

# THE AUTHORISED VERSION: The Influence of William Tyndale's Translations

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## Introduction

In this 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Authorised Version, it is most fitting that much is said in praise of that climactic English Bible version, and I therefore count it a pleasure as well as an honour that the Trinitarian Bible Society should have invited me to make my own small contribution to this series of commemorative lectures. Yet as great as the Authorised Version may be, even the AV translators themselves indicate in their preface *Translators to the Reader* that their contribution was not to forge any new path in their production of a new Bible version, but simply, as they put it, 'to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one'.<sup>1</sup>

If you have a copy of the Authorised Version in front of you, you will see from the title page that the translators, typical of all Renaissance Bible translators, were all the while 'diligently comparing and revising the former translations' so that the resulting product was, in their own words not 'a new Translation' at all. Overshadowing all these preceding versions was the revolutionary translation work of William Tyndale. It is hard to overstate the deep influence of Tyndale upon all subsequent English Bible translations even up until the 21st century, and this is not simply because he had the first bite at the cherry, but rather that, in the remarkable providence of God, the man raised up to translate the Scriptures from the original Greek and Hebrew into the English tongue for the first time was an eminently godly scholar who was nothing short of a genius and a master of the English language.

But before we begin I should like to dedicate this lecture to the memory of the late Reverend John E. Marshall, formerly of Balliol College Oxford, not simply because he was a friend and supporter of the TBS, but because it was Mr Marshall who in 1994, at the outset of my doctoral studies at 'the other place', first commended to me the relevance of William Tyndale as a model of scholarly excellence combined with a robust piety and unbending principle, and he kindly gave me a copy of Professor David Daniell's biography of Tyndale, then just published by Yale for the quincentenary of Tyndale's birth. In his own day as a faithful pastor and preacher of God's Word, Mr Marshall displayed qualities similar to those of Tyndale, and we thank God for all such servants of the church of Christ.

## Tyndale as Scholar and Martyr

So who exactly was William Tyndale and where did he come from? What did he do and how did he die? Time here will only permit us the briefest of overviews of Tyndale's life and death, but at least some understanding of the context of Tyndale's translations is necessary in order to appreciate their impact.

The exact year of Tyndale's birth is unknown, but we do know he was born around 1494 in a village in 'God's Gloucestershire'—a county known for its Lollardy.<sup>2</sup> He was born into a comparatively wealthy family who launched him early in life into the pursuit of studies here in Oxford. In 1512 the young Tyndale graduated BA from Magdalen Hall before being ordained priest in 1515 and recommencing studies here at Magdalen College, Oxford, for the MA degree, this time in theology. Oxford furnished Tyndale with the tools of learning and exposed him to the critical study of ancient languages, and especially Greek—which was a controversial new Renaissance subject in Tyndale's day. The more he expounded and discussed Erasmus's newly printed Greek New Testament in clandestine meetings of fellow students in his university rooms, the more he saw the corruptions of the church and theology of his day, and the more grew Tyndale's sense of a divine calling to translate the Word of God afresh into the native tongue of his fellow countrymen.

But unwelcome and opposed in England concerning this aspiration he left for Germany in 1524. His first attempt at publishing an English Testament at Cologne was aborted by the authorities. In 1525 the printing hadn't even progressed beyond Mark's gospel when the print shop was raided, and Tyndale was forced to flee to Worms where, finally, the first English New Testament translated from the Greek was published in 1526. The Bishop of London immediately prohibited the book and made a bonfire of confiscated copies outside St Paul's Cathedral, denouncing Tyndale's Testament as 'pestiferous and moste pernicious poison',<sup>3</sup> even though it contained no preface or marginal notes whatsoever. Notwithstanding such opposition and the threat of torture and death for anyone found in possession of one, Tyndale's 1526 Testament was reprinted at least four times, indicating a burgeoning appetite for the Word of God in 16th-century England. In God's providence, it was his time in Germany that in all probability enabled Tyndale to learn or at least to improve his Hebrew,<sup>4</sup> and in the early 1530s an English Pentateuch and a translation of the Prophet Jonah were published. In 1534, Tyndale published a revision of his 1526 Testament and then in 1535 a minor revision of this 1534 Testament.

In engaging in this work, unauthorised by the authorities of his day, Tyndale was deemed to be a heretic worthy of death and he was continually being hounded by the King's emissaries. Finally, a 'Judas Iscariot' by the name of Henry Phillips betrayed him for the love of money and Tyndale was arrested on 21 May 1535. After languishing in prison for over a year, in October 1536 Tyndale was tied to the stake, strangled and then burned at Vilvoorde in modern-day Belgium, where there can still be seen a monument to Tyndale, partly funded by the Trinitarian Bible Society and erected in 1933.<sup>5</sup> Tyndale's famous last words were, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes'.

### **Vernacular Scripture as Heresy**

But how could it be that a man should be put to death for simply translating the Scriptures into the ordinary language of the people of God? Indeed, how could it come to pass, as it did in Norwich, that a man should be burned alive for simply possessing a copy of the Lord's Prayer in English!?<sup>6</sup> Or that another man should be imprisoned and tortured for embellishing some cloths for an inn in Colchester with vernacular Scripture texts?<sup>7</sup> The answer lies in the Oxford Constitutions, masterminded by the

Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel, and adopted by a synod of bishops in 1408 at the time of John Wycliffe. These constitutions, ‘under pain of the greater excommunication’, prohibited the translation of Scripture into English and the reading of Scripture in English unless permission was first obtained from the authorities.<sup>8</sup>

At the outset of his translation project Tyndale sought such permission from the Bishop of London in whose diocese he had been ordained, but support was withheld, no doubt because implicit in the request, whether Tyndale realised it or not, was a seeking of permission to instigate the reform of the church, possibly along the lines of Martin Luther, which of necessity would require political change. Tyndale came to believe that the defensive stance of the church concerning the Latin Vulgate arose not from a desire to protect the pure teaching of the Word of God, but from a desire to protect a rival authority. This is illustrated by a famous story told by a contemporary of Tyndale while he was still back in Gloucestershire. Defending God’s law to a supposedly ‘learned’ divine, the cleric had retorted to Tyndale that ‘we were better without God’s law than the pope’s’. To this assertion of the primacy of the Pope over God’s Word, Tyndale is said to have replied ‘I defie the Pope and all his laws...if God spare my lyfe ere many yeares, I wyl cause a boye that dryueth ye plough, shall knowe more of the scripture then thou doest’.<sup>9</sup> It was to dispel this gross darkness and to give the ploughboy the Bible in his own language that Tyndale was to give his life—in both senses of that phrase. As Tyndale watched ordinary believers systematically tortured and burned alive simply for reading fragments of the Bible in English, he came to the conviction that he was being confronted with the Antichrist himself, and that it was better to obey God than the Oxford Constitutions.

