought with gold and precious stones to signify his status before God. Oddly enough, Clifford does not protest at the word 'bonnet', used mostly for the lower ranks, which some might also find 'antiquated'. I wonder if Clifford dons his 'bonnet' when he enters the pulpit.

Why Clifford objects to mitres as used in ancient Persian and Hebrew usage for a tiara or high coned hat, and prefers a Muslim word, is difficult to fathom, but obviously he wishes to avoid a term which contradicts his own leveler's conviction. However, when the term 'turban' entered the English-speaking world, it was a headgear symbolising Islamic pomp and high rank. So, to use common hunting jargon, Clifford has shot himself in his own foot again.

### **Clifford himself drops colloquial English and uses stilted and antiquated speech**

Instead of 'God save the King' in 1 Sam. 10:24, Clifford says the Hebrew demands 'May the king live.' 'God save the King', however, is still colloquial and Clifford's 'translation' is not. Indeed, most of Clifford's suggestions for new translations are stilted, antiquated and now 'un-English'. A further example is Romans 3:4 which Clifford believes should read 'may it not be' instead of 'God forbid'. Clifford's substitute is definitely not idiomatic, and not immediately understandable, either. 'God forbid' is still idiomatic and expresses the original meaning absolutely.

### **Easter, Passover and Pentecost**

Clifford has, at first glimpse, a good point when wishing to reject 'Easter' in Acts 12:4 used in the old Jewish calendar which Tyndale and Coverdale followed. Here, Clifford suggests 'Pentecost' in spite of his expressed aversion to using Greek and Latin words. Elsewhere, he suggests 'passover' as used in the Geneva Bible. However, 'Pask' is the Anglo-Saxon rendering of 'Pentecost' as used in and closer to the Hebrew, and still used in Northern England for the Jewish feast, rather than pagan Easter. We also use this expression in the term 'paschal lamb'. We must, however, think clearly and objectively here. Technically, the Passover was over at this time and the continued days of unleavened bread ran into the pagan feast of Astarte or Easter which followed it. The AV translators wished to follow Tyndale's and Coverdale's absolute, though perhaps a little pedantic, accuracy. (Ed. *The word 'Easter', used in Acts, is correct. See my article on this*).

### **Thou, Thee, Thy and Thine**

Of course the major stone of stumbling for modern revisers or re-writers of the AV, is the

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addressing of God by the second person singular, 'Thou', which occurs in all European languages and cultures, but has now been abolished by a pressure group of English-speaking Christians who are intent on dumbing-down their language at a greater speed than their foreign counterparts, or even secular linguists. The latter are, on the whole, for preserving words which enrich the vocabulary and grammar rather than deplete it.

To address God, parents, or intimate friends, with the wrong pronoun was considered impolite or stand-offish in the ancient Biblical languages and culture, just as it is considered so in most modern cultures and languages. The exception is those who plead for a simplified new translation of the Bible in the language of the streets. This is merely another sign of the dumbing-down of the English language which, on using merely a 'democratic' 'you', cannot distinguish between the singular and the plural. The AV, following the original languages distinguishes between 'thee' and 'you' to show that either one person or more are being addressed. See Pastor Thackway's articles for a further explanation here.

Needless to say, the abandonment of the second person singular is quite contrary to natural, historical and experimental linguistic laws. Yet Clifford argues that 'there is no case for exclusively addressing God as 'Thee, Thou', etc.' What German or Frenchman would be so impious as to address God with 'you'?

### **Are we saved by Christ's righteousness imputed or merely by His righteous acts?**

Clifford has a bone to pick with the AV translation of Romans 5:18 and Revelation 19:8, where we read in Romans of 'the righteousness of One', obviously a reference to Christ's righteousness, and the passage in Revelation refers to 'the righteousness of the saints'. In both cases, Clifford sees a mere reference to 'righteous acts'. He comes to this conclusion after a complicated and quite false pedantic Aristotelian dissecting of Christ's supposed 'active' righteousness from his passive righteousness, explaining that he feels the AV is lacking in belief in the imputed righteousness of Christ in these two instances.

