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Abstract: This article discusses the history and translations of the Bible, and the imperfect but accepted King James Translation.

THE BIBLE.

THE KING JAMES TRANSLATION—A COMPROMISE.

BY FREDERIC CLIFT, M. D.

Inspiration—we understand by this word when applied to religious matters that the mind is impressed by Divinity with certain thoughts which the individual expresses in his own words, either verbally or in writing. He does not lose his personality—the educated man expresses the same thought, but in a different language, to that used by the uneducated. Contrast the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The language of the latter shows that it could not have been written by the authors of three of the Gospels, whilst its similarity of expression, and the use of scientific terms, identifies it with the author of the Gospel of St. Luke who, we are told, was a physician. So, too, when we compare the writings of St. John with those of other writers in the New Testament, we find that his Greek is that of the more educated class, whilst the others wrote in the provincial Judaic or Hellenistic Greek.

The Christian world considers the Bible to be the one and sole revelation of God. It contains the history of man from his creation and fall to the redemption wrought out by Christ; and a short history of the founding of the Church, as also a prophetic forecast of the future. They assert that direct inspiration by the Almighty has ceased since the year 97 A. D., and that God no longer employs prophets through whom to reveal his mind and will to his people; and this notwithstanding he declared by the prophet Amos, "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret to his servants the prophets."

In 397 A. D., the so-called church of that day established what is known as the Canon of Scripture—that is, the bishops,

under the inspiration and by permission of the Roman emperor, assembled at the Council of Carthage, in that year, and decided which of the then existing numerous Hebrew and Christian writings should be received as inspired scripture. They rejected all other writings as uninspired, and thus arose the collection of sixty-six books known as the Bible. The reception or rejection of each book was decided by a majority vote in each case, and history records that St. John's book of Revelation was only included by a bare majority of one. The inspiration, if any, given to the compilers must have been somewhat meagre, if it had not already departed. We can picture the acrimonious discussions which took place, from the spirit which pervaded the so-called councils of the church, at the beginning of the Roman usurpation. The Lord hath said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," and this council seems to mark the time of the absolute departure of the Spirit of God from the church, as a whole. There were individuals who sought the Lord and obtained blessings, but the apostasy of the church was complete from that time, for they had rejected many precious truths; and later, we find Luther rejecting several books of the New Testament, including the Epistle of St. James, because the doctrines taught therein did not agree with his philosophy. The time had come when men "would not endure sound doctrine" (II Tim. 4:3).

The majority of the Christian world admit that the individual authors of the various books of the Bible were divinely inspired, and that the books, as written by them in their respective dialects, are true and authentic writings; but the Latter-day Saints, whilst proclaiming the inspiration of Paul and others, do not admit that those who copied and translated the original manuscripts into other languages were also inspired. Before the days of printing, errors necessarily occurred, and were passed over by successive scribes, each copying or endeavoring to correct the mistakes of his predecessor, and adding some of his own. The originals were lost or destroyed during the early Christian persecutions. The three earliest known copies only going back to and ranging in date from 300 to 450 A. D. These three manuscripts, or copies of the books in their original tongues, are: 1. The Vatican, or Codex B. 2. The Sinaitic or Codex Alept. 3. The Alexandrian, or Codex A. The

Vatican is to be found in the Roman Catholic library at Rome. The Sinaitic is one of the treasures of the Greek Catholic church, in St. Petersburg; and the Alexandrian belongs to Protestant England, and is kept at the British Museum. The latter was presented to Charles I. by the Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1628, seventeen years too late to be of use in preparing the King James' translation of 1611.

In addition to these manuscripts, we have what are known as versions, *viz.*, translations made from the original Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Greek, into the various languages of Christendom, one of the most important being that known as the Latin Vulgate. This was made by St. Jerome, about the end of the 4th century, and is that from which the Roman Catholic translations, used in English speaking countries, and known as the Douay and Rheims versions, were made in 1582 and 1609. Bede, the Anglo Saxon historian, 735 A. D., was one of the first to translate the Bible, or portions of it, into the language of our forefathers. The first English translation by Wyclif, 1383, was based on the Latin Vulgate, and of this one hundred and seventy original copies are still in existence. Then came the printing press, in 1450, with the revival of Greek learning in Europe, resulting in the publication by Tyndale of several editions of his translation of the books from the original Greek, about the year 1530, or three hundred years before the publication of the Book of Mormon. To those interested in comparing these translations with those of subsequent date, it may be noted that the Gospels and Epistles in the first prayer book of Edward VI., are taken direct from Tyndale's translation, whilst the Psalms, in that and the present prayer book of the Episcopal church, are taken unchanged from the Great Bible of Henry VIII. These were followed by other translations, at short intervals, until the publication of the Genevan Bible, in 1560. This translation was dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, and, during Puritan times, became the standard Bible. The following, a copy of one of the notes in that Bible, clearly indicates its Calvinistic origin, and shows that Episcopal dislike to it was not unwarranted, from their point of view. Commenting on Rev. 9: 3: The locusts that came out of the bottomless pit are explained as meaning "False teachers, heretics and worldly, subtile prelates, with Monks, Friars, Cardinals,

patriarchs, archbishops, doctors, bachelors, and masters of arts, which forsake Christ to maintain false doctrines." In 1568, appeared another translation which was ordered to be read in the Episcopal churches. It was known as Parker's or the Bishops' Bible.

