

THE AUTHORISED VERSION: The Safeguard of the Christian Gospel

The Rev. D. P. Morris

22 September, Cradley Heath, West Midlands

I am glad to be here with you as part of the celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the publication of the Authorised Version of the Bible. It is a great honour for me to be asked by the Trinitarian Bible Society to deliver this lecture this evening. It is no hardship to do so and to seek to explain to all, but especially perhaps to the young people here tonight, why we stick to the AV. Is it just tradition or is there something else, something much more important involved?

We are going to investigate this very important matter tonight of the safeguarding of the Gospel through the Authorised Version of the Bible. Now may I begin with a reminiscence: as a boy I can remember the excitement which accompanied the appearance of the New Testament of the New English Bible in 1961. It opened the floodgates for a bewildering range of English translations of the Bible. In one way one might say that that had to be a good thing. But when we find these translations different from each other, in some cases we quickly become concerned.

What would you think of a situation such as this? Say the sinner becomes concerned: he knows that he is not right with God, his conscience starts troubling him and instinctively he takes up a book, the book of God, looking for clarity, authority and certainty in these matters. If the Holy Spirit is involved in this, the sinner will look and search for the good news of Jesus Christ in the Bible. But if he should begin to compare the various versions of Scripture and notice all the differences, it could throw such a person into tremendous confusion. He is looking for certainty concerning the Person of Christ, but he could not be at all assured that the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed God according to many renderings of 1 Timothy 3:16. If the sinner is aware of the wrath of God and that God is angry with the wicked every day and God is angry with him now, if he should turn to Romans 3:25 he would read in many versions that God hath set forth the Lord Jesus Christ to clear away sins. But he might still be concerned and ask: However, is God still angry? The AV tells us that God is propitiating, and if the sinner believes in Jesus Christ, God is now without wrath and anger towards him towards him. Thus he will be able to say happily with Toplady,

The terrors of law and of God
With me can have nothing to do¹

How have these discrepancies and differences in translation come about? Some obviously arise because of the different methods and different approaches concerning translation: more literal translation will differ from the translation that seeks to translate ideas and concepts rather than words, and some are paraphrases rather than literal translations. But there is another supremely important factor which accounts for differences in translation: the question of which manuscripts are used to translate from.

What text is used is absolutely crucial and vital, but it does not seem to bother many Christians at all. For the Christian people of today, all that they are interested in is the readability of the translation. Can I understand it without too much effort? Then they get into all sorts of difficulties because they have not asked and searched and dug deep enough concerning the text that has been used. It is my contention that we may be in danger of losing the very Gospel itself unless we are very careful about these matters. If we adopt a liberal and relaxed attitude with regard to the Word of God, we will find that the enemy has crept in unawares and robbed us of that which is most precious: the wonderful words of life. The oracles of God that might be taken away from us.

David Blunt in the booklet *Which Bible Version* reminds us to watch for Satan's strategy. Right at the beginning with Adam and Eve, it was omission, addition and substitution. That is what Satan did originally with the Word of God, and he is still at it. In discussing Bible versions some believe we are merely in the realm of academics, but we are most certainly, I believe, in the realm of spiritual warfare. But, again, many Christians are unaware of this.

The Greek text

Thus, let us try to use our minds to understand this matter of texts, remembering that the most precious things are indeed at stake. I have to try and present what is a technical subject as simply as I possibly can, so I will condense a lot and try to simplify, but we must think first of all of manuscripts. The Old and the New Testaments of Scriptures are, of course, a result of divine activity: only men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—that is how we got our Bible. What these men wrote (or dictated to their secretaries) was then inscripturated or recorded. The very first records were called autographs. Then copies were made and circulated. Churches became the custodians of the Scriptures, and one of the authenticating features of the New Testament manuscripts would be the area of origin of any particular manuscript. If a manuscript came from an area where an Apostle had ministered, and where orthodox Christianity had been upheld it, would probably be the representative of a pure textual tradition.