However, the passages in no way challenge the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, though, of course, Clifford's faulty interpretation certainly does. The verse in Romans is obviously referring to the active righteousness of Another. Romans 5:18 clearly states that Christ's righteousness is the free gift which produced justification of life. Indeed, there is no such thing as the passive sufferings of Christ as He was entirely active in suffering for the sake of His Bride, the Church, which Romans makes clearer than perhaps any other book.

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Clifford sees Christ as passively yielding to the Law, but Christ actively placed Himself under His own Law for the sake of sinners, to fulfil the Covenant of which he is the active Author and Keeper. Clifford strives to split hairs here by arguing that the words *dikaioma* and *dikaiomata* used in these passages have a different meaning to *dikaioonee*, a word not used in the text, and which alone means righteousness in the imputed sense. This, of course, is quite contrary to the basic meaning behind these three words of one family.

The entire testimony of the whole Bible is that man has no righteousness or righteous acts of himself, so Christ's righteousness must be imputed to him. Here, in Romans 5 18ff, this is made explicitly clear. Matthew Henry commenting on Romans 5:18-21 sums up the truth of these words by saying:

*'Sin reigned unto death; it was a cruel bloody reign. But grace reigns to life, eternal life, and this through righteousness, righteousness imputed to us for justification, and implanted in us for sanctification; and both by Jesus Christ our Lord, through the power and efficacy of Christ, the great prophet, priest, and king, of his church.'*

The fine wedding garment of righteousness that is given the Bride, mentioned in Revelation 19.8, in context, can only refer to the wedding garment provided by Christ for the marriage supper of the Lamb to which His righteous ones, His Bride, are all invited. It does not refer to the righteous acts of the Bride seen as separate from Christ's righteousness. Thackway rightly points out that Clifford is following a theory of J. N. Darby and not the plain testimony of Scripture, here.

### **Clifford is more 'Latinate' than the AV**

Clifford's own plea for a Saxon Bible abounds with Latinate words showing that both Saxon and Latin are integral parts of the English language. The very few words Clifford lists as 'difficult' can be explained in a few minutes, so why does he want to finance a translation in the language of dumbed-down 'texters', as he calls translators, striving to use modern slang, when modern versions up to date have not been a match for the AV? They have also been more Latinate. Where, too, are Christian scholars equal to the task?

The big snag in Clifford's plea for a translation in present-day proletarian parlance is that such jargon is non-Biblical. The Gospel is a new language which has to be taught to be used. The preacher and teacher is there to extend the fallen vocabulary of man to help him learn spiritual truths to which he is a spiritually and linguistically alien. However 'modern' a translation is, it is

still incomprehensible without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit and the hard work of good pastors.

### **Holding fast the profession of faith**

Clifford believes the word 'faith' in Hebrews 10:23 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised)', should read 'hope'. This might be a valid point out of context, only if we ignore the teaching of the passage which is that faith is the source, grounds and substance of hope.

Also, Clifford does not pay due regard to the fact that the meanings of the Greek words underlying the English terms, 'hope' and 'faith', are synonymous. Indeed, the verse refers to the dependence of the faith of the believer on the faith of Christ. Similarly, we are told in the Scriptures that we are saved through faith as in Ephesians 2:8, but this is also expressed in Romans 8:24 as being saved by hope. Galatians 5:5 brings the two words together and speaks of 'the hope of righteousness by faith' where the term hope clearly denotes belief and faith.

Indeed, the passage states that 'faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen'. Here, faith and hope are interlinked and interactive. Hope is also used to display trust, confidence, a secure belief, the ground of our faith, and many other aspects of the Christian faith as shown by dictionaries such as Baxter, and translations such as Beza's. We also see in Baxter's analytical dictionary that the words for 'faith' in the New Testament, developed from *peitho* (conviction, persuasion), overlap with the meanings of words developed from *elpidzo* often translated as hope, trust, a secure guarantee or belief. Thus, to separate 'hope' from 'faith' as Clifford does, giving one Greek word only one English meaning, where each term has many meanings, is to render the teaching of this text null and void, especially as it would appear incongruous in Hebrews 10:23.