At the beginning of the reign of King James, these two Bibles were in general use, whilst a third—the Great Bible of Henry VIII—was still chained to a stone or wooden desk in many of the English country churches. Smyth, in *How we Got Our Bible*,* tersely sums up the position: "The latter was antiquated and cumbersome, the Genevan, though a careful translation and convenient for general use, had become, through the Puritan character of its notes, quite the Bible of a party, while the Bishops' version, a very inferior production, neither commanded the respect of the scholars nor suited the wants of the people."

In January, 1604, a conference of bishops and clergy was held, under the presidency of King James himself, at Hampton Court Palace, to consider certain alleged grievances of the Puritan party in the church, at which it was proposed that a new translation of the Bible should be made. King James favored the project. He did not conceal his dislike for the Genevan Bible, and in authorizing the preparation of the new Bible he directed, "that no notes should be added, having found in those which were annexed to the Geneva translation some very partial, untrue, seditious, and savoring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits." The following note shows the temper of both parties at the time. In Exodus I, where the conduct of the Hebrew midwives is described, and who it is stated, "did not as the king commanded, but saved the men children alive," the Genevan margin declares "their disobedience to the king was lawful, though their dissembling was evil." "It is false," cried the indignant advocate of kingly right; "to disobey a king is not lawful, such traitorous conceits should not go forth among the people." On another occasion the king exclaimed

*I am indebted for many thoughts and quotations to this small volume—published by Pott Co., New York. Our missionaries would gain much useful information from its perusal.—F. C.

“Presbyterianism agreeth as well with monarchy as God and the devil.”

Such was the spirit of the times. Men were largely tired of the wrangling of the two religious parties. Fifty-four learned men were selected impartially from High Churchmen and Puritans. Forty-seven of them took part in the work, and in addition some who represented scholarship totally unconnected with any religious party. Pains were taken by the king who wrote a letter to Bishop Bancroft charging “the bishops to inform themselves of all such learned men—having special skill in the Hebrew and Greek tongues—that they send their observations * * * that so, our said intended translation may have the help and furtherance of all our principal learned men within this our kingdom.” Marginal notes were forbidden, except for the explanation of Hebrew and Greek words. The translators were divided into six companies. They carefully studied the then available Greek and Hebrew texts; they used the best commentaries of European scholars, and the Bibles in Spanish, Italian, French and German were examined for any help they might afford in arriving at the exact sense of each passage. But, there was no Divine inspiration, except such as was claimed for the councils of Nice, Carthage, etc.; and further, these translators did not have the privilege of examining and comparing their work with the three earliest manuscripts. It was a bold effort on the part of man to put forward a Bible which should suit the majority of the people of whatever religious party they might be members. The sense having been found, “no pains were spared to express it in clear, vigorous, idiomatic English.” Words were inserted or interpolated without any corresponding equivalent in the original language, in order to elucidate or improve the sense, and oftentimes the meaning of a passage was strained that a smooth and euphonious rendering might be given. Its admirers speak of its “grace and dignity,” its “flowing words,” its “masterly English style;” and Father Faber, one of Rome’s greatest converts, wrote of this version: “It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. Nay, it is worshiped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose fanaticism, its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the scholar.” It must be admitted that the translators did not hesitate to add words expressive of

their own views, and to alter and transpose the language of previous translators, in order to obtain this "grace and dignity." On the other hand, the Rheims and Douay translations are not so elegant, in their diction and euphony, but are more correct and literal translations, and, like Tyndale's, may therefore be frequently consulted with advantage by those not able to use the Hebrew and Greek texts, for the purpose of clearing up the actual meaning of many passages of scripture.

Notwithstanding the Bible has been thus handled by various translators, one of the chief objections to the Book of Mormon is, that it is not translated into the elegant English of Boston or London. These same Christian objectors, who claim inspiration for the authorized translation of King James, object to the most trivial verbal correction of the Book of Mormon, and adduce such correction, or the added "grace and dignity" produced thereby, as evidence of its fraudulent origin. How appropriate that those who approve of adding "grace and dignity" to the language of the uneducated fishermen of Galilee, and converting their Judaic provincial dialects into "masterly English;" or who, again, in order to bolster up a conception of the Godhead, hostile alike to sense and reason, approve of the interpolation of twenty-four words between the 7th and 8th verses of the 5th chapter of St. John's 1st Epistle—how appropriate, I submit, that these same followers of the Christ should use the self-same arguments which have been adduced by infidels against the truth of the Bible, when they, in turn, contend against the truth of the Book of Mormon.