Two centres of Christianity emerged; the first was Antioch, the capital of Syria. You remember from your reading of the Acts of the Apostles how believers were first called Christians at Antioch. It became the centre of Christian activity following the scattering of believers because of persecution following the death of Stephen. At Antioch manuscripts were copied and kept, and Christian teachers such as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus—the Cappadocian Fathers—Theodoret, Silas and Chrysostom of Constantinople ministered. They used and copied from these Antiochan manuscripts. These manuscripts form a text-type which then became associated with Byzantium or Constantinople, so that we can speak of an Antiochan or Byzantine Text. Now mark this: 90% to 95% of the extant New testament manuscripts belong to this text-type, the Antiochan or Byzantine. This was the text type that Erasmus used to formulate what has become known as the Received Text, an edition of which was used in the translation of the AV. The Byzantine Text became the standard text of the Christian church round the Byzantine period, about AD 312–1453. It continued to be the standard text after that. So that was one of the centres where these manuscripts were produced and kept, Antioch.

The other centre was Alexandria, so I must tell you something about Alexandria. If you can imagine Egypt, being in the news recently, that part of the world comprising Libya and

Egypt: you can imagine the Nile delta at the top of Egypt with Alexandria on the coast, a great seaport on the North-west coast of the Egyptian delta. In New Testament times there was a large Jewish population in that city, and possibly the first church in Alexandria was composed of Jewish converts. The Christianity that developed in this great city of Alexandria was the heir of Alexandrian Judaism. Things began to go wrong in that centre of Alexandria, with an Alexandrian Jew called Philo, a contemporary of the Apostle Paul, who tried to synthesise Greek philosophy and Christianity, to bring them together and mix them up as it were. It is a great pity that he did not heed the injunction of the Apostle Paul to beware of being spoiled by philosophy. The Apostle had seen this coming: spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit.

Philo in turn influenced Justin Martyr and his pupil Tatian, and we know from Tatian's writings that he embraced Gnosticism. Now what is Gnosticism? It's the teaching that you need to have of some secret knowledge, and if you get that secret knowledge you are saved, you are right. This man Tatian produced a harmony of the Gospels called the Diatessaron which was a corrupt misrepresentation of the Gospels. So corrupt was it that in later years the Bishop of Syria was obliged to throw out two hundred copies of this Diatessaron. Tatian went to the trouble of writing it all out, only to have it binned because the text was corrupt. Tatian had a pupil called Clement of Alexandria who taught in Alexandria from AD 190–202. This man continued the Alexandrian love affair with philosophy and Gnosticism.

All these men have their pupils; Clement of Alexandria in turn influenced Origen. Origen taught that the soul of man existed in eternity and migrated after death into a higher or lower distance according to how his life had been lived—teachings still very popular indeed with the whole idea of karma. Origen had it and he even believed that devils will be saved and that stars and planets have souls and that they were on trial to learn perfection; he also believed in a graded trinity. Now I mention these prominent men based in Alexandria because they wielded a lot of influence in the catechetical school of Alexandria; it was against all this background of heterodoxy and orthodoxy that the manuscripts were copied.

Because of the dry climate in Alexandria, manuscripts produced there have lasted, some have even have survived to our day. It is possible to recognise them technically because of the look and spelling of words, so we can speak of Alexandrian manuscripts. I want to mention two of them they are important. The Codex Vaticanus has been kept in the Vatican for as long anybody can remember. It was first recorded in the contents of the Vatican Library: Codex Vaticanus was mentioned many, many centuries ago. The other Alexandrian manuscript is Sinaiticus: the story of the discovery of this manuscript is very interesting indeed. Some leaves of this manuscript were found in a wastepaper basket in the convent of St. Catherine at the foot of Mount Sinai in the mid-19th century. In 1859 it was finally rescued by a German man called Constantine Tischendorf who was interested in manuscripts. He found these in the bin but was not allowed to take them away with him then; he came back later and was allowed to take this manuscript, which became known as the Sinaiticus manuscript. Can you imagine a manuscript purporting to be a copy of Scriptures in a wastepaper basket, of all places! Would you put a Bible in the bin?

