

Excerpts from the Hermeneutics Text

Results of Applying Bible-Believing Hermeneutics

Here we illustrate a few results of hermeneutical studies guided by the conviction that God has indeed given us His perfectly preserved Word in the scriptures.

1. Word choice: Preserving God's Word or His people? Ps.12:5-7

KJV: (5)...*now will I arise saith the Lord; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.* (6) *The words of the Lord are pure words...* (7) *Thou shalt keep them O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever (for or to eternity).*

NASV...*Now I will arise," says the Lord; "I will set him in the safety for which he longs." The words of the Lord are pure words...Thou O Lord, wilt keep them. Thou wilt preserve him from this generation forever.*

NIV... *I will now arise," says the Lord. "I will protect them from those who malign them. And the words of the Lord are flawless...O Lord you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever.*

The KJV verse 12:5 says of God's words on oppression of the poor godly man...*saith the Lord, I will set him in safety.* 12:6 says God's words are pure (true), and 12:7 says He keeps (observes/does) His words for-ever for the righteous. Context stresses protection of the righteous, but protection is seen to depend on what *saith the Lord*, God's promise. God's words alone promise care of the righteous, and the main emphasis is on *words* by which the righteous are protected. 12:7 emphasizes God preserving *them*, His words that *certify* His care of the righteous, not only in David's generation, but forever. All His words are canonical, and their declared eternal preservation identifies them as written scripture, His words still certifying protection of the righteous today and forever.

Some say *them* in 12:7 is 12:5 people. But *them* loses certainty of meaning if separated from its immediate antecedent *words* in 12:6. If people were meant, the text would be faulty, confusing the sense. Some dismiss the antecedent factor and say word preservation isn't taught here due to gender discord. In 12:7 *them* (verb suffix) is masculine, and 12:6 *words* (substantive) is feminine, and Hebrew pronouns and their antecedents usually agree in gender. But the Gesenius grammar says, *masculine suffixes (especially in the plural) are not infrequently used to refer to feminine substantives*²³ (e.g. feminine *daughters of Zion* in Isaiah 3:16 & *midwives* in Exodus 1:21 are antecedents to masculine *them*). Hebrew gender discord is rather common, but immediate-antecedent discord can't be without risking confusion of sense. And in Hebrew language, passage sense takes precedence over grammar issues like gender discord,²⁴ and the Psalm 12:7 sense reflects *words* from the 12:6 immediate context.

To interpret Psalm 12 we must see the great emphasis on God's words. Verse 12:6 likens purity of His words to that of truly refined silver. 12:7 emphasizes the purity by stressing God Himself as word-keeper, making *Thou* in the first clause a separate word in the Hebrew, a device for emphasis (in the Hebrew *thou* will normally be a prefix on the imperfect verb). And *thou* recurs in the next clause on word preservation. The KJV retains this emphasis in English fashion with *Thou* at the start, and *O Lord* at the end of the first clause on word-keeping and *thou* repeated in the next clause on word-preservation.

This emphasis increases as Hebrew-text gender discord ties word-keeping to word-preservation. A masculine pronoun and feminine antecedent reflect Hebrew use of masculine gender to signify power/greatness and the feminine to signify compassion/sustenance.²⁵ Psalm 12:6,7 ties feminine *words* to masculine *them* to associate compassion (stressed in 12:5) of the words with almighty God's power to keep/do them (this accords with Hebrew prior-gender masculine language inclusive of a feminine persona,²⁶ one of compassion here). And in compassion God preserves His words forever to certify to all His people forever that He obligates Himself to keep/do them forever. *Keep* and *preserve* are right word choices tied to right pronouns in the KJV 12:7, and the KJV rightly relates God's power to preserve His words to His power to keep them.

Other verses relating to God's Word show gender discord (e.g. Ex. 11:6, Num.27:7). Dr. T. Strouse, Emmanuel Baptist Seminary Newington, CT notes Ps.119:111,129, 152,167 gender discord. Feminine nouns for God's Word (*testimonies*) link to masculine pronouns (*they/them/ thy*). To the present writer these cases relate our need of God's testimonies for sustenance (feminine) to His power as provider (masculine) to stress loving and revering His Word to our benefit, reflecting a relationship of the church to Christ, and to a degree, that of a wife to her husband.

