A Few Forgotten Renditions in the First Printed English New Testament

by Stan Larson

Mr. Larson shows how some of the renderings in Tyndale's English New Testament which were not taken up in the Authorised Version have stood the test of time.

Paradine Reprints of London in 1976 brought out a four-colour facsimile reprint of William Tyndale's original New Testament of 1526 (hereinafter WT) to commemorate its four hundred and fiftieth anniversary. It seems appropriate to re-examine that earliest printed English Testament and present a few cases where the rendition in WT coincides with modern exegetical opinion while that of the Authorised Version of 1611 (hereinafter AV) does not.

William Tyndale left his native England for the Continent in 1524, never to return.[1] Printing of his translation was begun in 1525 at Cologne, but it was prematurely stopped and only a single fragment survives.[2] Finally an octavo edition, without notes, was printed at Worms by Peter Schoeffer and published early in 1526. Only one complete copy (lacking only the titlepage) is extant today and it is located at the Bristol Baptist College. Naturally there were mistakes in his translation and at its close Tyndale counsels the reader to 'consyder howe that I had no man to counterfet (*i.e.*, copy) . . . Count is as a thynge not havynge his full shape, but as it were borne afore hys tyme, even as a thing begunne rather then fynnesshed.'[3] Tyndale himself revised the text in 1534 and 1535, before being strangled and then burnt at the stake in 1536.

The translators who gave us the AV had a considerable advantage over Tyndale, not only because there were nearly fifty times as many individuals working on that project, but also because there had been eighty-five years of further refinement in the understanding of New Testament Greek. Also, they could select from the most felicitious renditions that had been offered by the previous sixteenth-century trans-

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[1] What little is known of Tyndale's activities in Germany during this period that culminated in the 1526 translation is summarized in C. H. Williams, *William Tyndale* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1969), 16-24.

[2] Edward Arber, *The First Printed English New Testament, translated by William Tyndale: Photo-Lithographed from the Unique Fragment Now in the Grenville Collection, British Museum* (London, 1871), published a facsimile reprint of the Cologne fragment which has Tyndale's 'prologge' and the text with marginal notes up to Matt. 22:12. This fragment can also be read in Alfred W. Pollard, *The Beginning of the New Testament Translated by William Tyndale, 1525: Facsimile of the Unique Fragment of the Uncompleted Cologne Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926).

[3] *The New Testament, 1526*, a facsimile reprint of William Tyndale's 1526 New Testament (London: Paradine, 1976). The quotation is found on the second and third pages of the section entitled 'To the Reder.' It is also printed in N. Hardy Willis, *The New Testament Translated by William Tyndale, 1534: A Reprint of the Edition of 1534* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 612.

lators. Most of the time they were content with what had been hammered out in these earlier efforts. They state in 'The Translators to the Reader' that it was often their practice to re-do material they had already revised: 'Neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered.'[4] The comparisons here suggest that there are places where a closer look by them at Tyndale's work would have been fruitful.[5]

In the following comparisons of rendition, each of the passages selected was left unrevised by Tyndale in 1534 and 1535. The spelling is shown as originally printed by WT and AV.

At Luke 1:3 the AV 'hauing had perfect vnderstanding of things'[6] makes it sound as if Luke was a participant in all these events from the very beginning, but that view is contrary to the tenor of his prefatory remarks since he 'ranks himself with the many Gospel-writers who have to rely upon that which the original eye-witnesses have handed down to them.'[7] On the other hand, the idea implied by παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς[8] that Luke brought himself abreast of the events by his own research is expressed by the renditions 'as sone as I had searched out diligently all thinges' (WT), 'since I have traced the course of these happenings carefully from the beginning' (Phillips), and 'as I have carried out a thorough investigation of all the circumstances' (Schonfield).

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4 *The Holy Bible: A Facsimile in a reduced size of the Authorised Version published in the year 1611 with an Introduction by A. W. Pollard* (Oxford, 1911). The quotation is from page 10 of this introductory essay, which is ascribed to Miles Smith.