### **Tyndale as Translator**

Before we can appreciate the enormous influence of Tyndale upon the Authorised Version, we must consider Tyndale more closely as a translator of the Word of God. How did he go about his task? What was his general approach and what were his priorities? I suggest that there are three outstanding characteristics about Tyndale’s translations and in this order: accuracy, clarity and beauty.

### **Accuracy**

There can be no doubt about it that the aspect of his translation work that was most important to Tyndale was accuracy.<sup>10</sup> At first this might seem strange to some in the modern church where ease of communication seems to trump accuracy almost every time. How would Tyndale’s ploughboy be adversely affected in any noticeable way by ironing out a few of the complexities of ancient Semitic culture or Greek grammar? We therefore cannot understand Tyndale aright as a translator until we understand him as approaching a single **sacred text**. Not the partially restored and tentative, fallible texts of the modern academy, but a providentially preserved and infallible sacred text.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, if the Scriptures were not God-breathed sacred text, why risk one’s life to translate them? Let us not forget that as Tyndale pored over his draft translations, wrestling with the finer points of Greek syntax, he had a huge price over his head and the king’s bounty hunters were hot on his trail. If anyone had an excuse to do a rushed job in the interests of being immediately ‘more relevant’, it was Tyndale.

So Tyndale's internal driver for accuracy was his doctrine of Scripture. The external driver was that Tyndale well knew that any inaccuracies would be exploited by the authorities in order to support their claim that his translation was heretical. Although reading Tyndale's English Testament was illegal, Thomas More was given special permission by the Bishop of London to read it with the express purpose of finding 'heresies' in it—i.e., minute inaccuracies. There was no point in making More's task any easier.

Accuracy of translation was well within Tyndale's reach as he was a naturally gifted linguist and an extremely diligent life-long student. By the time of his death he was fluent in at least eight languages,<sup>12</sup> speaking the modern ones like a native and in the ancient ones being at the forefront of the scholarship of his day. Tyndale was undoubtedly one of the greatest Greek scholars of his generation, if not the greatest.<sup>13</sup> Some believe that Tyndale 'was a greater scholar even than Erasmus'.<sup>14</sup> His proficiency in Greek displayed in his New Testament translations needs no defence here. His Hebrew has been criticised, however, and, while he was not as strong in Hebrew as in Greek, and inferior in Hebrew abilities to the AV translators, he was still highly proficient, and still better than Luther (which says a lot). He could even match varieties of English to differences in the Hebrew of the different Old Testament genres and writers.<sup>15</sup> In fact, Tyndale actually preferred translating Hebrew as he could see that English (in stark contrast to Latin) was syntactically and grammatically very close to Hebrew and therefore capable of a more literal word-for-word translation. In Tyndale we therefore see the preservation of the Hebrew style—as much as English would allow—in 'its variations in word order, its use of verbal redundancies, and its readiness to hang verbless clauses on the end of poetic statements'.<sup>16</sup>

Let me give you a few examples. It is very characteristic of 'AV English' to use the word 'even' to join two related phrases together. But this comes directly from Tyndale who employed this ingenious linguistic device to aid him in the formidable task of recreating the effects of Hebrew poetry in English.<sup>17</sup> For example, in Psalm 21.4 we read that 'He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days for ever and ever'. The 'even' which appears here in the AV is in italics indicating that it is not present in the Hebrew, and even though Tyndale never translated the Psalms, it is Tyndale's use of 'even', via Miles Coverdale, that ends up permeating 'AV English' even in those books Tyndale never translated.

Another example of how Tyndale established a pattern for early Protestant biblical English is that Hebrew and Greek syntax is often 'noun-of-noun' as in 'man of God', 'fish of the sea', 'the Kingdom of God' and so on. Tyndale avoids the more natural and fashionable English of his day at this point—'a godly man', 'seafish', 'God's kingdom'—as that would have been to invert the original language's word order unnecessarily.<sup>18</sup> Tyndale's choice here has not only shaped the development of biblical English, but the English language in general. Today, for example, we speak of 'the lamb of God' and never 'God's lamb'; of 'the rule of law' and not 'law's rule'.

A final example is seen in the distinctively Tyndalian (and AV) Old Testament narrative which often seems to be a succession of 'and someone did this, and someone did that,

and someone said this, and someone said that'. In English narrative we are all conditioned to recoil from such 'flat' story telling and, like good schoolboys, to insert explanatory conjunctions such as 'when someone did this, then someone did that, and so someone said this, so that someone said that'. While Tyndale knew there are limits to how much the English language can contain the Hebrew approach to narrative, he clearly avoided inserting such explanatory conjunctions as much as he felt possible, as he wanted to avoid imposing any unwarranted interpretation upon the text. The original Hebrew juxtapositions must be allowed to stand in their own stark, yet pregnant, simplicity.<sup>19</sup> Endeavouring to bring them to the birth was to be the role of the commentator, preacher and reader, if anybody, and not, generally speaking, of the translator.

We can therefore concur with the verdict of Dr Gerald Hammond, one-time Professor of English Literature at the University of Manchester: 'Tyndale's translation is marked by a willingness to be as literal as is reasonably possible within the bounds of producing a readable English version'. By 'literal' Hammond means that 'Tyndale's chief concerns were to achieve fullness of translation and to convey some of the alien nuances of Hebrew [and Greek] style. Fullness of translation is a matter of neither taking away from, nor adding to, the original'.<sup>20</sup>

But what happens in the pursuit of accuracy when there just isn't an equivalent word in the receptor language? Even most purists at this point would concede, 'Well, just do the best you can with the words available'. Not so Tyndale. So committed to accuracy was Tyndale that he often invents a word to do the job. Some of the better known words coined by Tyndale include Jehovah, birthright, fleshpots, Passover, scape-goat, stiff-necked, longsuffering, lovingkindness and even viper.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, on Tyndale as an accurate translator of Holy Scripture, it might be said that in approaching Bible translation in this meticulous manner Tyndale was just being a child of his age and that things are different today. However, in Tyndale's day, 'When a Renaissance translator worked from a normal text it was customary for him to expand, interpolate, and omit, according to his taste and what he assumed the taste of his readers to be'.<sup>22</sup> It can be readily documented how 16th-century scholars happily expanded and massaged a text in order to produce a more user-friendly and respectable text. This was not considered irresponsible in the way that it would be in scholarly circles today. So Tyndale's meticulously conservative approach to translating the sacred text of Scripture was actually counter-cultural.