An NASV *them* in 12:7 suggests keeping of God's words, but *him* replaces the second *them*, making verse-5 people objects of preserving, when they're objects of word-keeping. The result is losing passage sense of preservation of the words that certify protection of the people. The right passage general sense, that the words speak of protecting people, is visible but distorted since *him* ties to *them/words* to mix the singular and plural, creating ambiguity (*them* can be *words*, but *him* implies *them* can be the people). *Him* is good Hebrew but bad English, for this 3rd-person/ singular/masculine pronoun denotes, not people, but 3rd-person/singular/ masculine *word* (same as *words* of God). Hebrew has no neuter gender, and *him/he* often refer to neuter terms rendered *it /that* in English (e.g. In Nu.22:20 God speaks to Balaam, and the Hebrew reads, *the word that I shall speak to you, him (it, that) you shall do* - more examples involving God's Word are Dt.30:14, Jer.18:1, Ezk.12:25). Thus the Hebrew of Psalm 12:7 says, *Thou shalt keep (do) thy words (them) O Lord, thou shalt preserve thy word (or words/them) forever*. *Word* has a plural sense (*thy words* comprise *thy word*), justifying *them* in place of *him*. Number discord in the Hebrew of Psalms is usually a poetic-style factor, but here the shift from *them* (*words*) to *him* (*word*) has a didactic purpose, emphasizing God's written words preserved for His people forever. *Words* is spoken or written scripture, but *word* stresses the written (God's verbal *word* is like a document: i.e. *you have my word on it*, not *words*). It's for us that God's words must be preserved, requiring the written form. God preserves His Words in writing forever to show us He obligates Himself to keep them forever (by the *Living Word*). The KJV second *them* does not lose the purpose of the shift, as the declared eternal preservation (for us) establishes the written form; *them* is rightly used twice for clarity (*it /that* is awkward and would confuse readers). Modern translators have no role in preservation and are confused by the shift. Lastly in our NASV commentary, we note that the 12:5 *for which he longs* is a less likely sense of the Hebrew, suggesting a sufferer pants for safety, when context indicates an adversary that puffeth at (a blowhard making threats).

The NIV, like the Septuagint, has a *them* for *him* in 12:5, which isn't right translation but can be used since *him* has a plural sense, and it has a wrong *us* for the double *them* in

12:7. *Us*, wrong by meaning in the first case and by pointing in the second, makes people, not *words*, objects of keeping and preservation (the people are objects only of word-keeping). *Us* can't fit passage sense without altering language (*this generation* is made *such people*). *This generation* is right, reflecting scripture preservation from David's time to forever. In the NIV *this generation* will suggest protecting the righteous forever from one generation. No one needs eternal protection from one generation that can't live forever, so *such people* "preserves" the *us*, but it's wrong translation, for *from* people is a wrong sense; *this generation* is that of David and joins with *from* and *to* /*for* to note a period from that time to eternity, or for ever. And *this* acts as a relative pronoun,* so *such* is poor; i.e. we read, *from the generation this [which] is, to forever*, not, *from the generation such is to forever*).

Scholars omit God's role in preserving scripture, no surprise for those who say the true New Testament text was lost for 1400+ years. They say true words and verses are scattered among manuscripts so that men must decide what is or isn't God's Word. They feel Psalm 119:89, that says, *For ever O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven*, means preservation is found only in heaven, but that's wrong. The sense of the Hebrew is that *settled in heaven* means preservation is verified/supervised *in heaven*, where there's no confusion by men. Passage context supports this, Word preservation on earth being why David can obey God's testimonies (Ps. 119:88) and why earth and its people endure by God's laws (119:91).

2. Who killed Goliath?

Modern scholars are uncertain of the identity of the man who killed Goliath. Modern versions say Elhanan killed Goliath in 2 Samuel 21 and David did in 1 Samuel 17, all in accord with literal Hebrew, but confusion results. Most scholars claim manuscript error, and liberals claim a contradiction in scripture, saying Elhanan, not David, killed Goliath.

2 Samuel 21:19

And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Bethlehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

1 Chronicles 20:5

And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff was like a weaver's beam.

The KJV at 2 Samuel 21:19 says Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath, and *the brother of* is in italics, meaning it's not in the Hebrew text, being added by KJV translators. This addition is the correct way to render the verse in our English translation, as Chronicles has it. The 2 Samuel Hebrew text isn't saying Elhanan, instead of David, killed Goliath. Rather, 1 and 2 Samuel render *Goliath* as a symbolic name for two different giants, and Chronicles identifies Elhanan's giant specifically. Early Hebrew readers would know the symbolic nature of *Goliath*, and others are to learn this from Chronicles.