Down through the ages there has been a proper regard and reverence for copies of the Scriptures. I read of some Scottish Presbyterians some time ago, who wanted to dispose of

tattered and unusable Bibles. They did not want to burn them; that would be unthinkable. The Roman Catholic Church has done that, so they could not, and they just could not put them in the bin to be taken away to the dump somewhere. So what they did was to bury them. They gave them a decent burial. That is the sort of thing that Christians would have done; Christian people have a proper regard for the Word of God would treat the Scriptures decently. But Tischendorf found some leaves of this manuscript in the bin.

Because of the antiquity of this manuscript—it is reckoned to be from mid- to late-4th century—this Sinai manuscript became very highly regarded by the textual critics B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort in the 19th century. Hort found in Origen's works quotations which bore similarities to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus; and no wonder, since Origen was from Alexandria, and these are Alexandrian manuscripts.

There is another, more probable reason for the survival of Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, apart from the dry conditions which helped preserve these manuscripts. This reason is far more ominous: it's probably because they were not well used, because they were not highly regarded as reliable texts. I think that explains why this manuscript was disposed of and put in a wastepaper basket: it did not have a good reputation.

These Alexandrian manuscripts not only differ from those that comprise the traditional text, they differ from each other three thousand times in the Gospels alone. They differ from the Byzantine text—the good text (the vast majority of manuscripts are Byzantine)—in some six thousand places. Yet, because these two manuscripts Vaticanus and Sinaiticus are slightly earlier than the earliest of the extant Byzantine manuscripts, the two Cambridge scholars B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort claim that these manuscripts have a common ancestor which was close to the inspired original. That is what they thought, that is what they propagated. So these men produced a Greek text which was used in the production of the Revised Version of the Bible in the 1880s.

Westcott and Hort put together a text which was printed and which became the forerunner of the text known today as the Nestle-Aland or United Bible Societies text. Their text was the first to replace the Byzantine majority, and has usurped the place of the traditional Received Text. The UBS text forms the basis for practically all of the modern versions, notably the very popular the New International Version and the English Standard Version. When you look at those Bibles you can be sure that the manuscripts that they have been translated from are manuscripts which comprise the Critical text and Alexandrian text, not the good Received Text.

But if the Alexandrian text is the closest to the original, the question must be asked would the Lord allow a sure text to sink into virtual oblivion for fifteen hundred years, as Westcott and Hort believed? What these men are saying is, 'we have now, in the 19th century, found the proper text'. But would the Lord have allowed the true text to be hidden for fifteen hundred years, only to be brought to light by men who actually did not believe in verbal inspiration? We cannot believe or accept that. It would mean that the text that was used by the Reformers, which was associated with the glorious Protestant Reformation, was an inferior text. According to Westcott and Hort it was a corrupt text. They actually hated the Received Text.

Rather we believe that the Word of God has been preserved, not only given in the original autographs but preserved for all generations. I have heard men say: 'well of course we believe in inspiration, but only the original autographs were inspired'. How does that help me and Christians of today? How does that help the sinner? Unless I know that the Bible I have in front of me is the Word of God and preserved, that God himself, who said that His words will never pass away, has seen fit to have His Word preserved for us so that we have it now, today, of what help is inspiration?

A Comparison of translations

So we come to compare then some of the modern renderings with the Authorised Version. I can only refer to a few versions because there have been at least sixty translations of the Bible or parts of it since 1957. Some are very wild indeed, and I do not intend to refer to them at all. I am not going to refer to much to the New King James Version because the problem we have with that version does not lie in the text on the page so much but in the marginal notes. We will have something to say about that towards the end. What I am going to do now is to concentrate on the truth concerning Jesus Christ as is presented in Scripture. I am sure you will agree with me tonight that Jesus Christ Himself is the Gospel and the Good News. There is nothing so crucial as what the Word of God says about Him, about Jesus Christ.