But as much as Tyndale pursued accuracy, he never came to the point where he thought he had perfectly attained it. He always saw his translations as capable of improvement. He writes in the preface to his revised Testament of 1534: 'If I shall perceive either by myself or by the information of other, that ought be escaped me, or might be more plainly translated, I will shortly after, cause it to be mended'. But that is not to say that his translation was inherently unstable or would be readily amended, for he immediately adds in the same place: 'Howbeit in many places, me thinketh it better to put a declaration in the margin, than to run too far from the text. And in many places, where the text seemeth at the first chop hard to be understood, yet the

circumstances before and after, and often reading together, make it plain enough'.<sup>23</sup> Tyndale was not generally open to changes simply because the suggested amendment was easier to understand. And most of the time a marginal comment would suffice.

### **Clarity**

Secondly, Tyndale as a translator also sought to achieve clarity. Tyndale wanted the Bible to be read and understood by the ploughboy, but it is important first to note that this was to be fundamentally achieved by giving him the Scriptures in English (which the ploughboy spoke) as opposed to Latin (which he couldn't speak, never mind read). This Tyndale most certainly did, and that alone was enough to cause a revolution. It is hard for us to imagine at this distance what impact Tyndale's Bible would have had on the ordinary Christian. Hitherto they were used to hearing a priest mumbling at the altar in incomprehensible Latin with his back to the congregation. But now the ordinary Christian was able to hear ringing in his ears in plain and lucid English the simple words of, say, the Gospel or First Epistle of John.

But Tyndale's mission to bring the Word of God to ordinary people in their mother tongue came second place to accuracy. Indeed, he didn't actually translate the Bible into common speech at all, but rather 'into a register just above common speech'.<sup>24</sup> According to Professor David Norton of the Victoria University of Wellington, Tyndale's English to his original readers 'did not seem as natural and easy as we are inclined to think it'.<sup>25</sup> As long as overall it could speak directly to the heart, it did not matter to Tyndale if an accurate translation of the Scriptures was not in 'street language'. In fact, this was particularly impossible to achieve in the 16th century anyway. The lack of modern communications and ease of travel meant that regional dialects could vary considerably, and in fact it is quite clear that Tyndale was consciously working hard to identify an 'international' kind of English, and filtering out, for example, the way he would naturally say things himself coming from Gloucestershire.<sup>26</sup> He does not always succeed in this—quite a bit of dialect still remained—but the fact that the vast bulk of the English that he did write is so eminently readable even to this day is a great tribute to Tyndale's genius with the English tongue.<sup>27</sup> Anyone who has dipped into David Daniell's modern spelling edition of the Tyndale Bible will know that this is true.<sup>28</sup> Had Tyndale written in conversational colloquialisms his work would have soon been outdated and would never have attained the degree of timeless clarity that it has, nor, ironically, its global influence and continuing relevance. To appreciate this, one only needs to consider the relative incomprehensibility of Shakespeare's plays compared with the Tyndale Bible.

In Tyndale's day even English at its best was despised by the educated as a barbaric and unwieldy tongue incapable of bearing the demands of a book worth reading.<sup>29</sup> The general perception was that if you wanted to say anything worth hearing, then you had better say it in Latin. And if you didn't know Latin, that was because you hadn't, in fact, got anything worth saying. But Tyndale's quest for clarity for the ordinary Christian put this notion of barbaric English to rest—not because there was no truth at all in the claim, but because Tyndale enriched the existing English language by marrying it to the greatest book of all. He unashamedly adopted the simplicity of Saxon syntax and vocabulary and in so doing endued it with the power of the Word of

God. Instead of the ornate and endless subordinate clauses of Latinised English, Tyndale, for the most part, wrote short sentences of subject–verb–object often using only monosyllabic words.<sup>30</sup>

Tyndale as translator, however, did not believe that plain English was of necessity flat and two-dimensional. In fact, Gerald Hammond’s research illustrates how early English Bible translators like Tyndale ‘cultivated ambiguity and evocative vagueness’, in contrast to most modern English versions which ‘invariably move towards one fixed and unreverberative meaning’.<sup>31</sup> Let me give just one example to show what Hammond means by this. In Genesis 2.24 we read in Tyndale that ‘for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh’. The AV also says the man ‘shall cleave unto his wife’. But the NIV, for example, (following the NEB) says the man will ‘be united to his wife’. The Hebrew *dabaq*, however, carries the sense of ‘sticking’ as in Deuteronomy 13.17—‘there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand’—and in Lamentations 4.4 where ‘the tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth’. If marriage is simply a uniting of two, then the act of ‘becoming one flesh’ is simply a matter of sexual intercourse. But Tyndale could see that the Hebrew is far more powerfully evocative at this point, and he had every intention that the ordinary English reader should experience the resonances of the Hebrew—which readers of the AV do today in that ‘to cleave’ well conveys the imagery ‘of clinging, clutching and separation from the rest of humanity’.<sup>32</sup> It is far more than the mere coupling of two railway carriages so that they become one train. And when we read Scripture christologically, as we should, and as Paul does in Ephesians 5.30-32, we begin to perceive something of the unfailing love and commitment of Christ ‘cleaving’ to His chosen bride.

In his preface to his 1526 Testament, Tyndale recognises that his translation contains ‘wordes which are nott comenly used’ (and this was a gross understatement for the ones he had just coined!) and acknowledges that ‘scripture useth many wordes which are other wyse understoode of the comen people’. It is to be noted that Tyndale’s response to this was to append tables to his translation of these ‘wordes which are nott comenly used’ rather than dilute the translation itself or depart from the strict meaning of the original. The ploughboy was being set up for an education: a book that would not leave him where he was, but would elevate him not just spiritually but intellectually.<sup>33</sup>

Hammond speaks of ‘the English biblical tradition of resonant obscurity’: what he means by that is that Tyndale (and the AV translators) ‘accepted that fidelity in translation would inevitably mean local ambiguity and obscurity—and, further, that such places should not be disguised, but made attractive and resonant’.<sup>34</sup> Tyndale even took this approach in those places where he did not provide any marginal notes.<sup>35</sup> This stands in marked contrast with most modern day English Bible translators for whom any hint of complexity is an embarrassment and must be ironed out immediately as if God did not have His or our best interests in mind when in His special providence the Hebrew and Greek defy any conclusive analysis. What is clear is that such a situation was no embarrassment to Tyndale, and he and the AV translators are done an injustice when obscurities in their translation are automatically dismissed as failure. Tyndale

wanted for the English ploughboy a faithful translation, not a deceptively simple paraphrase based on guesswork. If the ploughboy encountered the words of the Holy Spirit, that same Holy Spirit would continue His great work of illumination. That the ploughboy was not given the illusion of instant comprehension of every verse of Scripture was not a problem for Tyndale, nor for the ploughboy. At the very least it taught the ploughboy to pursue humility even as his knowledge increased.

