

SET ASIDE FOR SERVICE

A Discussion Regarding The Ordination Of Deacons But Touching A Number of Issues

Please take early note that all definitions given for words are taken from the Merriam-Webster 11th Collegiate Dictionary.

It is often asserted that the opening verses of the Epistle to the church at Philippi provide the simplest picture of a church. While that observation may indeed be an oversimplification, and certainly, the two verses alone do not provide an adequate *definition* for a church, the passage is most pertinent to any understanding of the structure of a church that is organized and functioning biblically.

Philippians 1:1-2 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

The church at Philippi is descriptively identified by the phrase “all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” The familiar preposition “with” is a key word—for the purpose of our discussion, the comma between Philippi and “with’ *and* that same common, hardworking, everyday “with” are, indeed, *the two essential elements*.

The punctuation marks of the Authorized Version are not inspired *because they are not found in the original text*. Since these symbols are inserted by the translators “to clarify the meaning and separate structural units” and are used as “something that contrasts or accentuates,” they are sometimes used as a means of criticism for the translators of the Authorized Version. One should remember that the intent of the translators was to provide readers of English with an understandable edition of the word of God that was crafted to be read. The phrase on the title page of the Cambridge edition is “Appointed to be read in Churches.” The word “appointed” is confused by many as to its meaning in this statement. The verb “appoint” is assigned the following definition when used as a transitive verb.

1 a: to fix or set officially <appoint a trial date>

b: to name officially <will appoint her director of the program>

c: archaic: ARRANGE

d: to determine the disposition of (an estate) to someone by virtue of a power of appointment

2: to provide with complete and usually appropriate or elegant furnishings or equipment <a beautifully appointed room>

As an intransitive verb, the word conveys the meaning of “to exercise a power of appointment.”

The synonym for “appoint” is given as “furnish,” and the dictionary supplies this further information: “APPOINT implies provision of complete and usually elegant or elaborate equipment or furnishings <a lavishly appointed apartment>.”

It is my observation that when I have a question for the precise usage of a word in the Authorized Version and my Merriam-Webster provides me with an “archaic” choice, it often is the best fit; however, all of the shades of definition for “appoint” may easily be understood to be intended in the phrase “Appointed to be read in Churches.”

There are those who insist that the Authorized Version “was never authorized.” The 1(a) definition would challenge that assertion as it would state that the Authorized Version was fixed or set officially to be read in churches and 1(b) would plainly proclaim that the Authorized Version was named officially to be read in the churches. Definition 1(d) would declare that the Authorized Version was given to the churches by the virtue of having been so appointed. These definitions, whether taken individually or collectively, provide sufficient qualification for the validity of the title Authorized Version. However, we must not forget that the archaic definition of “appoint” is “arrange”; this declares quite clearly that the translation was arranged for the specific purpose of being read in the churches. To that end, the translation was provided “with complete and usually appropriate or elegant furnishings or equipment” with the intent that it be prepared to be read in the churches. The complete, appropriate, and elegant equipment furnished to the translation, making it a work enabling clarity of vocalization, is the punctuation marks. The translation was phrased and punctuated so as to be easily read to a congregation and readily understood by those listening.

Once more, I remind my readers that the punctuation is not part of the originals and is, therefore, not to be regarded as inspired. Consequently, doctrine should not—perhaps, I should say, must not,—be built upon a punctuation mark or sign. At the same time, I would not suggest that we willy-nilly disregard the interpretative suggestion that the translators have given us with their choice and placement of punctuation.

In our phrase, “to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons,” the comma is used as a reading aid, providing the separator of structural units, and to contrast and to accentuate the saints from the bishops and deacons. The saints are the members of the church, and the bishops and deacons are the officers of the church at Philippi. Together, they form the church. Thus, the apostle was writing to the members of the church as they and the officers were functioning together.

That presents the use of the comma and now we need to define the preposition “with.” This very common word is not a simple combination of letters. The use of the word “with” conveys very definite and very concrete concepts requiring a number of words to explain fully the meaning of the word in any given use. [Please bear with me; this is not space-filling double-talk.] While we use the preposition “with” everyday, we do not consider the complexity of the word. First, we must understand the meaning of the term “preposition,” which is “a function word that typically combines with a noun phrase to form a phrase which usually expresses a modification or predication.” Thus, the word “with” is always used as a word conveying a function, usually of modifying or expressing an action, state, or quality, or is the logical affirmation of something about the noun with which it is found. The definition of “with” is given as:

1 a: in opposition to: AGAINST <had a fight with his brother>

b: so as to be separated or detached from <broke with her family>

- 2 a: used as a function word to indicate a participant in an action, transaction, or arrangement <works with his father> <a talk with a friend> <got into an accident with the car>
 b: used as a function word to indicate the object of attention, behavior, or feeling <get tough with him> <angry with her>
 c: in respect to: so far as concerns <on friendly terms with all nations>
 d: used to indicate the object of an adverbial expression of imperative force <off with his head>
 e: OVER, ON <no longer has any influence with them>
 f: in the performance, operation, or use of <the trouble with this machine>
- 3 a: used as a function word to indicate the object of a statement of comparison or equality <a dress identical with her hostess's>
 b: used as a function word to express agreement or sympathy <must conclude, with you, that the painting is a forgery>
 c: on the side of: FOR <if he's for lower taxes, I'm with him> d: as well as <can pitch with the best of them>
- 4 a: used as a function word to indicate combination, accompaniment, presence, or addition <heat milk with honey> <went there with her> <his money, with his wife's, comes to a million>
 b: inclusive of <costs \$5 with the tax>
- 5 a: in the judgment or estimation of <stood well with her classmates>
 b: in or according to the experience or practice of <with many of us, our ideas seem to fall by the wayside — W. J. Reilly>
- 6 a: used as a function word to indicate the means, cause, agent, or instrumentality <hit him with a rock> <pale with anger> <threatened with tuberculosis> <he amused the crowd with his antics>
 b ARCHAIC: by the direct act of
- 7 a: used as a function word to indicate manner of action <ran with effort> <acknowledge your contribution with thanks>
 b: used as a function word to indicate an attendant fact or circumstance <stood there with his hat on>
 c: used as a function word to indicate a result attendant on a specified action <got off with a light sentence>
- 8 a (1): in possession of: HAVING <came with good news>
 (2): in the possession or care of <left the money with her mother>
 b: characterized or distinguished by <a person with a sharp nose>
- 9 a: used as a function word to indicate a close association in time <with the outbreak of war they went home> <mellows with time>
 b: in proportion to <the pressure varies with the depth>
- 10 a: in spite of: NOTWITHSTANDING <a really tip-top man, with all his wrongheadedness — H. J. Laski>
 b: except for <finds that, with one group of omissions and one important addition, they reflect that curriculum — Gilbert Highet>
- 11: in the direction of <with the wind> <with the grain>

Accordingly, the word has eleven primary uses and fifteen addition nuances of use. The single word “with” may convey any one of twenty-six distinctive meanings. If one is to understand the intent of the use of the word in any given sentence, then these twenty-six possibilities must be considered. I have insisted that in our text under discussion, the word “with” is central to understanding.

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we consider which of the twenty-six possibilities to understand, only three makes the sentence understandable:

1. 4(a) (“a function word to indicate combination, accompaniment, presence, or addition”) meaning that the saints are accompanied by bishops and deacons,
2. 7(b) (“a function word to indicate an attendant fact or circumstance”) meaning that the saints have bishops and deacons, or
3. 8(b) (“characterized or distinguished by”) meaning that the saints are characterized by having bishops and deacons.

The central idea conveyed by all three of these possible definitions would be that the saints and the bishops and the deacons are together with each having conveyed a slightly different flavor to the “with” and all presenting a legitimate and valid understanding of the relationship of the saints with the bishops and the deacons—the church with her officers.

Therefore, the comma and the preposition unite to convey that the church at Philippi consists as a unit, which is comprised of saints who have bishops and deacons. The bishops and the deacons do not have the saints. The saints are not inferior to the bishops and deacons. The apostle is writing to the company of saints and includes the bishops and the deacons. The local church is responsible for the propagation and the defense of the faith; it is not a matter left exclusively to bishops and deacons—that is the suggestion of the comma and the teaching of the preposition “with.” The translators gave us a hint to pause and to consider what was coming next as being separated from what was just written by using the comma. Then the translators gave us a faithful, legitimate, thoughtful, reliable, correct, reflective translation by their choice to use the preposition “with” to translate the Greek preposition “sun,” which is defined by “*a Greek authority*” as “a primary preposition denoting *union; with or together* (but much closer than meta or para), that is, by association, companionship, process, resemblance, possession, instrumentality, addition, etc.: beside, with. (In compounds it has similar applications, including *completeness*.)”

I have engaged through this article in this tedious enterprise because I am weary of hearing the philosophy spouted that only it is only in the Greek and the Hebrew texts that we may discover “the fullness of the meaning of Scripture.” While I would not willingly surrender the multiple Biblical language resources on eight feet of the shelves of my library, I do not depend upon them

to give me “a richer truth” than my Cambridge edition of the Authorized Version conveys. Those resources help to “flesh out” some words, but then so does my Merriam-Webster 11th Collegiate Dictionary. In the calculated attempt to magnify an alleged necessity for believers to accept a role of subservient dependency-sans-criticism upon scholarship’s rendition of the ancient Biblical languages, the role of the English words and their ability to convey the fullness of truth is seriously depreciated. Every English translation is represented as capable of being only a flawed, general approximation of the word of God and it is, thereby, denied any sanction of final authority. No translation of Scripture is more maligned by this smear than is the Authorized Version. Strangely, the identical preposterous position is the foundational teaching of Islam with regard to the Quran; that confused collection of strange writings, which are purported to be the recollections of what witnesses claimed to have remembered hearing Mohammed say, (*The man revered by Islam as The Prophet left not one word in his own handwriting, allegedly because he was illiterate.*) is declared to be untranslatable and is held as authoritative only as it is found written in the Arabic words. The only authoritative version of the Quran [a.k.a. Koran and Qu’ran] is the Arabic one—and it is untranslatable. One must learn to think in Arabic to understand the Quran, according to Islam. I have found no other document in any other language to be so regarded by anyone anywhere in the world! In the same vein, the detractors, who deny that the English language possesses the ability to convey “the fullness of truth,” also delight in depreciating the ability of “any translation of the originals”; however, they, unlike the Moslems, do not have a written authority. Of course, that is the crux of the problem—the proponents of this “insufficiency of translation” do not believe that anyone any longer has access to the original writing because textual criticism has not yet had its final say—though it is getting closer. A few more rubbish heaps have to be uncovered and sifted and yet another monastery or two needs to have the library diligently searched (*or at least the wastebasket in the library*) before a final original can be reconstructed. As an example of the fluidity of the Critical Text, the current edition of the Nestle-Aland estimation of the original Greek text of the New Testament is the 27th revision of that critically acclaimed Critical Text.