Where do we begin reverently with the Lord Jesus Christ? We go back into eternity past, do we not? Micah 5.2 in the Authorised Version refers to the eternal generation of the Lord Jesus Christ in eternity past. This is how it reads: 'But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting'. The reference here is to the Lord Jesus Christ coming forth in time in Bethlehem, but His goings forth from God the Father have been from of old, as we are told in the AV. So here is then the eternal generation of the Son of God. There never was a beginning to the goings forth from the Father of the Son. Deep mystery here, of course, but we believe simply what we are told in the Word of God. The Son comes forth from the Father; His goings forth were continuous and everlasting. The New International Version, the Revised Standard Version and the English Standard Version fall fatally short in the translation in the last part of this verse; they refer to origins instead of goings forth. So you see what that does: it opens the door for the heresy that Christ had a beginning, an origin, which if He did have an origin He is then a created being. This is what the Jehovah's Witnesses believe; this is the old Arian heresy. What did dear old John Newton have to say about this?

Some take him a creature to be,
A man, or an angel at most;
Sure these have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost:
So guilty, so helpless, am I,
I durst not confide in his blood,
Nor on his protection rely,
Unless I were sure he is God.²

So the ramifications for the Gospel are endless if Christ is not God. If what He did on the cross is not the work of a divine person with divine virtue and efficacy, then we are still in

our sins and we are lost and run down. These are three modern versions which fail badly on Micah 5.2 and undermine the truth of the eternal generation of the Son of God.

If we continue with this matter of the generation of Jesus Christ, in John 1.14 the NIV fails disastrously in the maintenance of this particular truth, the generation of Christ. The AV reads: 'And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth'. The NIV omits 'begotten', rendering it 'one and only': 'The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth'. What is lost actually here? It is the relationship of the Son to the Father being generated, of the same essence; but by changing from 'begotten' the NIV leaves this out. Jesus came out of the realm of eternity past, into time.

Perhaps some are thinking now that in the NIV John is going to come to the incarnation, but not yet. There are theophanies or Christophanies, the wonderful appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. There is something very glorious about this: it must have been incalculably precious for the three lads in the fiery furnace of Daniel 3, for example, to have the Lord Jesus Christ come to them and to have Him with them in the fiery furnace protecting them and saving them so that they emerged without a smell of burning. Isn't it wonderful! I'm tempted to stop and preach now. Who was it that came? Who was the fourth Person? We know for sure going to the AV; listen Daniel 3.25, 'Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God'. The New English Bible has this as 'Yet I see four men...looks like a god' with a small 'g'. There is no clue as to the identity of this Person. We remember that Satan is described as a god with small 'g', isn't he—the god of this world. That is a very unsatisfactory translation to say the least, very ambiguous indeed. The AV tells us exactly Who it is: it is Jesus Christ Who has come to His people characteristically, wonderfully to save them.

Let us now come to the verse about our Saviour, prophesied by Isaiah in 7.14; the AV reads, 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel'. We are willing to concede that the word translated 'virgin' from the Hebrew can be translated young woman; but the context then has to decide whether you translate it as young woman or virgin. The context is that the Lord will give a sign. A sign is an extraordinary event, a miracle which would mark out the Messiah's identity. But if you translate it as a young woman you have to wonder what is so miraculous about a young woman conceiving and bearing a son. Is that a sign? That happens all the time, it happens every day. Let us put ourselves in the shoes of the faithful remnant in the New Testament that were waiting for the consummation of this. You remember people such as Simeon; the matter of Mary's virginity and then the subsequent birth of the Lord Jesus Christ would have been such a significant pointer to his identity as Messiah, that would have convinced them. Would not this have been one of the convincing factors: yes, she is a virgin; this child has come forth as foretold in the prophesy of Isaiah, so it must be Messiah. Thus the correct translation must be 'behold a virgin shall conceive'. However, the RSV has 'behold a young woman shall conceive'. The RSV takes away the supernatural element in the conception and birth of the Saviour.

The NIV does the same in Luke 2.33. This is how the AV reads: 'And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him'. The NIV has it this way: 'The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him'. So the NIV in this case calls Joseph the Child's father. Now Scripture does refer to Joseph as the Child's father, but only when expressing the opinion of those who mistakenly thought him to be the Child's father. When Mary herself uses the term 'father' with reference to Joseph, she was just expressing the commonly-held view; but the Lord corrected her by saying '...I must be about my Father's business' (Luke 2.49). But although Joseph is not His father the NIV denominates him as the Child's father, thus again omitting the supernatural element and opening the door to the heresy that Jesus was just a man.