Tyndale's desire for the ploughboy was therefore not a translation in the modern idiom at any price but an accurate translation in the native tongue no plainer than fidelity to the original languages would allow. Tyndale was aiming for simple English but also resonant English, for clarity but not banality.

### **Beauty**

The third characteristic of Tyndale's translations is beauty. Tyndale's Bible is not merely a literal translation, as if it were but a precursor of Robert Young's literal translation.<sup>36</sup> I suppose even 'Google Translate' can come up with a decent literal translation from time to time, but what we have in Tyndale is, of course, far more. The words he chooses, while being faithful to the original, also happen to have great rhetorical effect and stylistic beauty. According to C. S. Lewis—a former fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, where we are gathered this afternoon—Tyndale was 'the best prose writer of his age',<sup>37</sup> and David Daniell argues that 'without Tyndale, no Shakespeare'.<sup>38</sup>

Scholars differ over the extent to which they believe Tyndale consciously strove to create beautiful literature. Professor David Daniell has masterfully demonstrated the beauty of Tyndale as literature, but Professor David Norton argues that it was not Tyndale's conscious goal: Tyndale never approached the Word of God as a piece of literature, so any literary merit in Tyndale's translation was merely instinctive.<sup>39</sup> Norton acknowledges that this view could be challenged on the grounds that Tyndale indicates that he aspired to recreate in English not only the 'sense and pure understanding' of the original biblical language, but also its 'grace and sweetness'.<sup>40</sup> But even if Norton is still right, Tyndale's genius for writing beautiful prose is only further emphasised: to excel without even trying is talent indeed. And there can be no doubt that part of Tyndale's motivation, conscious or otherwise, is his evident strong conviction that, as the Word of God, Scripture should be read with deep and appropriate feeling.<sup>41</sup> This is evident in the beauty of Tyndale's translations—the alliteration, consonance, assonance, cadences and so on. These are 'better felt than telt', at least for this present lecturer, so one example is in order.

Personally, for most of my life I have found one of the most moving verses in the whole Bible to be that of 2 Samuel 18.33, which Tyndale translates as follows:

And the kynge was moved and went up to a chambre over the gate, and wept.  
And as he went, thus he sayde: my sonne Absalom, my sonne, my sonne, my  
sonne Absalom, woulde to God I had dyed for th[ee] Absalom, my sonne, my  
sonne!<sup>42</sup>

The AV here takes up Tyndale almost *verbatim*, but, in my opinion, improves upon his cadences by adding some ‘O’s and emphasising ‘moved’ with an alliteration:

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Now apart from Absalom’s name and ‘chamber’—everything here is monosyllabic, plain, Saxon English. It’s hard to imagine what could possibly be a stumbling block to the modern reader, even a child. And yet many modern English Bible translators seem unable to keep their fingers off! Listen to what just three attempts have done to expunge the beauty, gravity and pathos of this passage for the alleged benefit of the modern reader:

The *New Century Version* reads, ‘Then the king was very upset, and he went to the room over the city gate and cried. As he went, he cried out, ‘My son Absalom, my son Absalom! I wish I had died and not you. Absalom, my son, my son!’<sup>43</sup> *The Message* styles itself as a ‘fresh’ idiomatic translation, and so we might be forgiven for expecting a powerfully moving rendering at this point, but instead we find David engaging in a rather protracted and emotionally detached musing: ‘O my son Absalom, my dear, dear son Absalom! Why not me rather than you, my death and not yours, O Absalom, my dear, dear son!’<sup>44</sup> Finally, not to be outdone in this ever variegated pursuit of ‘relevance’, the *New Living Translation* from none other than the Tyndale House Foundation manages to portray David as a spoilt toddler: ‘The King was overcome with emotion. He went up to his room over the gateway and burst into tears...’<sup>45</sup>

I had better stop there as you probably can’t take much more. But it is hoped that you can hear my point. Examples of this general pattern in modern English translations could be repeated over and over again. As Gerald Hammond puts it, ‘increase of scholarship often goes in tandem with a diminution in poetic perception’—‘the search for the exact word to fit the shade of meaning the scholar has perceived’ results in losing ‘sight of the general effect’.<sup>46</sup> As Hammond puts it, ‘Tyndale moves continually towards the liveliness of narrative where modern translations retreat into the lifelessness of a scholarly document’.<sup>47</sup> Tyndale did not allow his scholarly insights to make him forget the big picture—nor to forget the literary impact his renderings would have on the ploughboy. In the last analysis, then, Tyndale’s English was far from being ‘common English’.<sup>48</sup> Something of the amazing achievement of Tyndale is that while endeavouring to translate for the ploughboy he also managed to produce translations that subsequent generations of ordinary Christians and scholars alike have recognised as uncommonly accurate, clear and beautiful.

### **Tyndale as Father of the English Bible**

So what can we say about the influence of Tyndale on our Authorised Version? A recent computerised study has revealed that about 84% of the AV New Testament and about 76% of the Old Testament is *verbatim* Tyndale.<sup>49</sup> In other words, if you understand and appreciate the approach and principles of Tyndale as a Bible translator which I have just outlined, you understand the fundamental features of the approach

and principles that underlie the AV. As Professor David Norton puts it, 'Tyndale's English became the model for biblical English and he is indeed the father of English biblical translation'.<sup>50</sup>

So how did this come about? Between Tyndale's Bible and that of 1611 there appeared five major Protestant English Bible versions, each building on the foundation laid by those preceding. Coverdale's Bible of 1535 (which fully incorporated Tyndale's work and translated the poetical and prophetic books he had not completed before his untimely death); Matthew's Bible of 1537; the Great Bible of 1539; the Geneva Bible of 1560; and the Bishops' Bible of 1568. These were the six Bibles that the AV translators were officially supposed to use in their revision work.<sup>51</sup> Priority was supposed to be given to the more politically correct Bishops' Bible,<sup>52</sup> but in practice it clearly was not,<sup>53</sup> and the influence of Tyndale, both directly and as mediated through these other translations, especially the Geneva Bible, is everywhere apparent.<sup>54</sup>

### **Accuracy**

So what of the 16 to 24% of the AV that differs from Tyndale? How does the AV compare with Tyndale? In terms of accuracy the AV is marginally more accurate, most of the time. This is partly because by the early 17th century great advances had been made in both the quality and number of Hebrew and Greek scholars available to the Christian church. The AV translators' knowledge of the original tongues was superior to that of Tyndale and they were therefore often able to make his translation even more accurate, taking advantage of recent advances in philology.<sup>55</sup>

Another reason for the increased formal accuracy of the AV is the slightly more rigid approach of the translators. Stylistically, the AV is even more literal than Tyndale and 'tidies up' Tyndale in places.<sup>56</sup> Tyndale was often more open to translating the same Greek or Hebrew word with an alternative English one for stylistic variation. The AV translators were more likely to recreate the repetitiveness of the original Hebrew.<sup>57</sup> There is also sometimes a certain idiosyncrasy in the Tyndale Bible that we might expect from a one-man translation, especially given the conditions under which Tyndale laboured. Such idiosyncrasies, if they had so far survived into the Geneva Bible, the extended committees and formal revision process of the AV translators made a point of smoothing out.