This belief in the unsettledness of the actual words of Scripture is, in my view, the impetus for the shift by so many modern scholars to the foolish philosophy of dynamic translation rather than word for word. Under this scheme, the translators are endowed with the assumed, presumptive ability to discover what the deceased human author of the originals actually intended to say, instead of reflecting precisely what he wrote. Any rational interpretation of this endeavor would understand that the translators are thereby required to read the mind of a dead writer in order to know his intention. Scripture never instructs anyone to enter the shadowy world of the necromancer, spiritist, or mind reader. This is also an action required for no other book in the world; in any translating project, the rules of integrity require that all difficult passages or words with disused or dated meanings are footnoted, but the original wording is left intact—except for the contemporary craze of issuing Bible translations and commentaries in updated, modern wording editions for profit. Changing an author’s word choices is dishonesty in action. In this regard, the apostle Paul stated, quite forcefully, that when we have the words, we have “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:1-16).

I remember being foolish enough as a young preacher to purchase a book, enticingly named by the author with the fascinatingly intriguing title, Untranslatable Riches From The Greek New Testament For The English Reader. Read the following portion taken from the author’s preface:

When one has read all the various translations, each of which brings out some different shade of meaning from the inexhaustible richness of the Greek text, there still remains a large [PLEASE TAKE NOTICE OF THE NEXT WORD.—Pastor Manley] untranslatable wealth of truth to which only a Greek student has access. The reason for this is that in a translation which keeps to a minimum of words, that is, where one English word for instance, is the translation of one Greek word, it is impossible for the translator to bring out all the shades of meaning of the Greek word. It sometimes requires ten or a dozen words to give a well-rounded, full-orbed concept of the Greek word.

... What we have in our Authorized Version is an excellent “one-word” translation, and correct. But one misses some of the riches that lies hidden beneath the English word. ...

This man was a scholar, gifted in linguistic skills; therefore, his selection of the word “untranslatable” was not a careless, momentary lapse of academic judgment. The word is not a common word and so we may assume that he chose it because it is not tainted with ambiguity as to its intended meaning. “Un” means “not.” “Translatable” is the adjective of the verb “translate,” which is defined as a transitive verb as follows:

- 1 a: to bear, remove, or change from one place, state, form, or appearance to another: TRANSFER, TRANSFORM <a country boy translated to the city> <translate ideas into action>
- b: to convey to heaven or to a nontemporal condition without death
- c: to transfer (a bishop) from one see to another
- 2 a: to turn into one's own or another language
- b: to transfer or turn from one set of symbols into another: TRANSCRIBE
- c (1): to express in different terms and especially different words: PARAPHRASE
- (2): to express in more comprehensible terms: EXPLAIN, INTERPRET
- 3: ENRAPTURE
- 4: to subject to mathematical translation
- 5: to subject (as genetic information) to translation in protein synthesis

When used as an intransitive verb, the word means:

- 1: to practice translation or make a translation; also: to admit of or be adaptable to translation <a word that doesn't translate easily>
- 2: to undergo a translation
- 3: LEAD, RESULT — usually used with into <believes that tax cuts will translate into economic growth>.

The definitions 2(a), (“to turn into one’s own or another language”), 2(c)1 and 2 (“to express in different terms and especially different words: PARAPHRASE; to express in more comprehensible terms: EXPLAIN, INTERPRET”), and the phrase “to admit of or be adaptable to translation” would apply to the use of the word “translatable” as he used it.

Combined then, “un” and “translatable” unquestionably mean that the author is setting forth the principle that it is impossible to “turn into” English certain truths contained within the Greek words of the original text **AND** that those Greek words cannot be expressed in any “different words” or in any terms that are “more comprehensible”; in short, the Greek words in which the New Testament was written *cannot be translated into any language*, but are forever bound in the Greek. “When one has read all the various translations, each of which brings out some different shade of meaning from the inexhaustible richness of the Greek text, there still remains a large untranslatable wealth of truth ***to which only a Greek student has access.***” [Emphasis added.] Therefore, the person that is not a student of the Greek language is denied the possibility of ever possessing an undisclosed large quantity of truth that perpetually remains sealed within the Greek text—that is, this is the view of the author of the volume that he titled Untranslatable Riches From The Greek New Testament For The English Reader and that was published as Untranslatable Riches From The Greek New Testament. Writer and publisher agreed on the use of “untranslatable.”