Clifford may refer us to Beza here, who uses both *fides* in Hebrews 10.22 and *spes* in Hebrews 10. 23, in his Latin translation to prove his (Clifford's) point, as the first meaning of *fides* usually listed in a good Latin lexicon is 'trust', whereas the first meaning given for *spes* is 'hope'. However, on further reading, one finds that both words can mean not only 'trust' but 'belief' or 'things expected' or 'a promise'.

The meaning of a Biblical word can only be understood in a Biblical context, and not by looking into the first meaning one finds in a Greek-English dictionary, often based on Pagan Greek rather than Biblical Greek of very limited scope. Greek dictionaries such as Cremer, Thayer,

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Bauer and Gemoll or Latin dictionaries such as Andrews, Lewis and Stowasser, are comprehensive, but still do not exhaust the meanings of faith and hope. However, we are not to change the AV merely because Clifford has a limited lexical knowledge of Greek and a one-word one-meaning misunderstanding of the AV, as he constantly shows in his arguments based on odd Greek words out of context in his polemic writings.

In context, the author is speaking about drawing near to God in the 'full assurance of faith' (v.22), holding 'fast the profession of faith' (v.23) because 'he is faithful that promised'. If an expositor wishes to deliberate on the overlapping of meanings between *pistis* and *elpis*, he may do so in his preaching but he need not reword the whole Bible for people who believe in cutting down the English language into a one-word one-meaning 'easy reader'.

### **The Bible cannot be abandoned because it tells you things you never knew**

It is a sad fact that evangelicals do not so much criticize the AV because of its vocabulary, but because of its political, social and theological stance. The major critics are nearly all men and women who have not the education, competence and experience, to translate the Bible themselves. Indeed, it would be hard these days to round up a competent team of academics who could. Trevor-Roper tells us that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century God raised up the right men for the task, but, where are they today? The truth is that we have, in the Providence of God, no alternative but to stick to the AV and its pure and simple language, that 'the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost'.

The AV is now thought by some to contain some hundreds of anachronisms. This criticism is unsound as it deals with special subjects which are particular to the Bible, and do not occur in everyday speech. For instance, words to do with atonement, reconciliation, salvation, redemption and propitiation are sadly now foreign to ordinary everyday speech. Even words like sin, repentance and forgiveness, are disappearing.

So too, in the Bible, there are many proper names, place names and technical terms, which belong to bygone history, geography and science, and which also belonged to general knowledge until recent years. Many of the alleged forgotten words can be fully understood from their context, and their association with forms of the words still used in English, e.g. 'husbandman', in context, refers to a farmer as in 'animal husbandry', and 'kerchief' meaning a piece of cloth worn on the head, is preserved for distinction in the word hand-kerchief.

The names of old weights and measures can be explained in a margin when they have no

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modern equivalent, just as we put inches into centimetres today. Of course, there are no exact equivalents of Biblical measurements used nowadays. Given the many thousands of words used in the AV, the ones seldom used in everyday speech are minimal.

This author remembers reading the New English Bible of 1961 for the first time and having to go back to the AV time and time again, to understand it aright. Such words as 'truckle' in Mark 12:14 were unknown to him and the word 'abyss' for the deep (water) in the creation account, seemed quite out of place as also the translation of 'ruach' (spirit) as 'mighty wind' was quite exaggerated.

However, modern difficulties in understanding the AV are not reserved for that text alone, but for texts dealing with literature, culture and science in general. The average 'reading age' of children has altered radically since the early nineteen forties, when by the age of five most children could at least read *Old Lob* and *Mack and Tosh*. Indeed, we soon learnt them off-by-heart, a discipline forbidden in many progressive schools of today. Now the reading level and standards of those books have been rejected as too difficult for seven year olds.