Yet it would be wrong to imply that this whole revision process was a step forward every single time. Life is never so simple, and over the vast expanse of the near three-quarters of a million words in the English Bible, there are inevitably going to be significant exceptions to every generalization in this area. Sometimes alien pressures from the wider polemical context proved decisive. On one occasion at least the AV capitulates on a rendering of Tyndale's over which he had endured much bitter opposition from the authorities. In the AV, Tyndale's (and Geneva's) 'love' (for *agape*) is sometimes replaced by the term for which Thomas More had argued: 'charity'—a word capable of being reduced to almsgiving. But the AV translators did not have an option in their rejection of Tyndale's use of 'congregation' in favour of the politically safer option of 'church', because this was explicitly enjoined upon them in their written instructions.<sup>58</sup> Yet in chapters such as Ephesians 5 this is arguably still an

improvement, as Tyndale had rather awkwardly spoken there about the marriage between ‘Christ and the congregation’.<sup>59</sup>

So the fact that very generally speaking the AV is slightly more accurate than Tyndale should not be overstated, as very occasionally Tyndale still to this day shines more brightly as an outstandingly accurate and theologically insightful translator, not only well ahead of his time, but even ahead of much modern research. One notable example is Tyndale’s seeing a direct reference to the mercy seat in Romans 3.25 instead of just the AV’s abstract noun ‘propitiation’, when Christ is said to be ‘set forth to be a propitiation’ (*hilasterion*).<sup>60</sup> All subsequent major English Bible versions traditionally steered away from linking Paul’s thought with the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant, and opted for an abstract noun or some other phrase that makes *hilasterion* denote a sacrificial victim, be it the Geneva Bible’s ‘pacification’, the AV’s and ESV’s ‘propitiation’, or the NIV’s ‘sacrifice of atonement’.

The problem is, as Daniel Bailey’s doctoral research at none other than Tyndale House in Cambridge has shown, secular Greek usage of *hilasterion* never carries that meaning—not even once—and in the Septuagint Pentateuch *hilasterion* refers every single time to the mercy seat. In fact, *hilasterion* is always a concrete object and never a sacrificial victim or an action. Furthermore, when we consider the function of the mercy seat in the Pentateuch we see not only that it is a place of propitiatory sacrifice—as in Leviticus 16.14: ‘he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it...upon the mercy seat’—but also we see that it is a place of revelation and proclamation, as in Numbers 7.89, where Moses ‘heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat’.<sup>61</sup> Dr. Bailey has demonstrated by means of lexical semantics and syntactical and exegetical studies that Paul at this point is making a profound theological statement about the work of Christ. By identifying Jesus in 3.25 with the *hilasterion*, what Paul is saying is that Christ is the new mercy seat to replace the one that had gone missing at the time of the Babylonian captivity. Thus propitiation and proclamation are powerfully combined in Christ as the new mercy seat for the newly established New Covenant people of God, and this serves to ‘declare [God’s] righteousness’. So Tyndale’s simple Anglo-Saxon rendering of ‘seate of mercy’ proves to be bang up-to-date over against the traditional Latinate rendering of ‘propitiation’.<sup>62</sup> So while extolling the virtues of the AV we should never forget that not only does Tyndale stand so largely behind them, but in some places we might wish that Tyndale’s influence had been even greater. We must at all times render honour to whom honour is due.

### **Clarity**

So much for Tyndale and the accuracy of the AV. In terms of clarity the AV translators were no more concerned to ensure the English Bible was in ‘street language’ than Tyndale was. The AV was intentionally ‘archaic’ from the year it was first published. There never was a time when the AV did not sound ‘dated’ and from another world. But this was primarily because it was following the lead that Tyndale had set as the Father of Biblical English. As we have seen, in Tyndale and the AV the source language is allowed to dominate the receptor language. That is to say, the Hebrew and Greek are allowed to shape and mould and even invigorate the final English form. In doing

this they were being consistent with the nature of the sacred texts themselves. After all, Biblical Hebrew was never colloquial even when first written, but already included archaic idioms, obscure allusions and poetic diction designed to provoke prolonged meditation rather than instant comprehension. Similarly, the New Testament was not written in street language and differs significantly from ‘secular’ Greek, with its Hebraic forms and structures deriving from its relationship to the Septuagint, the centuries-old Greek translation of the Old Testament from which the Apostles preached.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding Tyndale’s ambitions for the ploughboy, some of his language could never have made it into the AV. Late Middle-English words found in Tyndale, such as ‘advoutry’ and ‘grece’ become respectively ‘adultery’ and ‘stairs’ in the AV. Numerous other instances of dialect and obsolete terms similarly fall away, not having anything to do with faithfulness to the Hebrew or Greek.<sup>63</sup> But it should be acknowledged that the AV is still often more Latinate than Tyndale and flees from colloquialisms more than Tyndale. This is often, however, only because the AV translators fundamentally agreed with Tyndale’s conviction that accuracy should be subordinated to clarity on those occasions when a choice has to be made, and because eventually even colloquialisms themselves can become unclear.