One day, I was basking in the sunlight of the illumination emanating from this scholar, with the extraordinary ambition to teach me what the Greek said but what the English could not say, when real light broke upon my vision. I suddenly roused from my tanning session stupor and wondered why I had not realized that the scholar was actually perpetrating a con (Defined as “running a confidence game.” The synonym is “swindle,” meaning, “to obtain money by fraud or deceit.”). I ask now the logical question: Precisely how did he or I imagine that he would be able to tell me the riches contained within the Greek without the necessity of using English words to do so? I had *placed a bet* on the *three-card monte* of an academician—a respected *conservative, evangelical scholar to be sure*, but my money was gone just the same. Why had I not figured it out before I spent my money, I do not know, but these riches that he offered could not really be untranslatable—was he not indeed offering me a translation of those very riches? This author was in reality criticizing all other English translations—especially the word-for-word translation of the Authorized Version—as insufficient to convey truth. I was, in this argument, doomed, never able to understand fully the truth, without purchasing his personal version of word choices, which he possessed through his vastly superior knowledge. Purposefully or not, the man was claiming the rank of “the keeper of the light”; if I wanted to know the real meaning of the Bible, I required his *priestly* intervention. He, the Greek master, had the hidden knowledge still kept secret from me, the English reader. His premise was that the English language was not equipped to convey the fullness of the words—and yet, as I realized that day, *he was restricted to the English to give me those riches and he proceeded to sell me a book of more than one hundred and twenty pages containing only one paragraph written in thirty-five Greek words*, which he did indeed leave untranslated. However, his title was “untranslatable” and not “untranslated”—so even this was fraudulent.

Immediately after that paragraph written all in Greek, the author describes exactly what is required in order for me to fully understand (e.g. Why his role is essential to me.) the riches of truth untranslatable from that untranslated paragraph:

Of course you say, "It is all Greek to me." Everything looks most unintelligible to the English reader, part of a world far beyond and part from his ordinary sphere of life. He is quite right in his judgment, for to handle the Greek language and produce a translation which is expressive and yet strictly true to the original, is no child's play. Such a thing is not flung off of one's coat sleeve. The subject is so vast that the longer one delves into it, the more he is impressed with the fact that he has but touched its fringes. A translator of the Greek New Testament should have a knowledge of Greek grammar and syntax, the possession of a vocabulary, the ability to break words apart, add together the meanings of the various words which go to make up that word, and then select a word or words in the English language which give an adequate picture of that word with all the lights and shadows it contains. One needs to know the historical background of the usage of the word in classical and Koine Greek. One needs to know the writer, the purpose he had in writing, the particular way in which he habitually used a word. A translator must study closely the context in which the word is found and select that particular meaning from the many shades of meaning which the word has, which best fits that context. All this, and more is involved in the adequate translation of a word. Over and above all this equipment, there must be a definite dependence upon the Holy Spirit, a comprehensive knowledge of the great scope of Scripture, an apprehension of the great dispensations, an understanding of prophecy, and a consuming desire that the Lord Jesus be glorified.

The work itself is of the most taxing kind. It requires patient, slow careful research, the consultation of a representative number of Greek authorities, the tabulation of each one's material on each word, and in weighing of that material in such a way as to select the best when authorities differ. After one has fully treated each separate word, he is ready for his translation. With your English translation open before you (the writer is using the Authorized Version) [*This parenthesis is in his original.*], let us study the more important Greek words together.

When we have finished our word studies, we will offer the fuller translation.

This author presents quite well the reasoning cited for the creation of a dependent underclass of Christians. The English reader will always lack “**a knowledge of Greek grammar and syntax, the possession of a [Greek] vocabulary, the ability to break [Greek] words apart, add together the meanings of the various words which go to make up that word, and then select a word or words in the English language which give an adequate picture of that word with all the lights and shadows it contains,**” the knowledge of “**the historical background of the usage of the word in classical and Koine Greek,**” and only a scholar would possess the ability to know “**the writer, the purpose he had in writing,**” [and] “**the particular way in which he habitually used a word.**” Of course, the English reader is unable to “**study closely the context in which the word is found and select that particular meaning from the many shades of meaning which the word has, which best fits that context.**” The unstated, but surely implied deficiency of the non-Greek scholar to possess “**over and above all this equipment**”... “**a definite**

dependence upon the Holy Spirit, a comprehensive knowledge of the great scope of Scripture, an apprehension of the great dispensations, an understanding of prophecy, and a consuming desire that the Lord Jesus be glorified.”

Notice the wordsmithery of the author’s next paragraph.

