

THE W. C. TAYLOR LETTERS

Letter No. 12

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# MY BLESSED EPISCOPALIAN BIBLE

On its title page I read: "THE HOLY BIBLE, etc. . . . REVISED BY HIS MAJESTY'S SPECIAL COMMAND . . . Appointed to be read in Churches . . . Authorized King James' Version." Whose "Majesty"? What right did he have to give COMMANDS as to the Bible? Or to appoint reading matter in Churches? And how is it better by reason of being "authorized" by him?

Those were the days of the "divine right of kings". It was the Episcopalian regime of Church and State, one People, by the legal and obligatory sacrament of infant baptism. We turn a page and find this dedication of my Bible to "The most high and mighty Prince James, by the grace of God King of Great Britain, France and Ireland (Don't tell De Gaulle or De Valera's followers. W.C.T.), Defender of the Faith. Great and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon the people of *England*, when first he sent Your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us. For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well to our *Sion*, that upon the setting of that bright Occidental Star, Queen *Elizabeth* of most happy memory, some thick and palpable cloud of darkness would have so overshadowed this Land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk; and that it should hardly be known, who was to direct the unsettled State; the appearance of Your Majesty, as the Sun in his strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists. . . ."

This pusillanimous and pitiful subservience, incorporated into our Bibles, goes so far as to say further: "Your very name is precious among them: their eye doth behold You with comfort, and they bless you in their hearts, as that sanctified Person, who, under God, is the immediate Author of their true happiness." The new Version created great hopes for "the Church of *England*" and gave forth dire prophecies of woe to dissenters and "Popish Persons" and wound up with a benediction of still further adulation of the Royal Person. Yet this is my beloved Episcopalian Bible, which I memorized at my mother's knee, in its beautiful, incomparable English speech, and which I still preach with joy, after a ministry of 52 years, at home and abroad.

Besides this antiquated and villainous man-pleasing, our translators have incorporated in the text of my Bible, and in this have been followed by most all other Versions, a sheer falsification of some words of the original, hiding for centuries their meaning from the common people and causing the general Christianity to take the form of their own disobedience and deceit. It has been the decision of Baptists for centuries to resist these errors, and to inform as far as possible all sincere Bible students that such translations are false. The reverent will follow the original commands of Jesus, not the perversion or hiding of those commands from the eyes of the conscience that has the will to obey, but cannot for lack of clear light. If the will of Jesus had been known, it would have created a very different kind of Christianity and would have avoided the current apostasies and rebellion against the clear will of God, as it is in the original tongue, and have given men the Christianity of the New Testament.

Let us see. My Greek New Testament has the word which means IMMERSE 80 times on its pages. The Greek word has been transliterated, not translated. Besides these 80 instances of the word *immerse*, there occur two words meaning *immersion* a total of 26 times, and the Forerunner of our Lord is called *John the Immerser* 14 times and *John the Immersing One* once. Christianity was launched in this clearly Baptist fashion at the very "beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). And it kept right on down this straight and narrow way all through the New Testament. To hide these facts of translation from Bible readers for centuries on end, and seemingly never to end, is one of the most wicked deceptions in all the history of human depravity and sin. That sin created and maintained modern Protestantism, partly in the image of older Catholic apostasy, in flagrant rebellion against Christ and his Word.

Add to this wilful hiding of truth the sad fact that we have the word CONGREGATION, descriptive of organized Christianity, 105 times in our Greek New Testaments, and 35 times in the plural. Yet these slaves of bad King James, and subsequent imitators of their treachery, in later translations, hid from our English-speaking world, on both sides of the Atlantic and of the Pacific, the patent fact that the original apostolic churches were Baptist churches, an organized congregational life of saved and subsequently immersed people.

The whole external aspect of Biblical Christianity was thus falsified and corrupted, in deliberate apostasy from the Word of God. ("Apostasy", of course, in the Bible sense of the term, means departure from the truth, never in any case the loss of the salvation and eternal life which God gives by his grace.)