### **Beauty**

In terms of *beauty*, the AV translators not only approved most of Tyndale’s words, but they also followed his rhythmic, literary style. As a result, so many phrases from the AV have taken up a place in wider English literature and modern parlance. Some of the most well-known phrases which reappear in English literature, and which have even attained proverbial status in modern English due to the AV’s influence, go back originally to Tyndale. Examples include: ‘be of good cheer’, ‘the last shall be first’, ‘eat, drink and be merry’, ‘fatted calf’, ‘let there be light’, ‘harden his heart’, ‘still as stone’, ‘fell flat on his face’, ‘dreamer of dreams’, ‘sheep’s clothing’, ‘go through the eye of a needle’, ‘the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak’, ‘go, and do thou likewise’, ‘riotous living’, ‘a shining light’, ‘the times or the seasons’, ‘a law unto themselves’, ‘the powers that be’, ‘let not the sun go down upon/on your wrath’, ‘suffer fools gladly’, ‘my brother’s keeper’, ‘let my people go’, ‘house of bondage’, ‘take the name of the Lord thy God in vain’, ‘a stumbling block’, ‘light a candle and put it under a bushel’, ‘eye for an eye’, ‘the blind lead the blind’, ‘the signs of the times’, ‘coals of fire on his head’, ‘eye hath not seen’, ‘fallen from grace’, ‘fight the good fight’, ‘wandering stars’, ‘no man can serve two masters’, ‘pearls before swine’, ‘seek and ye shall find’, ‘by their fruits ye shall know them’, ‘a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country’, ‘crumbs which fall from [the] table’, ‘where two or three are gathered together’, ‘all these things must come to pass’, ‘thirty pieces of silver’, ‘what shall it profit a man’, ‘physician, heal thyself’, ‘the harvest...is great, but the labourers are few’, ‘signs and wonders’, ‘judge not’, ‘behold the man’, ‘death, where is thy sting’, ‘bear his own burden’, ‘filthy lucre’, ‘bottomless pit’, ‘that old serpent’, and ‘great whore’—and that is but a selection!<sup>64</sup>

But we should not assume that just because the AV rejected Tyndale’s translation of a certain phrase that it was therefore to be denied proverbial status. Due to the

influence of the Geneva Bible we still use Tyndale's phrase today, 'cast the first stone' (where the AV has 'first cast a stone').<sup>65</sup>

Nor is this to say that the powerful influence upon modern English that the Authorised Version has had is all down to Tyndale. Here are some examples of literary or proverbial phrases that people still use today that are not in Tyndale's translations nor any English Bible prior to 1611 but do come directly from the AV: 'lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven' (instead of Tyndale's 'gather ye treasure together in heaven'), 'get thee behind me' (instead of Tyndale's 'get thee hence from me'), 'suffer little children' (instead of Tyndale's 'suffer children'), 'pearl of great price' (instead of Tyndale's 'precious pearl'), 'no small stir' (instead of Tyndale's 'no little ado'), 'turned the world upside down' (instead of Tyndale's 'trouble the world'), 'a thorn in the flesh' (instead of Tyndale's 'unquietness of the flesh'), and, 'unto the pure all things are pure'.<sup>66</sup>

Sometimes the AV translators followed the Geneva Bible over against Tyndale and still produced for us well-known phrases such as these: 'there were giants in the earth in those days' (instead of Tyndale's 'there were tyrants in the world in those days'), 'love thy neighbour as thyself', 'grave, where is thy victory' (instead of Tyndale's 'hell, where is thy victory'), 'they know not what they do', the beautiful, rhythmic phrase 'live, and move, and have our being' (where Tyndale just gives 'live move and have our being'), 'led as a sheep to the slaughter' (where Tyndale has 'led as a sheep to be slain'), and, 'all things to all men' (where Tyndale has 'I fashioned my self to all men').<sup>67</sup>

All these phrases, however, are but some of the highlights of Tyndalian, AV English. In reality, Tyndale's Biblical English, via the AV, has far more imperceptibly become warp and woof of modern English. Through Tyndale's immense influence on the AV translators, and, in turn, the immense influence of the AV upon Christian civilisation in the English-speaking world, David Norton is able to say that 'more of our English is ultimately learnt from Tyndale than from any other writer of English prose'.<sup>68</sup> We should be most thankful to God that this vernacular translation which is so readily available to us to this day is accurate, clear, beautiful, and that of the English language at its zenith.<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusions

I would like to close now by offering some lines of thought upon our own approach to Scripture in the light of what the marketing departments of many Bible publishing houses would have us believe today. We have seen repeatedly that in Tyndale and in the AV the original language of Holy Scripture is authoritative over against the receptor language—English—and must be allowed to determine the final English form. The English language and English culture were expected to make room for the source language, to have the courtesy to allow the visitor in the room to enrich the encounter by bringing with him some treasures and insights from distant times and lands, not forcing him to leave anything distinctive in the locker in the corridor. Yet in so many modern English translations this relationship has been reversed, and it is contemporary English that dictates what the Bible now may or may not say to us. If the Holy Spirit inspired a sense that doesn't fit in with modern English today, then He is no longer allowed to say it. If He used an idiom which we don't like, then He is barred

from using it again in our superior company. If His language is too shocking, then He must be taught proper manners at the hands of today's new communication gurus. So whereas Tyndale coined a new word, enriched the English language and demanded of his readers to make the mental effort required to enter into the layers of meaning in the inspired Scriptures, the modern translations tend to eradicate nuances in favour of instant ease of comprehension. It should not be too hard to see how this can go hand-in-hand with an insufficient reverence for Scripture as the very words of God.

But secondly, let us be equally clear that just reading the translation of Tyndale or the King James men does not automatically solve the problem either. It is still possible to read the AV as if it simply contains the substance of a message, and to believe that once we have understood the message then the exact words God used to convey it are unimportant. This is to treat the text of Scripture like a dispensable husk that can be tossed aside once the kernel of meaning is grasped.<sup>70</sup> This attitude is often to be found in those Christians who are big on systematic theology but who actually don't really know the text of their Bibles very well at all. They can logically defend their doctrinal corner, but rarely on the basis of specific passages of Scripture. Having attained to the kernel of orthodoxy, the husks of God's texts are simply thrown to the wind. But the approach of Tyndale and the AV translators teaches us otherwise. Their devotion to the shape and contours of the text as well as to its content are a reminder to us to meditate much upon the sacred text and to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom (Colossians 3.16). So let us learn to say with David—and no doubt with Tyndale—'How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!' (Psalm 119.103).