Symbolic names were assigned to giants to refer to them in Samuel, as Israel could not possibly know proper names of any of thousands of invading Philistine strangers,

*Gesenius said the Masora teaches that the Hebrew word is used as a relative pronoun (2nd English edition. 1910. Clarendon Press. Paragraph 126y)

ines. The giants are given symbolic names in the text based on their great size, except for an unusual individual in 2 Samuel 21:20 who is just described according to his unique physical features, a clear indication that his proper name was unknown to Hebrew scribes who penned the text. All the giants involved in our texts belong to one family (or one tribe), and in 21:16,18, the father of the giants (or tribe progenitor) is called *the giant*, a generic name, and a clear indication his proper name was unknown to scripture penmen, which means the names of his sons (or tribal descendants) were also unknown. On the other hand, Hebrew giant-killers in 2 Samuel 21 all have proper names and are identified as sons of men with proper names (certainly the penmen would know proper names of their own countrymen). In the later Chronicles, Hebrew names don't change from their form in Samuel, indicating ongoing use of proper names, while certain giants' names change due to symbolic names changing to invented proper ones, as we'll see.

The only suggestion of a change in Hebrew proper names is *Jaare-Origim* in Samuel rendered *Jair* (means, *he arouses/rises* [against]) in Chronicles. The name *Oregim* (*weavers*) is a symbolic addition to the name since it disappears in Chronicles where, as we'll see, symbolic names are discarded.* *Oregim* in Samuel attaches to Jaare's name to reflect the son's valor, killing a man so big his spear shaft was like a weaver's beam. Despite the different meaning, *Jair*, isn't really a different name, just a variation of *Jaare* preferred in the later Chronicles. *Jair* is a proper name spelled much like *Jaare* to retain the man's identity, while the meaning still reflects the son's valor to compensate for loss of *oregim*. This is indicated by the fact that *Jair* derives from a marginal note, a Hebrew textual comment (qere) serving here to up-date spelling

Goliath as a symbolic name signifying great size is indicated by use of that type of name, *Saph*, for a giant killed by Sibbechai (2 Sam.21:18. This was the name of the head of an Arabic family in Palestine with sons of great height and strength (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown com.), so it signifies great size. And a giant killed by Abishai, *Ishbi-benob* (means "my seat is on a high place") signifies one of great stature, or great size.

A symbolic *goliath* for giants of David and Elhanan and a mutual Bethlehem origin relate Elhanan to David. God raised up Bethlehemite giant-killers by David who set the example, killing the first Goliath as Israel cowered in fear before him. God called Bethlehemites to this task by David, and as other Bethlehemites killed giants, David's leadership of the exalted tribe was recognized, indirectly or directly, and *Goliath* and *Bethlehemite* do so indirectly. The truth of this is seen as David is recognized directly in 2 Samuel 21:21

*Scholars say that Hebrew manuscript copyists accidentally joined *oregim* (Eng. *weavers*) to *Jaare* since *weavers' beam* is nearby in the verse. But that degree of error is far too great to attribute to Hebrew scribes who took extraordinary care to ensure text accuracy. Error is claimed since *Jaare-oregim* translated literally, *forests of weavers*, can't be a man's name. But *Oregim* is a symbolic name, and joining it to a proper one, *Jaare*, results in a compound name that can't be translated as one, just as *Ed the giant*, a very large fellow, can't be translated *Ed Giant* (the hyphen between the names correctly shows *oregim* wasn't attached by scribal error). Further, error is claimed since *oregim* isn't part of the name in Chronicles, but in Chronicles symbolic names are discarded, as we'll see. A symbolic *Oregim* would have been added to *Jaare* to observe the son's victory. In their patriarchal society, with Hebrews being known by their fathers' names (son of Saul, son of Jesse, etc.), recognizing a father for his son's exploits is no surprise.

where another Bethlehemite giant-killer, Jonathan, is tied to David by his father, called David's brother in the text; this giant needs no name, being identified by unique physical

features (Similarly, 2 Sam.8:13 shows David's leadership being recognized in his nephew Abishai's victory over Edomite Syrians in 1 Chr.18:12).