[Translation] **requires patient, slow careful research, the consultation of a representative number of Greek authorities, the tabulation of each one’s material on each word, and in weighing of that material in such a way as to select the best when authorities differ. After one has fully treated each separate word, he is ready for his translation.**

Unfortunately, he fails to mention that the “slow careful research” and the “consultation of a representative number of Greek authorities” only require the use of a most rudimentary knowledge of the Greek alphabet, but would indeed require a substantial knowledge of the English language. One may “consult” Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, George Ricker Berry’s Interlinear New Testament, or the Trinitarian Bible Society’s The Greek New Testament to find the untranslatable Greek word. Strong devised a numbering system so that any reader of English could find the definition of the underlying original word without ever knowing how to pronounce it—that numbering system has become the standard for reference works and many are produced, especially computer editions, keyed to the Strong’s numbering system. The “Greek authorities” of which he writes, though not identified in his statement, obviously are the recognized works of men such as Bullinger, Machen, Vincent, Friberg, Girdlestone, Trench, Wuest, Rienecker and Rodgers, Robertson, Dana and Mantey, and Thayer. They are considered to be the masters of the Greek language. All of whom, learned linguistic scholars that they were, wrote their works in English!

The author failed also to identify the enormity of the importance of his statement **“and in weighing of that material in such a way as to select the best when authorities differ.”** Those words are, perhaps, more significant than anything else the author wrote, because they constitute the foundation upon which his entire premise rests. He is affirming that the translator must weigh [review, judge, evaluate, assess, and approve or discard] the **“material in such a way as to select the best when authorities differ.”** In other words, the misnamed “Greek authorities,” after all is said and done, are not actually the arbitrator of the “best” word choice. Under his methodology and that of all those holding the Critical Text theory, the final authority establishing the words of the text must be and will be the individual, personal, private determination and interpretation of “the Greek scholar du jour”—whether that be a selectively cited Greek language expert or the person *selling the book*. That sounds very close to that ungodly business of “every man doing that which is right in his own eyes.”

However, the author then makes, what I believe is a most astounding admission: **“After one has fully treated each separate word, he is ready for his translation.”** That which he said was untranslatable is now declared not really to be untranslatable at all; it is going to be translated—all that was lacking was the presence of a Greek scholar to make the decision **“to select the best”** translation. The next sentence in his paragraph (a sentence that I did not copy in the citation given earlier) is enlightening indeed.

With your English translation open before you (the writer is using the Authorized Version) [This parenthesis is in the original.], let us study the more important Greek words together. When we have finished our word studies, we will offer the fuller translation.

Amazingly, the Greek scholar instructs me to study the Greek by using my English translation!

Do you wonder why I describe his book as nothing other than a respected conservative, evangelical scholar’s three-card monte?

In another volume of this author’s works, he examines the text with which I began the article. He devotes a chapter of six pages to the examination of the “untranslatable riches” of Philippians 1:1, 2. For his authorities, he cites Adolph Deissman and Archbishop Trench, once each and gives two citations to two of his own other writings. When he provides the Greek or the Hebrew word, he does so by using an English transliterated form. He then gives the following rendition.

Paul and Timothy, bondslaves by nature, belonging to Christ Jesus, to all the consecrated and separated ones in Christ Jesus, together with the overseers and ministering deacons. (Sanctifying) grace be to you, and (heart) peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Far from opening “hidden riches,” he has obscured the simplicity of the Authorized Version. He threw away the phrase “which are at Philippi,” thereby removing the personalization of the epistle and altered the order of the words as it has pleased him. I find that his choice of the phrase **“bondslaves by nature”** requires a detailed explanation to remove the implication that “by nature” refers to the natural existence of Paul and Timothy. A reader of Scripture will know that “by nature” is a phrase that Paul consistently uses (Romans 2:14, 27; 11:24, Galatians 2:15; 4:8 and Ephesians 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.) in a strict theological sense to describe the natural man in contrast with the regenerated man. Such terms ought not to be discarded because doing so confuses truth and does not clarify it.

Asked to choose between his “fuller translation” and the translation of the Authorized Version that he rejected as one that **“misses some of the riches that lies hidden beneath the English word,”** I find the choice very easy. I prefer to rest with the Authorized Version’s “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Let it be understood that the man in question was brilliant. I have no reason to believe that he was not a genuine believer in the LORD Jesus Christ. I do not doubt that he was very sincere in his position. *I offer a challenge only to the validity of his reasoning that I must have him (or someone like him) to reverse translate my English Bible back into the Greek language so that he might re-translate the untranslatable Greek words into his fuller choice of the best English.* I believe that he and I could have spent an enjoyable afternoon fellowshiping until we came to the issue of whether or not I could hold the word of God in my hands and read it for myself in the English language. I expect to meet him in Heaven and, if it merits discussion There, we will rejoice together that he now knows better than to abrogate a role of mediator. His knowledge of the original language should be a

help to ignorant students such as I am, but when he institutes himself or other scholars as a layer between the word of God and the people of God, in my view, *he has done despite to the doctrine of soul liberty, shown disdain for the doctrine of soul competency, damaged the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer, and he has thereby usurped the Lordship of Christ.*

I freely acknowledge the necessity of someone learned in the Biblical languages to translate the originals into the English tongue for me to possess and to read. That work was done and, as even the author cited above confesses, that **“our Authorized Version is an excellent “one-word” translation, and correct.”** If “our Authorized Version” is excellent (“superior,” “meritoriously near the standard or model and eminently good of its kind”) and correct (“conforming to an approved or conventional standard, conforming to or agreeing with fact, logic, or known truth, conforming to the strict requirements of a specific ideology or set of beliefs or values” “CORRECT usually implies freedom from fault or error.”), then why should he be so bold as to proceed to find fault with it and dismissively describe it as a **“one-word”** translation. He sets the label **“one-word”** in full quotes. He means to suggest that it is deficient to translate the Greek language by one word. I am insisting that it is deficient to read the English language without acknowledging that words have meanings that require more than one word to understand.