Now we are very familiar with this heresy, aren't we? We saw this in the 20th century as well as one of the pillars of liberal theology, that says that Jesus Christ was just a teacher, just a good example, and just a man. But think what liberal theology has achieved with the destinations of chapels up and down the land, places of worship closing and once influential denominations now on their knees. The recession of Christianity in this land can only be blamed, amongst other things, on the Higher Critical theories of Scripture and this liberal theology majored on denying the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are used to the liberals doing this, but when we have a translation of the Scriptures which is purported to be evangelical opening the door to liberalism, even a little bit is just too much. Having a translation opening the door to such fundamentals errors, should shock us; we should be horrified about these errors.

The most glaring failure regarding the Deity of Christ is the Critical Text's rendering of 1 Timothy 3.16. This is a key text, and the AV provide us with the most direct and terse expression of this truth, the Deity of Christ. If you want a proof text when you are talking to friends, enquirers, people that want to know who Jesus is, this is it: 'And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory'. The Revised Standard Version, the English Standard Version, the New International Version, and many modern translations have 'He was manifested in the flesh' rather than 'God was manifest in the flesh'. There is plenty of manuscript evidence in favour of 'God manifest in the flesh', and it is nonsense to assert that 'He was manifested in the flesh'. I want to quote dear old Spurgeon—he is excellent on this when speaking about it in the 1880s:

"God was manifest in the flesh". I believe that our version [the AV] is the correct one, but the most fierce battles have been held over this sentence. It is asserted that the word *Theos* is a corruption for "*Os*" so that, instead of reading, "God was manifest in the flesh" we should read, "*who* was manifest in the flesh". There is very little occasion for fighting about this matter, for if the text does not say, "*God* was manifest in the flesh," who does it say was manifest in the flesh?

Either a man, or an angel, or a devil. Does it tell us that a man was manifest in the flesh? Assuredly that cannot be its teachings, for every man is manifest in the flesh and there is no sense whatever making such a statement concerning any mere man and then calling it a mystery. Was it an angel, then? But what angel was ever manifest in the flesh? And if he were, would it be at all a mystery that he be "seen of angels"? Is

it a wonder for an angel to see an angel? Can it be the devil that is manifest in the flesh? If so, he has been “received up into glory,” which let us hope, is not the case.

Well if it was neither a man, nor an angel, nor a devil—who was manifest in the flesh? Surely He must have been God! And so, if the word is not there, the *sense* must be there or else *nonsense*.³

I agree entirely with Spurgeon. Given what was said earlier about heterodox teaching associated with Alexandria, perhaps we should not be too surprised that the Alexandrian manuscripts give the rendering that they do then regarding 1 Timothy 3.16. We have got to remember that it was in Alexandria that the most notorious heretic of all the Early Fathers was located: Arius, who began to propagate unorthodox views of the person of Christ, that He was a created being, changeable and liable to sin. Arius was a presbyter of Alexandria and for a long time after AD 380 his teachings continued to trouble the church. They were condemned by the Council of Nicaea in 324, but Arianism lived and still lives today with the Jehovah’s Witnesses particularly.

Still on the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, I just cite three further examples where the NIV fails:

Luke 23.42-43 ‘And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise’. The NIV says ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom’. What is omitted? ‘Lord’.

Revelation 1.10-11, in the AV we read: ‘I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia...’. The NIV reads ‘On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches...’. What is omitted? ‘I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last’ is left out.

Another example, 1 Corinthians 15.47 according to the AV ‘The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven’. The NIV reads ‘The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man from heaven.’ So the title ‘Lord’ is omitted here and it opens the door again to ambiguity regarding who Jesus is: a vital matter, isn’t it? From this reading He could be no more than a John Baptist, a man sent from God, commissioned from Heaven, but in the AV ‘Lord’ denotes Him firmly as God, as Deity.