And now we have a lot of little parrot theologians, parties to this wicked deceit, who are running around saying: "Of course, there can only be ONE Church." Such men seem not to own a Bible or not to be able to read it. For while the word CHURCH is not translated as the original demands, it is in the PLURAL 35 times. Such wilfully blind advocates or sympathisers with the World Council of (False) Churches (strange enough, also in the PLURAL) might just as well be running around saying: "Of course, there can be only one man, or only one rooster." Every reference to organized Christianity in the New Testament defines the clear will of God as a congregationally organized Christianity of many *churches*, of people first saved by grace, then obediently immersed in the name of the Triune God, and "continuing stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Acts 2:42. Yet this revealed and obedient Christianity has been wholly lost to the many Catholic sects and almost as wholly, in its external form, to even the better Protestant world, by the refusal to translate our Bible, on the level of life as it should be lived for God.

The discovery of these facts, and sacrificial obedience to the will of God, have given to Baptists some of the greatest Christians in the world, and vast hosts of them on the foreign field, enlightened by a Bible that fell into some lonely reader's hands. The facts of immersion and congregational life cannot be hidden from the sincere investigator, even in only partially translated Bibles. In countless places on the mission fields, men were converted and sought to obey the Bible. They formed studying groups to live by it and did not even know they were Baptists, or that there were any Baptists in the world, till someone told them. Then they joyously came into the older fellowship of the same faith and life. Take a few cases.

William Carey came out from under that Anglican shadow to be baptized in the River Nen by Dr. Ryland. He felt and taught that the same obedience to the Great Commission that produced his baptism must produce the modern missionary movement, on the basis of voluntary cooperation. He launched that movement in a Baptist Association. He personally, in seven years, mastered Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French and German. Then on the mission field he translated the whole Bible into six languages and the New Testament into twenty-three languages and portions of the Scripture in many dialects, in all making the gospel accessible to 330,000,000 people, in one short lifetime. When the Bible Societies took over later these Carey and Judson Bible translations, they forced them into conformity to these same King James errors, here set forth. They will not print Bibles on any other terms.

Studying to defend themselves, in case Carey should urge upon them his Baptist views, Adoniram Judson and wife and Luther Rice came to the same convictions that the original New Testament has brought Baptists to, in thousands of such investigations. They were baptized by Carey and developed great Baptist movements in other Asian lands and in organizing cooperative Baptist life and missions in our own homeland. Just as Judson and Rice, already Congregationalist missionaries, found that not enough, even so Solomon Ginsburg and many, many others in Brazil, left even a Congregational life without infant baptism — for so Dr. Kalley started Congregationalism in Brazil — and severed all ties to become Baptists, for the love of truth and obedience to their Savior and Lord. IMMERSION and CONGREGATION are front words in the New Testament's presentation of the will of God for all the saved. It takes both, not just one without the other, to have a true church.

The boy, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, was a Congregationalist pastor's son, sprinkled in infancy by his grandfather. He went to an Anglican padre as a school teacher. This priest told him his infant baptism was not valid. "Why?", asked the boy. The answer was that the New Testament demands repentance and faith as prerequisites to baptism and, in the Anglican ceremony, the sponsor takes the place of repentance and faith. But this Congregationalist boy had no sponsor, so he had no valid infant baptism. Spurgeon went back to the New Testament and found the conditions of baptism to be exactly those. But he said: "If I have had one false baptism, I'm not going to consent to another." So he came, by study of the Word, to Baptist convictions and then made the discovery of the Baptists and joined them. He had to ask his strict Congregationalist father for permission to be baptized, and then again for his consent to be pastor of a Baptist church, while still a teen-ager. And so, out of Baptist convictions, God gave to the world its greatest preacher since Paul and a leader on many lines. This is no minor matter. It has awakened the deepest springs of loyalty and devotion to Christ in the whole of human history. It is the way things started.

Hubmaier was the foremost Anabaptist, in Reformation times. He found out that infant baptism is nothing Christian and wanted what Rome and Protestantism insisted on calling Anabaptism, baptism again, a second baptism. He knew it would be his first. But how Europe, Catholic and Protestant, hated that idea,

we simply cannot conceive. They joined, in bitter hatred, in burning, drowning and banishing the Anabaptists by the thousands. They made themselves a motto: "Qui merget, mergatur." "He that immerses, let him be immersed (drowned)". So after burning Hubmaier, they drowned his wife. Three hundred years later, Dr. Rushbrooke, I believe, in the name of the Baptist World Alliance, cast a wreath of flowers on that spot in the Danube where the great soul went to her Calvary, for the love of her Lord.