Frankly, the translators of the Authorized Version fulfilled all the requirements that he establishes for a translator and did it more than fifty-four times over. The translators chose their words as carefully as our author insists translators must; therefore, I should expect the flavor of the original to be found within the chosen English word. Working with dictionaries of the Biblical languages and the English tongue are tools that are available to any believer who desires to obtain them. As to his primary argument that “[i]t sometimes requires ten or a dozen words to give a well-rounded, full-orbed concept of the Greek word,” I required one thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine words to explain a comma and the English preposition “with.” That is the function of teaching and preaching—to explain the use and application of the words. I could be wrong since I only skimmed the pages and could have, therefore, missed something in my Merriam-Webster, but I do not believe that any word in the English language is defined with a single word in that dictionary. Look up the word “a”—I wrote “word” and not “letter,” because the word “a” is a noun, an indefinite article, two different prepositions, and a verb. I do not count the thirteen abbreviations that “a” might represent. Merriam-Webster uses at least five hundred and eighty-two words to define “a” and references the Authorized Version in doing so. Reading with understanding requires of everyone the knowledge of the meaning of the words. I fully believe that the meaning of the originals of the Greek and the Hebrew are conveyed very well by the English of the Authorized Version. The urging of the necessity of “a fuller translation” for the modern reader does not legitimately rise from the shallowness of the English words, but in the superficiality of the vocabulary of the modern reader. Instead of the Authorized Version being a **“one-word”** translation that **“misses some of the riches that lies hidden beneath the English word,”** I am advocating that the fullness of that richness is WITHIN the English word, not buried under the English.

In effect, it could be said that I simply am asking the question, “Is it reasonable for me to exchange the cooperative collective workings of *fifty-four universally respected and historically esteemed scholars* for the effort of *one scholar however learned he may be*?” I think not. The justifying argument that he offers and that which the other advocates of setting the Authorized Version on the shelf to gather dust promote is that fresh, new discoveries must continually lead us to reject the text from which the translators of the Authorized Version gave us their translation and to replace it with *an unsettled, progressively emerging, tentatively suggested, temporarily reconstructed text*. He and they are demanding that believers set aside faith in a bedrock foundation and to accept in its place the same measure of faith in a sand castle that is waiting for the next wave to arrive. What this man and others in his camp ignore is that great body of evidence that shows that those who translated for King James had access to the same family of texts (indeed, the same wording) and rejected them three hundred and ninety-five years ago. This battle is not new; it has been fought for centuries. The battlefield is, as it always has been, faith—faith in the preserving faithfulness of the Godhead—or faith in the intellectual and spiritual faithfulness of whatever Greek scholar or scholars are alive and popular.

When one reduces his argument to the simplest terms, it becomes clear that his position is that unless and until the English reader learns to think in Greek words without translating the Greek terms into their English equivalents, that reader lacks the ability to fully understand the Scriptures. The Scriptures are **“untranslatable riches”** beyond the grasp of the English reader. **The word of God was not spoken from heaven to remain “untranslatable” on earth.** That concept is foreign to the plan and purpose of the God of Heaven and must be rejected as unbiblical.

Some scholars greatly enjoy using the artificial vocabulary of erudition, their “extensive knowledge acquired chiefly from books.” Possessing their own exalted, exclusive language lifts them above the ordinary *common people* and establishes their academic superiority. Our scholar insists that the Bible student **“needs to know the historical background of the usage of the word in classical and Koine Greek.”** The term “Koine” is one of those special, scholarly words that require translation for the uninitiated. “Koine” and is defined by Merriam-Webster as “the Greek language commonly spoken and written in eastern Mediterranean countries in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.” Thus the scholar is simply saying that the Bible was written in a form of the Greek language that the common people could understand. There were no language scholars needed for the recipients of the originals. Of the preaching and teaching of the LORD Jesus, it is recorded (Mark 12:37) “that the common people heard him gladly.” I must insist that there is a paradigmatic difference between the Biblical scholar and the linguistic scholar. Dr. Bob Jones SR reported that he knew grandmas in front-porch rocking chairs that understood more Scripture than professors in Bible colleges quoting the Greek. The problem is not in the translation found in the Authorized Version; the trouble is in the failure to study the words of the translation. Our scholar seeks a **“fuller translation”**; his scholarship has failed him, since the word **“fuller,”** as he is using it, has no logical meaning. My Merriam-Webster states that “FULL implies the presence or inclusion of everything that is wanted or required by something or that can be held, contained, or attained by it.” a translation may be less than full, but it can not be more than full. If the Authorized Version has the presence and inclusion of everything that is wanted or

required in a translation and everything that can be held, contained, or attained by a translation, then the translation is full and more cannot be added.