Now I must pass on quickly to the Saviour’s work while here on earth. I want to refer to His work in suffering as graphically portrayed in the figure of baptism. Our Lord Himself uses this figure to convey the overwhelming nature of his sufferings and the way in which He will be immersed in sufferings and consequent feelings of being engulfed. Speaking about this to the disciples, He says according to the AV ‘Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, we are able’ (Matthew 20.22). The NIV omits the reference to baptism entirely, leaving, “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered”. So the reader here is robbed of the picture of the Saviour’s overwhelming suffering and no longer understands the Old Testament references to this experience such as this found in the Psalms: ‘all thy waves and

thy billows are gone over me' (Psalm 42.7). What an insight into the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ! Would we be without that? Would we be robbed of that in the New Testament, this picture of suffering? So we dare not minimise the cost of our redemption.

All the New Testament fulfilments of Old Testament predictions concerning Christ are very valuable indeed, serving to confirm His identity and establish us in the faith. So here is one. The AV reading in Mark 15.28 is 'And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors'. This is a fulfilment of Isaiah 53.12 and highlights the depths of our Saviour's humiliation. He took his place amongst the shameful and the disgraced and identified Himself with them without becoming a transgressor Himself. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The NIV, the NASB and the RSV all leave out the entire verse and jump from Mark 15.27 to 15.29. That is gymnastics, very unedifying gymnastics.

Precisely what did our Lord do and achieve on the cross? Surely in our understanding of what the Lord Jesus Christ did on Calvary, the very first thing was Godhood. He did something in reference to God. After all, the problem the sinner faces is not what Satan thinks of him, not what other sinners think of him, not what he thinks of himself even, but where does he stand before God? In becoming the propitiation, the Lord Jesus Christ addresses the needs of the guilty sinner who has offended God and has incurred the wrath of God. But that truth is not to the liking of the unregenerate. They rightly discern that the God of wrath is their biggest threat. The truth of propitiation is changed in these newer translations to 'expiation', which means the clearing away of sin. It is a vital truth and wonderful truth, that God has seen fit to clear away our sins; but in the newer translations there is no reference in this verse to an offended and wrathful God. That is why, I believe, expiation is substituted for propitiation. People do not like the wrath of God; it has become unfashionable.

In Romans 3.25, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle says according to the AV 'Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation'. But the NIV says: 'God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement'. The RSV reads 'God put forward expiation by his blood'. The New English Bible reads, 'For God desiring to be the means of expiating sin by His sacrificial death'. These three translations avoid the term propitiation, and the NEB avoids the term 'blood' as well. That just reflects the liberals' aversion to the word blood: they don't like it taught to them, and they don't like the truth behind it. Liberals prefer a religion of nice ethics, and call the things that are most dear to us 'slaughter house religion'. When a new Baptist hymnbook was being put together in Wales in the 1950s one prominent man on the Committee, a very well known man in Welsh Baptist circles, had such an aversion to the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, that he wanted all references to it edited out. He did not succeed, but that is what he wanted. You find Dr. Lloyd Jones referring to this matter in his exposition of Romans 3.25 in his volumes on Romans.

What about us then concerning the blood? We are solemnised by it; we remember the cost of redemption, the suffering of the Saviour, and the manner of His death: it's there in that term 'blood'. It signifies His life laid down in death on the cross. We are solemnised by it but we rejoice too in the blood, because here our salvation lies: in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We rejoice in its potency, in its effectiveness to cleanse us, and to protect us, and speak for us—and in short, to save us. Yet if you read Colossians 1.14 in the NASB you will

find no reference to the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The AV reads, 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins'. Isn't that wonderfully definite? Would you rejoice in that tonight? In Jesus Christ we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. That's grand, isn't it? But the NASB simply leaves out 'through his blood'.

Men would like to believe that God forgives anybody, or that He forgives just by saying the word, but the truth is that there is no forgiveness except through Jesus Christ and His death for the remission of sins. There is no way round that at all, no way round the blood. So for our part, we rejoice in these references to the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are unhappy therefore that the New King James Version has even a marginal reading for Colossians 1.14 informing us that the Critical Texts omits 'through his blood'. Why should we need to be told that? It just sows the seeds of doubt into people's minds.