5 Sometimes when WT is better than the AV, the marginal note by the AV translators suggests a meaning in line with the earlier rendition of Tyndale. For example, the three-hour darkness ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν (Luke 23:44) at the time of the crucifixion is corrected by the AV margin from the 'earth' of the text to simply 'land,' which was the rendition of Tyndale. Also compare the AV marginal information at Luke 8:18, Acts 17:3, and Rom. 7:5, which correct the text and follow Tyndale.

6 This is the reading of the text as printed in 1611. Modern printings of that version have made a silent correction of the text and added an 'all' to make 'having had perfect understanding of all things.'

7 J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke* (Leiden: United Bible Societies, 1971), 11.

8 William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Walter Bauer), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: University Press, 1957), 624, give the meaning of παρακολουθέω in this passage as 'follow a thing, trace or investigate a thing.' James H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1929), 486, emphasize a slightly different aspect of the verb, and say: 'Luke comes before us in his Preface . . . as one "having acquired familiarity" with them (the facts), "having become cognizant" of them, for long (ἄνωθεν), and having so kept in touch with them, that his witness is practically contemporary witness.'

Since the phrase Ἰούδαν Ἰακώβου in Luke 6:16 does not explicitly state the relationship of these two individuals there has been conflict over whether it should be taken as 'Iudas Iames sonne (*i.e.* Judas, the son of James)'[9] (WT) or 'Iudas the brother of Iames' (AV). Often Greek omits the term indicating kinship and 'two proper names are brought into a gentitival relationship,'[10] requiring an interpretation as to what that relationship is. However, the Greek papyri discovered during the last hundred years support Tyndale's original rendition because they show that 'the bare genitive is the regular, ordinary way of expressing the paternal relation.'[11] The AV opted for 'brother' here because they identified this apostle with Jude, the brother of James,[12] but Newman and Nida point out that 'there is nothing in the New Testament which permits one to identify this Judas with Judas the brother of James in Mark 6:3 or Jude 1.'[13] When Luke intends a brother to be understood, he specifically adds that information, as shown by the example at Acts 12:2.[14]

Jesus' command ποιήσατε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἀναπεσεῖν in John 6:10 is rendered in AV as 'Make the men sit downe.' This implies that he was directing his instruction only to the males present, whereas the WT rendition 'Make the people to sit doune' properly has reference to all present,[15] since 'people' is a valid translation of ἄνθρωπος.[16] The Today's English Version makes the proper distinctions: 'Make the people sit down, . . . So all the people sat down; there were about five thousand men.' That women and children were there, but were not

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9 Alfred Loisy, *L'Évangile selon Luc* (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1924), 194, supports the WT rendition and adds that the name of the father was given to distinguish this Judas from the one who betrayed the Lord.

10 John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 254.

11 Edgar J. Goodspeed, 'The Versions of the New Testament,' *Interpretation*, 3 (1949), 76.

12 The 1611 printing of the AV had a marginal cross-reference at this point to Jude 1, even though modern printings have deleted it.

13 Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles* (London: United Bible Societies, 1972), 23. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 240, concludes that understanding 'son' is more probable.

14 Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Luke* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 174-75, also cites Luke 3:1 and 6:14 as examples of Luke's usage of specifying 'brother' when that is what is intended.

15 Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 157n, points out that οἱ ἄνδρες near the end of the verse must apply only to the men, while ὄχλος in verses 2, 5, 22, and 24 and ἄνθρωποι here and in verse 14 apply to the whole group.

16 Arndt and Gingrich, *op. cit.*, 67.

included in the count of 'about five thousand' is made clear in the parallel at Matt. 14:21.