And David is recognized directly through Abishai (who killed Ishbi-benob) being called a son of Zeruiah (David's sister) in 2 Samuel 21:17. *Goliath* doesn't apply here, for Abishai wasn't a Bethlehemite. Abis-hai's father wasn't Jesse, his mother Zeruiah being David's sister (1 Chr. 2:15,16) by a marriage of David's mother to Nahash before marriage to Jesse (2 Sam.17:25). This relationship of Zeruiah's sons, Abishai, Joab and Asahel, to David explains text use of the unique term *sons of Zeruiah*, a woman. *Goliath* also doesn't apply to the giant of Sibbechai, a Hushathite unrelated to David. *Saph* and *Ishbi-benob*, distinguish non-Bethlehemites not called to be giant-killers, but following the example of the Bethlehemites. God raised up Bethlehemite giant-killers to follow David's example and defeat a family, or tribe, of giants raised up by satan to trouble Israel, and Sibbechai and Abishai followed the Bethlehemite example.

Elhanen's giant is identified in 1 Chronicles 20:5 that shows he's a brother of the Goliath killed by David. (the giants' family or tribal relationships would be known to Hebrew scribes by reputation). Chronicles assigns the giants proper names based on identities of the Hebrews who killed them, the only basis other than symbolic names Israel had for differentiating the giants. The giant Saph killed by Sibbechai becomes Sippai in Chronicles, and the latter name reflects salient parts of the name Sibbechai, indicating a Hebrew proper name invented for this giant (*Sa* is now *Si*, and the double consonant *pp* reflects *bb* - the Hebrew for *p* and *b* are related phonetically, both being labials pronounced with emphasis on use of the lips, and *ai* is a common Hebrew-name suffix - eg. Haggai, Barzillai, Abishai, etc). And *Lahmi* (means *my bread**) is a Hebrew proper name deriving from Elhanen's Beth-lehem-ite origin (*lehem* is *bread***). This Hebrew proper name is assigned to Elhanen's 2 Samuel 21 giant to differentiate the giants of Elhanen and David, while continuing association of the two Hebrews by their Bethlehem origin

**Lahmi* signifies the giant as no terror, but *my bread* (my meat), or made to order for my needs, as in Numbers 14:9 that tells of giants met in the Canaan conquest as *bread for us* (the Hebrew's meat). Defeat of the giants terrified Canaan inhabitants over God's power on behalf of the Hebrews.

** Since *Lahmi* derives from *Bethlehemite*, scholars say the latter is a corruption of an original Samuel reading like that of Chronicles, *Lahmi, brother of*.²¹ But Hebrew scribes couldn't know the proper names and used symbolic ones in Samuel, not inventing their own proper names for the giants until centuries later. To incur the suggested error, a scribe would have to read 't *Lahmi* as *Bét hal-Lahmi*, an error too great to escape an extremely meticulous Hebrew scribe. He'd have to mistake the sign of the direct object ('t) for the word *b-t* (*Beth*) and to mistake the word for brother ('-h) for ('-t) the sign of the direct object.²¹ Such error seems likely to non-Hebrews, but is most unlikely for Hebrews accustomed to use of a term to signify a grammar principle. They wouldn't mistake the sign of the direct object, a grammar principle, for a word any more than we would mistake English punctuation marks for letters of a word. And the extremely meticulous Hebrew scribes constantly reviewed the text for error, so it's not credible to attribute to them three major errors in just one part of one verse, the two suggested here and that suggested in the use of *oregim*. Thus it's suggested that a scribe misread the text due to smudging or abrading of wording in a manuscript being copied,²¹ but Hebrew scribes revered God's Word too much to risk error by using such a manuscript. Far from being a corruption, *Bethlehemite* serves a crucial function, revealing why *Goliath* is used to name the giants of both David and Elhanen.

Knowledge that *Goliath* was symbolic couldn't be retained indefinitely, requiring clarification of the giants' identities, so in Chronicles proper names replaced symbolic

ones. When Chronicles was written ~500 years later, *Goliath* had become the proper name for David's giant and Israel had given proper names to Elhanan's and Sibbechai's giants. KJV translators grasped all this, or else were providentially led to adopt a rendering patterned after that of Chronicles, but modern scholars miss this totally and imagine copyist error or contradiction in the Hebrew text.