There are two more events and then we draw to a close, my friends. You have been very good and attentive.

An integral part of the Gospel is the resurrection of our Lord. It is good news indeed because He is raised for our justification. But if we read the last part of the Gospel as Mark as recorded in the NIV, we find that in chapter 16 between verses 8 and 9 these words appear in the text—not in the margin, not as a footnote, but in the text. 'The most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9 to 20'. So what follows verse 8, according to the NIV, is less than reliable. What an invidious and misleading statement! Doubt is now cast on Mark's account of the resurrection of our Lord and our Lord's rebuke of His disciples for not believing the report concerning it.

Imagine the situation: a copy of the NIV getting into the hands of an enquirer, somebody interested in the things of God; imagine that the copy is torn and tattered, and all that is left is the Gospel of Mark. Imagine then that the enquirer comes across this statement concerning the last verses not being present in the most ancient and reliable manuscripts. What does that do for an enquirer? Does that help an enquirer at all? It can rob an enquirer of hope and again throw them into tremendous confusion. He asks himself, should it be in the Bible then? Is there something that has been stuffed in at the end and made up by somebody? All sorts of things can start to brood in his mind.

Later Bishop D. A. Thompson gives an explanation as to why some of the manuscripts don't have this last section of Mark. He says that a Biblical scholar by the name of Christian Frederick Matthaei, who lived from 1744 to 1811, was a professor of classical literature in Moscow and he got hold of some manuscripts from Athos in Macedonia. He found what is known as an Evangelist Aria, a manuscript containing the four Gospels but not in the order which is familiar to us. The Gospel according to Mark was last and chapter 16 verse 8 appears at the bottom of the left hand page. The next leaf which would have been the last was missing, so by some misadventure the last twelve verses were missing. Now if that had been used to copy from and those truncated manuscripts were circulated, it might well account for the loss of the verses. In all probability Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were copied from the manuscript whose end page had got lost; it's as simple as that.

We delight in the resurrection surely: our Lord's conquest of death. He takes on all the enemies that are too strong for us, they are too big for us; we can't handle them at all. What can we do against death? The Lord Jesus Christ has grappled with this last enemy on our behalf, and the resurrection is proof: it's the Father's 'Amen' to Christ's 'It is finished'. He defeats Satan and the principalities and powers, and He becomes the firstfruits of them that slept. We are fully aware too, of the woe that could have been our lot if He had not risen. The Apostle Paul spells this out very clearly: our faith would have been in vain, preaching would have been in vain and, most ominously, we would still be in our sins, if Christ is not risen. So we rejoice in the resurrection and every account of it in the Word of God. We want it all, we want to keep those verses in the last section of Mark.

The final point: our Lord's ascension, which is also spoken of in that last section of Mark. The AV reads in verse 19 'after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God'. As I just have mentioned to you, the NIV in the text and other versions in footnotes cast doubt on the authenticity of this event too: not just the resurrection, but the ascension and the session with Jesus Christ seated on God's right hand. Again that is a tremendous spiritual blessing to us—to know the present position of the Saviour, raised far above all principalities and powers, with His enemies as His footstool. He is pursuing His mighty plan forever. Tonight He is ruling everything, Head over all things for the sake of the church, from that exalted position at God's right hand. We want to keep that in our Bibles; we want to believe that, we must believe it.

There is so much that I have left out, but I trust that what has been said will leave us with no doubt that the Authorised Version of the Bible has wonderful characteristics and qualities; but amongst other things it is most importantly the repository of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its text faithfully presents Jesus Christ to us. Modern version fail, so let us cleave to the good old Authorised Version and to the Saviour it faithfully holds forth. Amen.

1. Augustus Toplady, 'A debtor to mercy alone', in William Gadsby, *A Selection of Hymns* (London, England: 1919), no. 340.

2. John Newton, 'What think you of Christ', hymnary.org, www.hymnary.org/hymn/CD1791/CCCXI, 4 April 2012.

3. C. H. Spurgeon, *The Hexapla of Mystery*, sermon no. 1087, www.spurgeongems.org/vols16-18/chs1087.pdf, 4 April 2012.