She had urged her husband to be loyal, even if it meant burning. For he had reneged once. He then went bravely to the stake. As he was being consumed by the flames, an old woman took a stick, stirred the fire and added it to the burning pile. The martyr, even then curious, asked her: "Why do you do that?" She said in reply: "I do it because you are a heretic, and in helping burn you I am purchasing my own salvation." So thought millions in that dark age. For this Baptist faith hosts of the brave and true have suffered as no words can tell. Shall we, for fear of disagreeable controversy or the love of ease and popularity, let the truth they preserved for us at the price of their blood be lost to our children and the future? This passion to return to the Christianity of Christ and the New Testament will never die in the soul of the redeemed.

These numerous, free, spiritual and cooperating churches are of the essence of revealed Christianity. And Christianity's final Revelation brings from our Lord seven times the solemn command: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." That same Lord solemnly spoke a farewell word to us. Don't add to, don't take from his words, Rev. 22:18, 19. Then DON'T TAKE AWAY THE PLURAL OF THAT WORD "CHURCHES". If you do, you are under a curse. Christ pronounced it. Quit saying there is just One Church, and the real churches we love and live in and serve in are merely "existence centers of that One Church." That is to impugn the veracity of the Son of God and repudiate his authority. This very week in which I write, THE WATCHMAN AND EXAMINER reports that some Northern Baptist has said: "Cincinnati (the last meeting place of the American Baptist Convention. W.C.T.) evidenced that Baptists are coming to accept their annual convention as an authoritarian body, somewhat like the Presbyterian General Assembly . . . We are coming to be 'The American Baptist Church'." (Quoted from W. B. Lippard, in their official magazine, *Missions*). The statement was editorially challenged and condemned by THE WATCHMAN-EXAMINER (IX-25-1958). But that will not stop the trend. The American Baptist Convention is already in the World Council of Churches, as one of them. Any Baptist Convention that pretends to be a "Church" lacks veracity and is in open apostasy from the New Testament norm. A Convention is not a church, has no church function. It does not call a pastor, maintain Sunday worship, baptize, exercise church discipline, receive or exclude members, or perform any of the local or cooperative functions of a church. The American (Northern) Convention paid the price of treason to truth to get into the new Catholicism which it is helping further to develop.

Some inexperienced Baptist, unguided by the lessons of history, might say: "Well, then! Let's make us a Bible of our own and translate these words." Any wise Baptist would reject that with horror. We tried that once. A version was published that used the word *immerse*, in parentheses, I believe, with the word *baptize*, also. It created a furor. A vast controversial literature arose. What did the denominations say who were enemies of immersion and determined to maintain their *status quo*? They hissed: "Now just look at the Baptists. They know they are wrong. So, since they cannot prove their doctrine by the Bible, they get themselves a new Bible, made after their own notions, and put the word *immersion* right in it in the place of saying *baptism*. Anybody can prove their doctrine that way!" No. We had far better have the best Bible available that all the people accept in public worship. That is the King James Version. Individuals, vast numbers of them, will keep on coming to the truth by personal study, as did Hubmaier, Carey, Judson, Rice and Spurgeon. One thing which we can do is to use, with our Bible common to all, study-versions, not meant for public worship. A number of them translate *immerse*. Any careful student of the Bible will use several versions. I have used some forty, in seven or eight different languages. They are far preferable to commentaries, for real, personal study of the Word. The worst thing that could happen to the Baptists in any land is to try to promote for public worship in our churches another "Baptist Bible". The one that came out is no more, and endowment funds established, in the heat of controversy, to perpetuate its spread are now used to distribute free copies of the King James Version, the very Version it fought.

You will ask me if the denominations that maintain the Bible Societies will ever be capable of a full, true translation that would reveal themselves to be unscriptural. My reply is: "No. Never." The trend is to grow worse. In my book, "The New Bible: Pro and Con", now out of print, I showed that the RSV keeps many, many of the worst errors of the King James Version. The American Standard Version showed some stirrings of conscience on this matter and did translate, with the verb *baptize*, the Greek preposition *in*, baptize in the river Jordan, in water, and figuratively, in fire, in the Holy Spirit, in sufferings and so on. But the later Version (R.S.V.) goes right back to the wilful hiding of the truth from the reader, so prevalent on this

subject in the King James Version, and substitutes the preposition *with*, to agree with its practice of sprinkling. Great collective wrong choices, bred in the popular mind by early home training in millions of homes, make a Christianity to its liking, and will keep it, whatever the cost in the way of loss of truth and obedience. There will always be a remnant according to the election of grace that, at any and all costs, will decide personally to be and do right.