However, as a teacher, I have experienced grammar school children of 12 who could not read texts that seven year-olds had understood quite well only two decades before. On the other hand, we are told that the Bible is too 'adult' for children, yet the easy-readers given them in schools have left the adventure stories of former childhoods and deal with social, gender and political issues before the children have any experience of them from the real world.

It is common now in the children's pages of newspapers to read discussions concerning drug-taking pop stars, and film topics such as 'Sex in the City'. One fairy-story for small children now used in schools introduces the schoolboy hero by saying that his father had peculiar perversions and his mother had an intensive affair with another woman. Absolutely filthy words are now used in children's 'literature'.

Children are just not allowed to be children anymore though their education is becoming more infantile and sexually geared. One of the major textbook publishers advertising in present day schoolbook catalogues, is bent on teaching children to use aggressive and dirty swearwords before they are able to write a pleasant, innocent letter to their parents, grandparents or friends, about a youth hostel visit or scout camp.

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Our schools do not teach general knowledge as they used to do, but specialize far more than they have ever done on corners of knowledge useless in themselves, often leaving pupils quite ignorant of many facets of life. The Bible, however, still offers them universal learning. The literature of Chaucer, Langden, Shakespeare, Defoe, Bunyan, Ballantyne, Stevenson, Cowper, Wordsworth, Burns and Stevenson, are still taught in schools, though, sadly, some 'Easy Readers' are still coming in, but even these works have preserved good, practical and still usable words and styles which are pooh-poohed when encountered in the AV.

For the time being at least, there are still schools to which Christian parents can safely send their children where pupils and students are still taught to stretch their minds in reading what is considered 'secular literature', and literature which has established the English-speaking world's culture, but the main influence on this, the AV, is disregarded, and education has failed to educate. Only our churches can now correct this dumbing-down of human life, purpose and, indeed, existence. Sadly, however, the amoral or immoral point of view engendered in the children of today renders them incapable of moral judgement when reading works from, say, Henty's, Stevenson's or even Enid Blyton's pens.

There is also a mock ignorance at play concerning the AV. A few years ago, at a minister's conference, several pastors confessed that they did not understand the AV with its thees and thous. However, the current cinema draw at the time was a film featuring George Cloony called *Brother Where Art Thou* which called for a little AV understanding, at least. This did not stop even the uneducated from understanding the title. So, too, the basic story of the film was built on Greek mythology which one would think was far more difficult to understand and much further from reality than the simple, majestic, soul-moving words of the AV.

As is already sadly happening, with the banning of the AV and the literary culture it has produced, we shall soon see the disappearance of true religion, edifying literature, reports of adventure and imagination, and moral integrity in this world, which seems bent on producing specialized human robots as means of mass production, animated solely by sex, and the hope of material gain.

In the United States much has been written about banning Mark Twain's and Harriet Beecher Stowe's books, because they are allegedly politically incorrect. James Fenimore Cooper's works are going the same way, not to mention Longfellow's. A whole nation is turning from its not too ancient cultural past.

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During my last visit to the U.S.A., I gathered the school children around me and told them my favourite Uncle Remus tales, drawing out the moral where it was not too obvious. Some parents came into the room and with shocked gestures and fingers on lips, signaled me to stop. The children quickly ran away rather frightened.

I asked why I was required to stop and why they had scared the children. The parents who sent their children to this evangelical, Reformed, Christian school, told me that Uncle Remus stories were now banned and their author, Joel Chandler Harris, was a *persona non gratia*. They said I should not tell stories where a slave is the main character as it would spoil their children's education and character. I was told that all politically incorrect works, especially where children are concerned, are detrimental to true education. Afterwards, the parents told me that they had enjoyed Uncle Remus as children but now we live in more enlightened times. Watch it! They will be banning your Bibles soon – whatever version.

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