In conclusion, the city at which war with Philistines occurred in 2 Samuel 21:18 is Gob, and 1 Chronicles 20:4 notes only the city Gezer. In the latter case Gezer isn't where the battle of 2 Samuel 21:18 occurred but is noted as another place where conflict had begun at the time the battle at Gob occurred, revealing a spreading Philistine conflict.

Discussion of a Few Hermeneutical Principles from the Hermeneutics Text

Lexicology

We'll study lexicology (word meaning – “lexicography” is also used) nuances extensively in topic 2, but substantial introductory comment is in order. Word meaning can be complex or unique, and at times the sense underlying use of a simple preposition is crucial, as in Acts 2:38. Here Peter says...*be baptized...for the remission of sins*. Some say *for* indicates baptism is a means of getting remission of sin. But knowledge of scripture doctrine shows that another meaning of *for* applies here. That is, persons are to be baptized *for* or “because of” remission of sins received or, in the case of Acts 2:38, remission about to be received. Here *for* means “because of,” as “shouting for joy” means shouting because of joy received, not shouting to receive joy.

Verb meanings are crucial with regard to tense, mood and voice since these aspects of verb usage bear directly on the questions of when, how and who pertaining to an action. Verb-tense in scripture is at times unique in meaning, as in the case when Christ speaking to the Jews in John 8:56-59 said...*Before Abraham was I Am*, which refers to the eternal present tense of the person of the great Jehovah.

Obviously noun meanings are always important in interpretation, but scripture doctrine often calls for a more exact sense than is common in everyday English language, as in the case of 1 John 2:29. The KJV at this verse says...*every one that doeth righteousness is born of him* (Christ). On the other hand, the NIV says...*every one who does what is right has been born of him*. Here the NIV has the wrong sense of the Greek noun, making the doing of *what is right*, or good works, the basis for salvation. The problem here is that, though saved persons are to do what is right, things like helping the sick or the poor, many unsaved persons do this also. In this syntax, doing *what is right* makes all who do good works to be saved persons, producing very bad works-based salvation doctrine. On the other hand, the term *righteousness* in the KJV provides the crucial right sense of the noun in the right syntax. That is, no man has any inherent righteousness, and only born-again persons, that is true Christians, have the righteousness of Christ at work in their lives by the Holy Spirit, which is a proof of their salvation.

Transliteration: Some English words derive from transliteration, the changing of letters and sounds from other languages into corresponding characters of English language (e.g.. the Greek transliteration *paradeisos* and the English *paradise*), and the word forms are usually well-defined. But at times modern translators offer forms of transliterated words that are poorly defined, rather than translating them through contextual studies. This

leaves a reader confused over word meaning, complicating interpretation. One of many problems modern translators create is overdoing transliteration, using it where translation is essential and demanded. For example, *Hades* in modern versions, deriving from a Greek transliteration, leaves a reader mired in Greek mythology on a 2-compartment world under the earth for both the blessed and condemned dead, whereas the translation *Hell* clarifies the normative meaning as a place distinctly for the condemned only (For a discussion of Hades see the eschatology section of my Systematic Theology book).

Occasionally, no English word adequately reflects the meaning of a biblical one, and transliteration is necessary, as with the Greek verb “baptizo.” The closest English word is “immerse” that doesn’t convey the religious significance of the word and shouldn’t be used. To immerse can be for various reasons, like cleansing, drowning a victim or searching for something on the bottom of a body of water. Baptism is symbolic of identification with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. “Immerse” doesn’t convey this symbolism, even though the Greek word does refer to immersion as the mode of baptism.

Word meanings in context: Of primary concern is variation in word meaning with varying contexts. Nuances of meaning can be of major importance, as in the case of the preposition “for” noted above concerning the relationship of baptism to remission of sins. The preposition “for” often means “in order to get,” but here it means “because of” due to the context of the New Testament as a whole. In accord with general New Testament doctrine, here the preposition refers to baptism “because of” remission of sin received, rather than baptism “in order to receive” remission. This is like the example of “shouting for joy,” which means shouting because of joy received, and not shouting to receive joy.

And the way a word is used in a given context can change sentence meaning and interpretation. For example, “keep” in “keep the law” refers to obeying the law, while in another sentence it can refer to maintaining or restraining as opposed to losing or loosing.