Somewhere, I came across the following quotation, but I no longer recall the source. With a slight modification this statement fits the *only a Greek scholar can define or understand the Scriptures* argument beautifully. “Gnosticism,” says Dr. Gwatkin, “is Christianity perverted by learning and speculation” (*Early Church History*, 73—this citation was in my source, whatever that was.). The claim that only a Greek scholar can define or understand the Scriptures is the perversion of the Scriptures by the appeal to learning and speculation.

However, our purpose in approaching this passage lies elsewhere that the doctrine of Bibliology; it is the examination of the functioning structure of the church. In these two verses may be seen the three terms differentiating the members of a church and the officers of that church: saints, bishops, and deacons.

1. The English word “saints” is one of the Biblical terms used to designate believers in a general sense. All believers are “saints” in that use of the term. A saint, by definition, is one who is sanctified. To sanctify, in its basic meaning, signifies “to set apart to a sacred purpose.” Every believer is set apart for the sacred purpose of glorifying the Heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16). Each believer is a saint; however, not every believer is saintly in his or her living. Sanctification, the process by which the believer is sanctified, has a range of Biblical meanings that include sanctification that is positional and permanent, distinguished from sanctification that is practical and progressive. The former is entirely the work of the Godhead, while the latter is the effective work of the believer.
2. Bishops are believers who are called to be pastors and elders. The Bible uses all three names to identify the same office. Religious organizations have elevated the term “bishop” to signify one who reigns over other pastors or they have lowered the word “elders” to a role either that is a step beneath the rank of the pastor or that is a term used to describe an entire class of special leaders of the church, who are then subdivided into those who are ruling elders and those who are teaching elders. All of these categories are human inventions that largely arise from scholars that tend to play with the words of the Greek language as they see fit. Changing any use of words in this Book from the Biblical context of use is wrong, no matter how intellectual the appeal of the alteration. The man who is called to the office of the bishop (1 Timothy 3:1) is to oversee the work of the ministry, to tend and to feed the flock as a pastor, and to live an exemplary life as an elder showing purity of faith and wisdom in life. One man given three titles describing his responsibilities.
3. We come to the third designation in the verse, that of the “deacons.” The pivotal question again is to discover how the Bible defines the office of deacons (1 Timothy 3:10, 13). The Scriptures not only use a common word with an established meaning, but the Scriptures also demonstrate the Biblical definition of that word.

The Greek word from the originals and translated as “deacons” is interesting. It has an etymology—“the history of a linguistic form (as a word) shown by tracing its development since its earliest recorded occurrence in the language where it is found, by tracing its transmission from one language to another, by analyzing it into its component parts, by identifying its cognates in other languages, or by tracing it and its cognates to a common ancestral form in an ancestral language”—that gives it a basic meaning of “one who runs errands.” [*Did you notice all that I was saying when I used the word etymology? Would it not be cumbersome, as well as ludicrous, to have to include that definition every time I used the word? I trust you get the point!*] The Authorized Version translates the Greek word as *minister*, *servant*, and *deacon*. The Greek lexicons say this is a word to describe “one who executes the commands of another” and Strong’s Concordance provides three examples of the Biblical application of the word.

1. the servant of a king,
2. a deacon, one who, by virtue of the office assigned to him by the church, cares for the poor and has charge of and distributes the money collected for their use, and
3. a waiter, one who serves food and drink.

The English word “deacon,” according to Merriam-Webster has an etymology that gives the word a basic meaning of “a servant” and then goes on to record this definition: “a subordinate officer in a Christian church.” Then, Merriam-Webster also gives three examples:

1. a Roman Catholic, Anglican, or Eastern Orthodox cleric ranking next below a priest,
2. one of the laymen elected by a church with congregational polity to serve in worship, in pastoral care, and on administrative committees, and
3. a Mormon in the lowest grade of the Aaronic priesthood.

The first and last definitions are obviously not helpful to our study, but the middle one is and, in fact, comes very close to a working definition for a Baptist church to use. The congregation indeed does elect deacons to serve the church in and through the three areas of worship, care, and administration.

In the New Testament, the word “deacon” or “deacons” is found only five times: once in our text, with all of the other verses found in the same chapter of 1 Timothy.

1. Philippians 1:1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
2. 1 Timothy 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;
3. 1 Timothy 3:10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.
4. 1 Timothy 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.
5. 1 Timothy 3:13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great

boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

This chapter is the focus of the Scriptural qualifications for the man who would desire to serve his church in the office of a deacon.

1 Timothy 3

This is a true saying, If a man desire **the office of a bishop**, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Likewise *must* the (1) **deacons** be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use **the office of a (2) deacon**, being *found* blameless. Even so *must their wives* be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the (3) **deacons** be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used **the office of a (4) deacon** well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 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.