Far worse than the banishment of the preposition IN, with *baptize*, is the corruption of the very gospel itself by the sacramental apostasy of making baptism necessary "for the remission of sins." In this instance, the Greek preposition means fundamentally, *with reference to*, and may either refer to the past or to the future. If it refers to the past, it may indicate cause, *because of*. If the reference is to the future, it may be the idea of purpose, *in order to*. This is as clear in the Greek original as the sun in the sky. But all last century and part of this, this elemental fact was denied fiercely, as it still is by many, and mighty public debates were held between Baptists and the Disciples of Alexander Campbell on this gospel issue. Scholarship won, and closed the mouth of many gainsayers. A. T. Robertson came out and demonstrated that the said preposition (*eis*) often means BECAUSE OF, and he translated Acts 2:38, "Repent". That is "unto life" (Acts 11:18). Then Peter changes the person of the verb and the subject: "And every one of you be baptized because of the remission of your sins." Other scholars have taught the same thing. Now scholarship has been forced to confess the obvious truth that Nineveh repented BECAUSE OF the preaching of Jonah. It was not *in order to* get him to preach. And John baptized people in water BECAUSE OF their repentance. It was not *in order to* get them to repent, for he demanded evident fruits of the repentance before he would admit them to baptism. This is so patent that you wonder at the perversity that so long made nonsense out of the Scripture, in order to preserve a false gospel. The spiritual saw eternal salvation so often affirmed of *all* who believe, that they simply put aside any seemingly contrary teachings they did not understand. But how much better to translate the Bible truly so it is not self-contradictory in such passages.

One more case of refusal to translate I shall cite. In our original New Testament there are two words, very different in meaning. One (*hieron*, akin to the word *priest*) means TEMPLE and is the vast area covered with gates, buildings, courts, porches, storehouses for tithes, a synagogue and the bridge to the castle of the temple police. It is referred to by the apostles as "the *buildings* of the temple", Matt. 24:1; Mark 13:1. It was a vast area. The glory of it all was the sanctuary (*naos*), which was a very small central structure where only priests entered and made the sacrifices on the great altar; and, in the Holy of Holies, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered to make atonement for the sins of the people. The King James Version makes no distinction at all between these two words, translating both "temple". The RSV largely copies these errors.

Now this second word, which never meant temple, but only the inner sanctuary of the temple, where God dwelt in the Holy of Holies, has a doctrinal meaning, omitted in all our Bibles. This sanctuary, which was where God dwelt and received the atoning blood as the propitiation for sin, is used of Christ's own body, John 2:19-21. Thus Christ's body is figuratively set forth as the Holy of Holies, whose blood brings us nigh to God. Just as God resided originally between the cherubim over the Ark of the Covenant in this Holy of Holies, so he now resides in the believer, in Christian experience, through the shed blood of Jesus, and in each true church, ideally, for the churches were to be made up of only those professing salvation, and so having collectively the same inner reality of the divine presence which their members severally knew, I Cor. 6:19; 3:16, 17; II Cor. 6:16. A great demonstration of the plurality of the churches, each a Holy of Holies for the dwelling of God in the midst of his people, is seen in Eph. 2:21. In Christ, "each several building (every single church, W.C.T.), fitly framed together, groweth into a holy sanctuary in the Lord, in whom ye also (the church receiving this copy of the circular Epistle, sent to many churches, W.C.T.) are builded together for a habitation for God in the Spirit." (American Revision, reading "sanctuary", with the Margin.) That is the highest conception of the churches of our Lord in the Bible. Each is a sanctuary.

That does not mean the church edifice. Our "main auditorium" is no sanctuary, nor is all the church house. People never sat in the sanctuary. Only once do we find anyone sitting there, II Thes. 2:4, and he is the Antichrist, taking the place of God in human life, or willing to. The saved people, with Christ dwelling in them, individually and as churches, constitute, in every given experience of the divine indwelling, THE SANCTUARY. God thus dwells among us and we reverence him, not any edifice of wood and stone and stained glass windows. If we reverence a *place*, that is materialism and superstition. Reverence God.

Translations are human, and so, imperfect. Let us study them, and seek to come by the original truth, inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by prophets and apostles.

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