At Acts 9:25 the question is exactly how Paul made his escape from his Jewish enemies who were watching the city gates of Damascus in order that they might kill him. It depends on how διὰ τοῦ τείχους is rendered: some take it instrumentally, as 'by the wall' (AV), and others take it as indicating the place through which the escape occurred, as 'thorowe the wall' (WT) or slightly more explicit 'through an opening in the wall' (Twentieth Century New Testament, and New International Version). In the parallel account of the same incident in 2 Cor. 11:33, Paul indicates that the escape was made through a window or opening in the city wall. It seems that one of Paul's friends 'had a house built on to the city wall, and . . . he was lowered in a large basket or net through a window of this house which was actually cut in the city wall.'[17]

In the dramatic account of Peter's escape from prison at Acts 12:7 the angel did not physically lift Peter up as the AV 'raised him vp' implies,[18] since ἤγειρεν αὐτόν, being used of a person sleeping,[19] here means 'steryd (stirred) him vppe' (WT),[20] 'woke him' (Translator's New Testament), or 'roused him up' (Rotherham). In Matt. 8:25 ἤγειραν αὐτόν is found and here the situation is parallel in that the Lord is sleeping on a ship and the disciples, becoming fearful due to the fierce storm, awake him from sleep.

Radically different inferences can be drawn from a literal translation of τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ in Rev. 1:6. The difficulty focuses on to whom the αὐτοῦ refers and accordingly how the καί between θεῷ and

πατρί should be translated: whether as an additive καί meaning 'and' as in 'vnto God and his Father' (AV), or as an epexegetic καί meaning 'even' as in 'to God, even His Father' (Berkeley Version).[21] That the King James translators intended the 'and' in the former alternative to be understood as indicating that God himself had a Father does not seem likely, but the resulting structure makes that interpretation possible in English,[22] in spite of the fact that such a view would imply a theogony unattested elsewhere in the Bible. Consequently, the latter alternative seems preferable, with the 'even' introducing the fact that he is Jesus' Father. Other ways to handle the καί with essentially this same meaning are simply to leave it untranslated as in 'vnto god his father' (WT, Weymouth, and Knox)[23] or to include it in a phrase in such a way as to make reference to only one person,[24] as in 'his God and Father'[25] (RSV, NEB, and many modern versions).

Though the Greek text printed in the various editions of Erasmus,

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17 F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Book of Acts* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, third edition, 1962), 204.

18 Since *raise* meant both 'lift' and 'rouse from sleep' in 16th and 17th century English (*OED*, VIII, 118), it is possible that the latter was intended by the AV. Clearer cases of later meaning development altering the contemporary signification are manifest in a number of passages. Sometimes the particular translation of WT did not go through such meaning-shift, resulting in its being immediately meaningful, whereas the AV must be 'translated' into its 20th century meaning. For example, in Luke 17:7 contrast the 'quickly' of WT and the 'by & by' of AV, which also construes the εὐθέως as not being a part of the imperative. In the Parable of the Pounds at Luke 19:13 πραγματεύσασθε, directed to the servants, is 'by and sell' in WT and 'occupy' in AV. In Acts 23:27 the στράτευμα (military detachment) with which Claudius Lysias rescued Paul on the temple grounds is described as 'soudiers (soldiers)' in WT and 'an armie' in AV.

19 According to Albrecht Oepke, 'ἐγείρω,' in Gerhard Kittel, editor, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart, 1935), II, 333, ἐγείρω is used here in the literal sense.

20 Ernst Haenchen, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 326, says that the angel in striking Peter on the side in order to awaken him was not very gentle.

21 It is of interest to note that the Geneva Bible of 1560 also has 'vnto God euen his father.' The AV itself is not unaware that 'even' is a proper rendition of καί as shown by its use in Rom. 15:6; 2 Cor. 1:3; 1 Thess. 3:13; and Jas. 3:9.

22 The Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, interpreted it in this manner on June 16, 1844, adding also that this verse in the AV is 'altogether correct in the translation.' This is recorded in Thomas Bullock's official minutes in the Joseph Smith Collection, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, and reprinted with modification in Joseph Fielding Smith, compiler, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1938), 369-70, 373. Saying nothing about the correctness of the doctrine of Jesus' Father having a Father, who has a Father, and so on *ad infinitum*, it is merely pointed out that the choice of this verse in support of that doctrine seems very poor indeed. Because of Joseph Smith's public use of this passage there has been controversy about the correctness of the omission of the 'and' at Rev. 1:6 (since it precludes the 1844 interpretation) in his earlier Bible revision, which in printed form is entitled *The Holy Scriptures: Inspired Version: Containing the Old and New Testaments, An Inspired Revision of the Authorised Version* (Independence, Missouri: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1974). However, Robert J. Matthews, *'A Plainer Translation': Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible, A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 181-83, demonstrates that the printed text correctly represents the original manuscript.