It may be said that the spirit of compromise was the prevailing element amongst the translators of the King James version. They knew that neither party would submit *in toto* to the other, and there is evidence of an agreement to give and take. The vote of the majority was to be accepted, and, as in the case of the acceptance of the Book of Revelation into the Canon of Scripture at Carthage, so in the authorized translation, a single vote may have been sufficient to bring about the acceptance of renderings, the contentions in relation to which have since led to the building up of the numerous sects of Christendom. We may well take upon ourselves the duty imposed by Tyndale in the preface to his own translation, "that if they perceive in any place that the version has

not attained unto the very sense of the tongue, or the very meaning of the Scripture, or have not given the right English word, that they should put to their hands and amend it, remembering that it is their duty so to do."

As instances showing the position assumed in this article, let us consider the crucial doctrine of baptism. There were, at that time, at least two parties holding different views. 1. The Catholic (English and Roman) who believed in its absolute necessity, and that immersion was the primitive method of performing the ordinance, but asserted that the quantum of water was immaterial, and therefore allowed sprinkling or pouring. 2. The Presbyterians and Puritans, on the other hand, who asserted that baptism was not a necessity, but allowed that a little water, more or less, would not do harm, anyway. Thus the Episcopalian English Prayer book instructs the priest, that, taking the child into his hands, "he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily," but if certified that "the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour water upon it." In practice Episcopalians of today act on the principle that all children are too weak to be dipped, and accordingly, without calling for a certificate, sprinkle them, unless, as sometimes happens, parents insist upon the ordinance being performed by immersion. Thus, although the Canon law of the English church required immersion, yet, by the neglect to insist on the production of certificates of ill-health, and the unfaithful teaching of the clergy, there was, and even to-day there is, no strong opinion in that church as to the necessity for baptism by immersion—although the canons of the church require that it be done in accordance with the primitive pattern, set by Christ himself. When, therefore, such passages as Matt. 3: 1, 6, and 11 came up for translation, the revisors were willing to leave it an open matter by translating the Greek word *en* in verses 1 and 6 by the word "in," whilst the same identical Greek word in verse 11 is translated "with." If "with" is the proper translation of the word *en*, then verse 1 would read "*With* those days came John the Baptist preaching *with* the wilderness of Judea," and verse 6, "And were baptized of him *with* Jordan." This would correspond with the King James translation of verse 11: "I indeed baptize you *with* water," and consistency requires that the word *en* should be translated by the same word in all three verses. The

Greek language has two words meaning "with" viz.: *meta* and *sun* neither of which however are used in verse 11. In the Rheims, Roman Catholic Testament, and also in the American Standard Revised Bible, of 1901, the words *en udatos* are correctly translated "in water." Thus modern and ancient translators agree, when they throw aside their doctrinal differences, and seek only for a correct translation of the original Greek. Again in John 3: 5, where Christ says, "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit," we find the revisors use the simple genitive case sign, "of," before the words, water and spirit; but a reference to the Greek shows that not only was the genitive case used, but a special preposition governing the genitive was inserted before the word *udatos*, water. This preposition *ek* has the forceful meaning, "out of." The same word is found in Matt. 2: 15. "Out of Egypt have I called my son," also in John 20: 2: "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre." The use of this special word emphasizes the fact that a man must first go down into the water in order to come "out of" it, but the translators, by purposely or otherwise omitting it, weaken the essential principle of the ordinance—viz.; the immersion. The proper rendering therefore is, "Except a man be born out of water and the Spirit." The Latin versions are of great value, from the fact that the Greek and Latin languages were both in general use by the civilized world, at the time when the scriptures were written, and at the time when no disputations had arisen as to the meaning of the Greek word *baptizo*. The English translators, instead of translating this word by its primitive equivalents, viz.: "to dip" "to plunge," coined the word "baptize," and so introduced a foreign term into our language, which has since gradually lost its primitive meaning of "dip," and is today held by the majority of Christians to permit of the ordinance being performed by sprinkling. The Latins, however, did not import the word *baptizo* into their language, but contemporaneous writers translated it by the Latin word *immergo* which by all competent authorities is rendered into English by the words, "plunge into," "immerse" "drown." *Immergo* never did nor can mean to "sprinkle" or "to pour." On the other hand, the two Greek words *nipto* or *luo* both have the generic meaning of "to wash" and may also be rendered "sprinkle" or "pour." The inspired Galileean

fishermen knew what they were writing and talking about, consequently they did not use either of these two words, when referring to the ordinance of baptism as instituted by John and our pattern, Christ.