Change in word meaning over the centuries: Another complication is changing word usage over the centuries that changes word meaning. Through usage many words change in meaning, and are even classified as archaic. Scholars suggest we must do revision in new translations to remove so-called archaic words. However, with language showing more change by degeneration than anything else, we might ask if this is appropriate for holy scripture. What is appropriate for the newspaper is not likely to be so for scripture.

To be sure, mankind keeps corrupting his own language over the centuries, changing the meanings of words until sometimes the current meaning is just the opposite of the original. An example of this very thing is the word “let” which in some contexts once meant hinder, but now normally means to allow, which is just the opposite. The original meaning is still used in some cases in contemporary society, as in the instance of a “let” or hindered ball in the game of tennis.

For some words the change is very slight and easily understood from grammar and context, as in the case of “writing table,” which has now changed to “writing tablet.” The suffix “le” originally indicated a diminutive, or smaller, form of an object, but later the suffix “let” came to replace it in this regard. One has only to see that “table” differs from “tablet” only in regard to the size of the writing platform involved in a contemporary setting so that context plainly shows what is intended.

But the overall result of language corruption is a necessity to, either define older words in a glossary, or to translate to give the current meaning. The question we face is whether

we need to retranslate, or to keep the original language intact and thus uphold our language. The KJV represents English language at the height of its literary genius. In contrast, language deterioration in modern times has accelerated markedly in response to increasing illiteracy caused by deterioration of the educational systems of the land. The tendency in many passages of modern versions is to follow the downward pace of deterioration and thus encourage the descent into illiteracy and language corruption. Somewhere, the church must take a stand and refuse to advance the cause of illiteracy and literary corruption, and the present KJV is the place to start. We need to reclaim original meanings by attaching glossaries to our KJV for those few words that have changed meaning significantly and encourage a return of our language to some semblance of its original literary genius. The reason we need to uphold our rich language heritage is seen as we examine a few examples of what has been lost in modern English.

One degenerative change in modern language is the tendency for words to become increasingly more specific in meaning as time passes, causing us to lose the fullest and best meanings of terms. For example, the term *corn* once meant the pod in which edible grain grows, as in the KJV, *a corn of wheat* (Jn.12:24). Today the term has been made specific to one type of grain. Other more important examples are noted below

1. Our conversation: Just words or life commitment?

Hebrews 13:7

Remember them which have the rule over you...whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

The KJV term *conversation* once referred to all aspects of our lifestyle, but has shrunken in meaning and now refers only to the verbal aspect. In this language change, we see a modern-day cop-out on Christian duty in that giving lip service to Christian living is so much more convenient than living Christian principles in every aspect of our lifestyle. Should we then retranslate the Bible and honor the cop-out and degeneration, or should we uphold our rich language and reclaim the original KJV word?

2. Charity: The depth of commitment: 1 Corinthians 13.

Various English words have suffered an increasing specificity of meaning that ruins a passage teaching when contemporary word meanings are applied. Another example of this degeneration of terms through increasing specificity is seen in the word “charity” so prominent in 1 Corinthians 13, the famous chapter on “love.” The word “charity” originally conveyed the idea of a sacrificial giving of ones entire self for others, which is synonymous with divine love. This is illustrated best in the example of Christ on the Cross who gave Himself fully for our benefit and thus showed us divine love, or charity, in its ultimate form. Today the word has been reduced to one specific aspect of charity, namely financial giving. But this latter is a cop-out on the meaning of the word that is convenient for those who want to be charitable without going “overboard.” We need to understand that the Christian standard of charity in its original meaning includes giving sacrificially of everything, including our affection, time, patience, encouragement, esteem and talents as well as our money, and all this in a spirit of devotion to the welfare of others. In some cases, giving even life itself for others is part of Christian duty and charity, as the great self-sacrifice of Christ and His martyrs of the church have shown us.

Mere giving of material things is inadequate of itself as we see from the teaching of 1 Corinthians 13:3. This verse says that even giving our bodies to be burned doesn't qualify as charity if it doesn't arise from devotion for others (as might be the case in such an act done for political protest). We follow this high standard of divine love, or charity, when we give sacrificially of our total selves in devotion to the welfare of others. To give only the pittance of our financial charity is only a modern pale facsimile of the real meaning of the word and is to renege on Christian duty.