23 This is also how Tertullian handled the Latin *et* in this verse as used in *De monogamia*, VII, 8: 'sacerdotes Deo Patri suo fecit.' He shows awareness of the full text of this verse by quoting it in *De exhortatione castitatis*, VII, 3: 'Scriptum est: Regnum quoque nos et sacerdotes deo et patri suo fecit.' See *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina, II (1954), 1238 and 1024, respectively.

24 Martin Rist, 'The Revelation of St. John the Divine,' in *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1957), XII, 370.

25 Both Henry B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of John* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1906), 8, and R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1920), I, 17, state that the αὐτοῦ goes with both τῷ θεῷ and πατρί.

Stephanus, and Beza during the sixteenth century was basically the same, yet there are still a number of significant variations. It happens that in a few cases where the Erasmian and Bezan texts differ the text as printed by Erasmus in 1516, 1519, and 1522 (and translated by Tyndale in 1526) corresponds to that adopted by the twentieth century critical editions of the Greek New Testament, whereas the AV represents the less acceptable variant text. For example, in Matt. 18:12 the Greek text was the same but the punctuation was different — WT leaves the ninety and nine in the mountains, while AV searches for the lost sheep in the mountains.[26] In Luke 2:43 WT has 'his father and mother,' while AV because it translates the later Greek text that shows an attempt to safeguard the 'virgin birth tradition and Mariolatry'[27] has 'Joseph and his mother' (a similar problem occurs at Luke 2:33).[28] WT omits Mark 11:26 and Luke 17:36 (which were probably derived from Matt. 6:15 and 24:40, respectively), and in John 8:59 WT omits the concluding part about Jesus' going through the midst of them and so passed by.'[29]

Thus, at times William Tyndale's pioneering efforts in Englishing the New Testament directly from Greek were better than the revising work of the King James translators eighty-five years later. Perhaps an even greater tribute to Tyndale is how much of his work has been retained in the AV and, by means of that, has made such a lasting impression on the English language.

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[26] Erasmus' text of 1519 had a comma after ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη, whereas Stephanus of 1550 and Beza of 1589 placed it before. Naturally a completely different image is brought to mind by the respective English translations of WT and AV. In support of WT is the parallel passage at Luke 15:4 where the ninety and nine are left ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, that is, in the 'uncultivated region fit for pasturage' (Joseph H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1901], 249a), for in Palestine 'the pasturelands lay in the hill-country' (Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition* [London: S.P.C.K., 1966], 65).

[27] J. K. Elliott, 'Can We Recover the Original New Testament?' *Theology*, 77 (1974), 350.

[28] Actually, Kenneth W. Clark, 'Observations on the Erasmian Notes in Codex 2,' *T.U.*, 73 (1959), 753, points out that codex 2 at Basel, the printer's manuscript for Erasmus' 1516 edition of the Greek New Testament, had as its text in Luke 2:43 Ἰωσὴφ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ, but this Erasmus in his pale-brown ink justifiably corrected in the margin to οἱ γονεῖς (the reading of codex 1). This is what is printed in his editions, while Stephanus in 1550 (followed by Beza) reverted to Ἰωσὴφ καὶ ἡ μήτηρ, which became the Textus Receptus.

[29] On these three passages, Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London and New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), 110, 168, and 227, gives the reasons for preferring the shorter text. In the latter two passages Bruce M. Metzger, 'The Influence of Codex Bezae upon the Geneva Bible of 1560,' *NTS*, 8 (1961), 74, points out that the longer text had intruded into the margin of the Geneva Bible of 1560, and by the time of the AV of 1611 it had moved into the text.