Again, the translators inserted words which formed no part of the original text. Take for instance, John 20: 1, "The first day of the week." The Greek text contains no corresponding word for "day"—it is an interpolation pure and simple. Whilst the Greek word *sabbaton* is translated by the word "week." This word *sabbaton* is with one exception never translated "week" except in the places in the New Testament in which the Christian Sabbath is referred to, *viz.*: the day following the Jewish Sabbath. These places are: Matt. 28: 1, Mark 16: 2 and 9, Luke 24: 1, John 20: 1 and 19, Acts 20: 7, I Cor. 16: 2. The interpolations and mistakes made by the translators in this connection, enable the Seventh-day Adventist to state, and make much of the fact, that Sunday is never called a Sabbath in the New Testament; and persons who believe—as the Christian world generally does—in the correctness and inspiration of the King James translation, are thus led to accept such statement as a fact, whereas if they consult other translations, *e. g.*, Tyndale's, or the Emphatic Diaglott, they will find that the Greek word *sabbaton*, in this connection, is correctly translated "Sabbath"; and so, one of the principal arguments upon which Seventh-Day Adventists build up their doctrine, falls to the ground.

Thus comparing Matt. 28: 1, in the King James, with a literal, or word for word, translation, we must admit that "in the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary," is more euphonious and has greater "grace and dignity" than the literal rendering, "Now after the Sabbath, as it was dawning into the first of the Sabbaths, came Mary." At first sight the meaning or distinction may not seem clear to the reader," but if the word "Jewish" is read before the word "Sabbath," and "Christian" before the word "Sabbaths," the meaning is clear and intelligible. Jesus had rested in the tomb during the whole of the Jewish Sabbath, and rose therefrom early on the first of the Christian Sabbaths, *viz.*, Sunday morning, the Lord's day. A reference to the writings of the early Fathers of the

church show this to have been the interpretation given by those living nearest to the days of the apostles; and Bede, the Anglo-Saxon historian, in book 3, chapter 25 of his History, writing of Easter day and St. John the Revelator, says, "And when that day came, the Lord's day, then called the first after the Sabbath." The word "then" refers to the time of St. John, and proves that in 664 A. D. the Bible was better understood than it was a thousand years later.

From these examples it is seen that the doctrine of baptism by immersion has been weakened by mistranslations, and by the introduction of a foreign word into the English language, instead of its proper synonym or meaning; whilst an unauthorized interpolation and mistranslation, as in the instances given in connection with the Sabbath, has formed a basis for the building up of a sect. Hundreds of such sects have been formed by private interpretations of unlearned men, who, while denying the possibility of new revelation, have accepted as inspired, a translation of the scriptures made by men.

This is not written in a spirit hostile to the King James translation, as a whole. The various books comprising the Bible were written under the direction and inspiration of God, and the eighth article of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints declares that "We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly." Our Father has given us the keys whereby we can understand for ourselves; and where doubt occurs, let us go back to the original or earliest copies, and with the aid of his Holy Spirit, and through his living oracles—our prophets, seers and revelators—we can arrive at the truth. The King James translation was the work of fallible men; and I submit, from the instances given, that in some points mistakes were made. We, as individuals and as sowers of the word, must therefore follow Tyndale's advice—go back to the earliest available copies.

I believe it is important that our missionaries should thoroughly understand and appreciate the cause and origin of many of the mistakes made in what is considered the standard translation of the Bible, and thus be prepared to support in argument, if necessary, our eighth Article of Faith. Such knowledge largely explains the present divided condition of the Christian world, each of the

rival sects crying, "Lo, here is Christ." The devil is the author of all contentions and division, and although the translators of 1611, in their revision, endeavored to put forth a Bible which should be acceptable to the two great religious parties of that day, yet they failed to preserve peace, unity and concord. On almost every page of the history of Christendom, there is evidence of the devil's handiwork. Wherefore, in the words of Micah, "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us?"

THE BABY'S LESSON.

She was only a golden-haired little tot, barely two years old. But she was so bright and quick, so dainty and sunny that when she was taken sick, the whole house seemed in mourning. "How is baby?" asked papa, forlornly, as he came in at night. Dot heard him, for the nursery was just at the head of the stairs, and the door was open. And back came a faint little voice, half pleading, half laughing, half commanding, "Peak as 'oo do when 'oo're laughing, papa!" That was the baby's lesson, and the whole household remembered it, even after Dot was all well again. It's hard to make the voice cheerful, and the face sunny, at all times. But it is pleasanter and more helpful for those around us when we do.— Selected from *Herald of Union*, Mammoth, Utah.