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Endnotes:

1. *Translators to the Reader* (London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1998), p. 24.
2. Unless otherwise stated, biographical information concerning Tyndale is taken from David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 1st ed. (New Haven, CT, USA: Yale University Press, 1994) and David Daniell, 'Tyndale, William (c.1494-1536)' in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: In Association with the British Academy: From the earliest Times to the Year 2000*, Brian H. Harrison & H. Colin G. Matthew, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)—henceforth *ODNB*.
3. Quoted in *ODNB*.
4. The long-held assumption that Tyndale learned his Hebrew on the Continent has recently been challenged by Jonathan Yates. Although Hebrew was largely unknown in early 16th-century England, there were in fact a few people learning Hebrew at that time and who had links with Oxford and Cambridge Universities (Jonathan P. Yates, 'The Time and Place of Tyndale's Hebrew Learning: A Reconsideration' *Reformation* 7 (2002): 23-47).
5. Brian H. Edwards, *Travel with William Tyndale: England's greatest Bible Translator* (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, [2008] Reprint ed., 2009), p. 111.
6. John Lambert, *A Treatyse made by Johan Lambert unto Kynge Henry the viij. concerynge hys Opynyon in the Sacrame[n]t of the Aultre as they call it, or Supper of the Lorde as the Scripture nameth it*, John Bale, ed. (Wesel, Germany: n.p., 1st ed.,

1548?), p. 3v; cited in David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence*, 1st ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 136.

7. This was a painter named Edward Freese. His heavily pregnant wife coming to visit him in the prison of the bishop's house was brutally kicked in the belly by the bishop's porter, killing the infant immediately and, eventually, the poor mother. Edward Freese was only released after further torture had made him lose his mind (John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments of these latter and perillous Dayes...*, 1st ed. (London: John Day, 1563), pp. 546-47). The four 16th-century editions of Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* are available online at [www.johnfoxe.org](http://www.johnfoxe.org).

8. The exact wording is as follows: 'The Holy Scripture is not to be translated into the vulgar tongue, nor a translation to be expounded, until it shall have been duly examined, under pain of excommunication and the stigma of heresy. Moreover it is a perilous thing, as the Blessed Jerome testifies, to translate the text of Holy Scripture from one idiom into another, inasmuch as in the translations themselves it is no easy matter to keep the same meaning in all cases, like as the Blessed Jerome, albeit inspired, confesses that he often went astray in this respect. We therefore enact and ordain that no one henceforth on his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English or other language, by way of a book, pamphlet, or tract, and that no book, pamphlet, or tract of this kind be read, either already recently composed in the time of the said John Wycliffe, or since then, or that may in future be composed, in part or in whole, publicly or privily, under pain of the greater excommunication, until the translation itself shall have been approved by the diocesan of the place or if need be by a provincial council. Whoever shall do the contrary to be punished in like manner as a supporter of heresy and error' (Alfred W. Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible: The Documents relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525-1611*, 1st ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911], pp. 80-81).

9. Foxe, *Actes and Monuments*, p. 570. Later editions of Foxe render this passage as reported speech. It is quite likely that Tyndale was consciously or subconsciously following Erasmus in this outburst, as Erasmus—one of Tyndale's favourite authors—had already stated concerning the Scriptures that he 'would that...the farmer sing some portion of them at the plough, the weaver hum some parts of them to the movement of his shuttle, the traveller lighten the weariness of the journey with stories of this kind' (quoted in David Norton, *A History of the English Bible as Literature*, 1st ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000], p. 19).

10. This is primarily evident from the quality of the translations themselves, but Tyndale himself says he strenuously sought to use 'proper englysshe' (Preface to Tyndale's 1526 New Testament), and the context in which Tyndale uses this phrase indicates that by it he meant the word that best conveys the original sense and meaning of the Hebrew or Greek (cf. Norton, *History of the English Bible*, p. 20).

11. Cf. Theodore P. Letis, 'From Sacred Text to Religious Text: An intellectual History of the Impact of Erasmian Lower Criticism on Dogma as a Contribution to the English Enlightenment and the Victorian Crisis of Faith' (PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1995).

12. David Daniell, 'William Tyndale, the English Bible, and the English Language' in *The Bible as Book: The Reformation*, Orlaith O'Sullivan and Ellen N. Herron, eds., 1st ed. (London: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2000) 39-50, p. 41.

13. As he grew in knowledge of Hebrew he also became sensitive to the distinctively 'Hebraic' nature of New Testament Greek and this new appreciation is what Tyndale himself says was behind many of the changes he made in this 1534 revised New Testament (William Tyndale, *Tyndale's New Testament: Translated from the Greek by William Tyndale in 1534*, David Daniell, ed. [New Haven: Yale University Press, Modern-spelling ed., 1989], p. 3).
14. Daniell, 'William Tyndale, the English Bible, and the English Language', p. 41.
15. Daniell, *The Bible in English*, pp. 136-37.
16. Gerald C. Hammond, *The Making of the English Bible*, 1st ed. (Manchester, UK: Carcanet Press, 1982), p. 20.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
18. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-52.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-26, 210. A not insignificant difference between the AV and the New King James Version is the abandonment of the AV's Tyndalian conservatism in this area.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
21. This focus on 'the form of the message' is to be contrasted with the modern focus on 'the response of the receptor' or reader. Eugene Nida (1914-2011), the father of the dynamic equivalence approach to translating Scripture, was 'not content merely to translate so that the average receptor is likely to understand the message', but 'rather...aim[ed] to make certain that such a person is very unlikely to misunderstand it' (Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* [Leiden: E. J. Brill for the United Bible Societies, [1969] Reprint ed., 1982], p. 1). With Tyndale, the ploughboy clearly still has some work to do, but, as he engages, he grows. With Nida he can kick back and relax, but, educationally speaking, he stays where he is.
22. Hammond, p. 30. Hammond provides examples of this.
23. Tyndale, *Tyndale's New Testament*, 1989, p. 3.
24. Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 158.
25. David Norton, *The King James Bible: A short History from Tyndale to Today*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 13.
26. Cf. Daniell, *William Tyndale*, pp. 12-18.
27. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 16. Inevitably, half a millennium on, some words in Tyndale are now generally unknown. One random example would be 'chevisance' in Deuteronomy 21.14, but for many others see the following detailed study of dialect and obsolete words in Tyndale: David Norton, 'Buttons and Ribbons, Hartgoats and Hedgehogs, Soleams and Stellios: A wayward Courtesy Lecture for laborious fainty snoutnosed Runagates on some Words in Tyndale's Old Testament but missing from the Authorised Version' *Reformation* 1 (1996): 129-37, 289-344.
28. William Tyndale, *Tyndale's Old Testament: Being the Pentateuch of 1530, Joshua to 2 Chronicles of 1537, and Jonah* Ed. David Daniell (New Haven: Yale University Press, Modern-spelling ed., 1992); Tyndale, *Tyndale's New Testament*, 1989.
29. Norton, *King James Bible*, pp. 11-12.
30. There are notable exceptions, however, such as in Romans 7.8 where Tyndale uses the Latinate term 'concupiscence' even though he had just translated the same Greek word, *epithumia*, as 'lust' in Romans 7.7. These renderings survive into the AV in this place and illustrate how, when comparing translations, we can only generalise.