Further, referring to "charity" as "love" misses the mark of all that's intended in the meaning. "Charity," or "divine love," is much fuller and nobler in meaning than mere "love." The latter in contemporary human endeavor can include such trivial things as love of sports or spaghetti or attraction to beautiful objects of our desire. We simply must be more accurate in our choice of a word to relate properly to the subject matter of 1 Corinthians 13. And for us even the superior term "divine love" would not necessarily communicate the intent behind such love. However, the word "charity" in its original sense communicates the self-sacrificing nature of divine love readily and thus gives us the essence of the meaning in one word. Thus, if we are to retain the best term in its original sense, we have the truest and easiest understanding of the teaching of true scripture.

Many once knew and appreciated the true meaning of "charity." Among the great men of history, Abraham Lincoln well knew the true meaning when in his second inaugural address after the Civil war he said, "with malice toward none, with charity for all." Was President Lincoln talking about a government hand-out for everyone? No, he was speaking of his desire that everyone in the nation would respond to each other in devotion, sacrificing individual feelings of bitterness and grief over personal loss from the Civil War so that the welfare of the entire commonwealth might be served. No contemporary word can express such sentiments as well as the original word "charity," a word we need to restore in its original sense to current English vocabulary.

Will not the church, if no one else, seek to maintain the high literary standard of our traditional English Bible acknowledged by most authorities as the greatest expression of English literary wealth of all time? Or will it go along with the downward spiral of language degeneration that worsens from one generation to the next and is followed in this by modern versions? In truth it's not that KJV English is archaic but rather that modern English has become so degenerate that correct English now seems archaic. Archaic language indeed; does anyone suggest that Shakespeare's unique language be modernized? Hardly, for that would inestimably lower appreciation of Shakespearean literature lovers for the true nature of Shakespeare. Should holy scripture in English receive any less appreciation for its divine dignity and merit by separating it from the English language at the height of its literary genius? If one would know the merit of Shakespeare, he must learn it in its true form, and if he would know the merit of the English Bible, he must learn it in its true form. We must never lower the Bible to men's standards, but must bring men up to all the standards of the Bible. When it comes to the Bible, why would anyone settle for anything less than the best?

3. Thou shalt not kill or you shall not murder?

a. Does the Bible condemn abortion?

Here we look at a fairly subtle change in word meaning considered unimportant by many moderns but actually quite important.

Exodus 20:13 (Deuteronomy 5:17 also)

KJV: *Thou shalt not kill*

NIV: *You shall not murder*

NASV: *You shall not murder*

NKJV: *You shall not murder*

Some think that changing the old “thee” and “thou” to the modern “you” is not a matter of importance, but here we illustrate that the old language has an important function. We will show here that there is an important change in meaning that corrupts the interpretation when “thou” is changed to “you.” But first we must deal with another related error in the modern versions in the Exodus/Deuteronomy passages.

Some conservative scholars say that the word “kill” in the KJV Exodus 20:13 is misleading since there are situations in which it seems improper to use this terminology. For example, they say, what of the soldier in combat who is required to follow orders and kill the enemy or else be killed himself and also be a detriment to his own nation. They say, what of the prison executioner who must kill as part of his duty. They claim that the soldier and executioner are condemned wrongly by the commandment in the KJV just for doing their necessary duty. Most modern translators believe that by changing “kill” to “murder,” condemnation of soldiers and prison executioners by the commandment would be rightly eliminated since what such people do is not murder. And they also eliminate the “archaic” word “thou,” changing it to the modern word “you,” which has a significantly different meaning, as we shall see a little later.

At first glance changing *kill* seems logical, but have they really improved the rendering, or have they done something very different? We must realize that men’s ideas are never equivalent to God’s Word in authority and truth. In determining the truth we must always look for the logic in the traditional scripture, and first we should realize what “Thou shalt not kill” in the KJV really means. We note the crucial first word “thou” is a singular pronoun referring to the individual. Thus the commandment is to the individual, and it tells him that he cannot decide to kill or end life. He did not give life, and he has no right to decide when it ends. That is not his prerogative but the prerogative of God who alone gives and has the right to take life. In other words, no individual has any right to make personal decisions about ending life.

Now a soldier in combat or a prison executioner doing only his duty isn’t condemned by the commandment in the KJV since he makes no personal decisions about life and death. He has no options to exercise but simply does his duty, obeying the government, and it is the government that bears the responsibility. And government is empowered by God to defend the land and innocent peoples of the world and to enforce the law and punish evil-doers. Indeed, the New Testament tells us the government is the agent of God’s vengeance against evil-doers (Rom.13:1-5). Thus soldiers and executioners doing only their duty don’t violate the commandment in the KJV. Finally, we note that making no personal decisions about killing includes not committing murder, so we see there was no need whatever to make this change made by the modern version committees.