31. Hammond, p. 7. See also Gerald C. Hammond, 'The Influence of Hebrew upon the Style of Tudor and Jacobean English Bible Translations' (PhD Dissertation, University College London [University of London], 1973).
32. Hammond, *Making of the English Bible*, p. 8.
33. This was quite in keeping with Erasmus's earlier vision of a ploughboy enjoying Scripture (see above), for Erasmus himself believed that 'things should not be written in such a way that everyone understands everything, but so that they are forced to investigate certain things, and learn' (quoted in Daniell, *William Tyndale*, p. 44). And Tyndale believed this not just concerning the ploughboy, but equally of the ignorant clergy of his day (cf. Daniell, *William Tyndale*, pp78-79, 83).
34. Hammond, *Making of the English Bible*, p. 115.
35. Marginal notes were a device that in many later English translations, and especially the Geneva Bible, were to become a convenient safety valve for the tension created by obscure places, and became an accepted means of offering the reader some unofficial compensation for a refusal to close down interpretative options in the main text.
36. Robert Young, *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Covenants, literally and idiomatically translated out of the original Languages*, 1st ed. (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton & Co., 1863).
37. C. S. Lewis, *The Literary Impact of the Authorized Version*, 1st ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1950), p. 10.
38. *ODNB*.
39. 'He is indeed a lover of the Bible, but not of the Bible as literature, and he is ultimately a scholar' (Norton, *History of the English Bible*, p. 16). And, we might add, a theologian. Norton is arguing that Tyndale is not treating the Bible as a piece of literature or consciously trying to create great literature in English but just producing it instinctively. This is shown by the fact that all his other publications are theological, and the fact that he seldom makes any '[d]irect statements of literary awareness' while 'literary questions hardly mattered to him' (Norton, *History of the English Bible*, p. 17; cf. pp. 19-26). Gavin Bone argued much earlier that Tyndale's literary merit was 'all unconscious' (Gavin D. Bone, 'Tindale and the English Language' in *The Work of William Tindale*, Stanley L. Greenslade, ed. , 1st ed. [London: Blackie & Son, 1938] 50-68, pp. 67-68).
40. These words are found in Tyndale's most important doctrinal treatise, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (William Tyndale, *The Works of William Tyndale* Ed. Henry Walter [Cambridge: The Parker Society, New ed., 1848-50] 3 vols, I:149).
41. Norton, *History of the English Bible*, pp. 14-15.
42. John Rogers, William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale, *The Byble, that is to say all the Holy Scripture: In whych are contayned the Olde and New Testamente, truly & purely translated into English, & nowe lately with greate Industry & Diligence recognised* Ed. Edmund Becke (London: For John Day, [1537] Revised ed., 1549).
43. *The New Century Version*, copyright 2005 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
44. *The Message*, copyright 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.
45. The Holy Bible, *New Living Translation*, copyright 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, IL, USA. All rights reserved.

46. Hammond, *Making of the English Bible*, p. 123.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 55; *cf.* p. 56.
48. Norton, *History of the English Bible*, p. 26.
49. Jon Nielson and Royal Skousen, 'How much of the King James Bible is William Tyndale's? An Estimation based on Sampling' *Reformation* 3 (1998): 49-74. Butterworth's calculations that gave him a figure of only 18% were deeply flawed methodologically, as Nielson and Skousen have shown (Charles C. Butterworth, *The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible* [Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1941], p. 231). For an example of passages from Isaiah with the words retained by the AV italicised see David Daiches, *The King James Version of the English Bible: An Account of the Development and Sources of the English Bible of 1611 with special Reference to the Hebrew Tradition* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, [University of Chicago Press, 1941] Facsimile reprint ed., 1968), pp. 213-14.
50. Norton, *History of the English Bible*, p. 10.
51. This revision work was carried out very conservatively. As Samuel Ward, one of the AV translators, reported later to the Synod of Dort: '...caution was given that an entirely new version was not be furnished, but an old version, long received by the Church, to be purged from all blemishes and faults; to this end there was to be no departure from the ancient translation, unless the truth of the original text or emphasis demanded' (Pollard, *Records*, p. 339).
52. Pollard, *Records*, p. 54. They were to ensure that the Bishops' Bible was 'as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit' (Pollard, *Records*, p. 53). Officially, the translators' reference to making 'a good one better' is to the Bishops' Bible, but in reality it refers to the Geneva Bible (David Daniell in *Tyndale's New Testament*, 1989, p. xiii). The Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims version of 1582–1610 was undoubtedly also used by the AV translators but not officially consulted (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 440).
53. A superficial reading of the AV preface to King James outside of its historical context might appear to contradict this, but it must be remembered that the translators were hardly likely to imply in a deferential preface to the King that his wishes concerning the Bishops' Bible were unhelpful—though they most certainly were.
54. David Daniell in *Tyndale's New Testament*, 1989, p. xiii.
55. This does not mean that Tyndale is not more accurate than the AV occasionally in terms of, say, Hebrew usage (Hammond, *Making of the English Bible*, pp. 38, 40).
56. Hammond, *Making of the English Bible*, p. 31.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 174-233. This is despite their dismissal of such scruples in the penultimate paragraph of their preface 'Translators to the Reader'.
58. Cambridge University Library, MS. Gg.1.29, ff. 113v-114r. These fifteen 'Rules' are reproduced in Pollard, *Records*, pp. 53-55, following an 18th-century printing. This instruction was despite Erasmus having got away with using the word *congregatio* in his own revision of the Vulgate.
59. The Geneva Bible had already made a break with Tyndale at this point.
60. Cf. 'a seate of mercy' (Tyndale's 1526 New Testament) and 'mercy-stool' (Tyndale, *Works*, I:11). Tyndale was most probably following Luther's 'Gnadenstuhl' (1522) at this point, but he was never a slave to Luther and only followed him when he independently believed he was right.

61. Cf. Ex. 25:22; Lev. 16:2.
62. Daniel P. Bailey, 'Jesus as the Mercy Seat: The Semantics and Theology of Paul's Use of *Hilasterion* in Romans 3:25' (PhD Dissertation, University of Cambridge, 1999), *passim*, but especially pp. 1-2, 8-9, 10, 174, 176, 221, 222.
63. Cf. Norton, 'Buttons and Ribbons'.
64. David Crystal, *Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 271-89.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-66.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 263-82.
68. Norton, *History of the English Bible*, p. 10.
69. 'In 1611, one of the last years of Shakespeare's writing life, the English language was at a peak' (Daniell, *The Bible in English*, p. 136).
70. I owe this point and metaphor to Peter J. Leithart, *Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), pp. 6-7.