But does this change by these committees do any harm to our understanding of scriptural teaching? It seems untroublesome at first glance, but we must consider the implications further. First we must see that murder is only one very specific type of crime, and we should understand there are other types of killing by personal decision that are condemn-

ed by the commandment as it appears in the KJV. For example, an abortion is commonly referred to as “terminating a pregnancy,” which is only a modern-day euphemism for making a personal decision about ending life. Abortion is a completely unlawful deed according to the KJV, but it is not condemned by the modern versions since abortion is not considered murder by society. If it were considered murder, all abortionists would go to prison, many being executed for their crimes. But abortionists don’t even get a scolding, let alone execution or prison. Thus society doesn’t even consider abortion a misdemeanor, let alone the equivalent of murder, so the modern versions have no application to the crime of abortion. Thus pro-abortionists can use the modern rendering against pro-life people, but they can never use the KJV that way since the KJV covers every kind of unlawful ending of life by a personal decision. Indeed, the KJV equates abortion with murder, both being unlawful acts of ending life by a personal decision.

And with regard to consequences resulting from changing God’s Word, what of a modernist couple that commits abortion but never learns or even reads the KJV? Because of modern trends in the church, they use only a very popular modern version. They get no concept of violating God’s commandment from these versions since abortion does not fall in society’s category of murder. Between their modern version and society’s attitudes, they get no sense of wrong-doing and think of abortion as nothing more than one of their rights. At the most, they might think, in keeping with attitudes of modern society on “inconveniences,” that abortion is just an “accidental” death occasioned by an accidental inconvenient pregnancy. But few things are as loathsome as deciding to end the life of a totally helpless innocent child out of personal convenience or expedience, a life ordained by God. What of the ultimate end of those who commit such crimes and never do understand the unlawful nature of such acts? They may never see their acts as crimes and may die in their sins as unrepentant and unforgiven sinners. Only at the judgment throne of God will they understand that they are unforgiven killers of helpless innocent life, just as guilty as any murderer, and what a bad time that would be to find this out!

Does this “improvement” in modern versions pose any possible problems for superficial readers who are not sufficiently knowledgeable of scripture to see, or even sense, an inadequate modern rendering. Let the reader decide for himself, and let him realize God’s Word is very precisely and accurately planned, ordered and arranged to say exactly what He wants it to say. When men change the wording of historic scripture, all they can do is corrupt it, no matter how good their intent.

In conclusion, we note that some references to Old Testament commandments in the New Testament give some points of the law in partial summations. In a partial summation, it is perfectly valid to say that the law teaches us not to murder or not to kill, either word referring to a primary principle of law. However, in Deuteronomy and Exodus, the exact total wording of the law is spelled out, and changing of the words by scholars there can have maximal adverse effects.

b. Thou shalt not kill or you shall not kill?

Now we deal with changed word meaning in our verse: Exodus 20:13.

KJV: Thou shalt not kill

RSV: You shall not kill

In the Exodus passage above we note that the RSV agrees with the KJV in using the term

"kill" rather than "murder." While this version uses the correct term here, we note that it has changed "thou" to "you," apparently in an effort to eliminate "archaic" words. But we also note that "you" is an ambiguous pronoun that can be singular or plural. Thus eliminating so-called "archaic" language has eliminated proper interpretation of the verse. Now it is no longer a case of no individual being permitted personal decisions about ending life, but rather a case of absolutely no individual and no group being permitted any role in killing under any circumstances. Thus no one, including soldiers or prison executioners, could feel free to discharge their duties to their government for protection of society and administration of justice unless they were willing to ignore "scripture." The so-called "archaic" KJV English serves a rather important purpose in clarifying scripture doctrine in a direct easy way that is not possible in modern English. One might wonder if Providence had something in mind in commissioning our traditional English Bible at a time when this type of English was still revered. It seems likely that a Bible using such English is still the will of Providence.

The reader may say that it is only necessary to change the RSV wording a little. But that proves the rendering is not inerrant and has misled people for a long time, and that is the whole point we are making here concerning unauthorized translations. This is only one of many errors in modern versions that mislead our interpretation.