In these verses, the apostle is reminding Timothy, or perhaps putting in writing for Timothy to show to the church at Ephesus, the credentials required for the office of deacon.

The New Testament recognizes only two offices. I attempted to call your attention in the passage by underlining and by using bold type that these two positions are named “offices.” The office of bishop (also titled “elder” and “pastor”) and the office of deacon; these two are the only Scriptural positions assigned the title of “office.” This does not mean that other positions or church assigned titles are unscriptural; I only emphasize that only two offices are designated offices in the Bible. There certainly was a treasurer in the first church and his name was Judas. We know that a role was kept (Acts 1:15) and that letters were granted (Romans 16:1,2;); however, we do not know the name of the person who served as church clerk. While Scripture does not use the title “trustees” to describe those who care for the properties owned or used by the church, one could make the argument that the Levites of the Old Testament offer a pattern in their care of the furnishings of the Tabernacle.

The Heritage Baptist Church of Pensacola has a church clerk and an assistant clerk, a treasurer and an assistant treasurer, trustees and three committees: auditing, nominating, and building. Committees serve for a purpose and a time determined by that purpose. None of these is a Biblical office—though the position of treasurer and clerk are both implied in the New Testament—all of these have been added, and not wrongfully, to meet particular needs. I know churches where these tasks are all assigned to deacons. I have no argument with that since I firmly believe in the autonomy of the church. Therefore, I must conclude that it is the choice of each particular church how to administer the governing of the church, provided that the church does not violate Scriptural teachings in order to do so. Because the Bible identifies only the office of a bishop and the office of a deacon, this church, as do most Baptist churches, restricts ordination to those who are to serve the church as deacons and those who will serve this church or a sister church in the pastoral ministry, called by the churches of a past day, The Gospel Ministry. This latter ministry describes more than filling the pulpit on Sunday morning. [For a more detailed discussion, see *A Charge To Keep, The Baptist Heritage*, January 2006.]

In the Old Testament, priests, prophets, and kings were ordained. However, ordination is more limited in the New Testament—our King is Christ and He is ordained of the Father; every believer is a priest, but there is no mention of ordination of believers or priests because the priesthood has its fulfillment in Christ as the Great High Priest, ordained after the order of Melchisedec; and, since the word of God is finished, there are no prophets commissioned and ordained today. In the New Testament, we find only six times that the term “ordain” is used. Each time the word appears in reference to an office:

First, the apostles who became the first pastors after the ascension of Christ for the church in Jerusalem.

1. Mark 3:14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,
2. John 15:16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.
3. Acts 1:22 Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

And then, it is used in relation to the apostle Paul and for those ordained as elders.

4. Acts 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.
5. 1 Timothy 2:7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.
6. Titus 1:5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Ordination is an act whereby one who is vested with the authority to do so places his hands upon the head of the one being set aside for the office. This is why we find Hebrews 6 speaking of the doctrine of “laying on of hands.” It is a matter of doctrine, not tradition. The authority of ordination is in the local church and is delegated by the church to individuals to represent the church. Ordination is not a light thing. Paul warns Timothy (1 Timothy 5:22), “Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be

partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure." Sometimes, I hear something said to the effect that other churches do not make as big a deal out of ordination as we do. Frankly, I do not care what other preachers or churches do. I do care what the Scriptures teach. There are many folks who do not make a big deal out of marriage; should that mean that we do not? I think it only indicates that they are wrong not to honor the place of marriage. Much of the problem with churches today is that they are trying to be like all the other churches—just as Israel of old desired to be like all the other nations. For your information, that is the precise error that is destroying America—the fallacy of trying to be like all the other nations. Politicians want us to be like European nations—steeped in socialism. Moralists, who are actually immoralists, want us to be like Holland and Denmark. The one quality that made America's greatness in olden times was her desire to be unique among the nations—"the city set on the hill." Today, that city is more akin to New Orleans than to Jerusalem on high. America today, morally, is closer to the below sea level sewage repository called New Orleans than she is to the mile high city of Denver.

Returning to the subject before us: since the word "ordain" is not used in connection with deacons, how do we arrive at the practice of including deacons in the rite of ordination. When the LORD Jesus founded the church, He did not, at that time, institute the office of deacons. We travel all the way to Philippi and the ministry of the apostle Paul, before we find the first mention of the word "deacons" and it is the epistle to Timothy that details the qualifications for the men who are to fill the office. It is legitimate, therefore, to ask when and where did the office of a deacon become part of the structure of the church? While some wish to argue the matter, the account of the origin of this office is found in Acts chapter 6. It rose from necessity.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. **Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.** But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, **they laid their hands on them.** And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The understanding of the purpose and the role of the office of deacon is established in this passage and is centered particularly in these specific verses.

It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. **Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.** But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

This church in Jerusalem, with twelve pastors had grown to such size and to possess such needs that **those pastors could not fulfill their first obligations to ministry because of the pressure of meeting the burdens of ministry.** I have phrased that carefully, "those twelve pastors could not fulfill their first obligations to ministry because of the pressure of meeting the burdens of ministry." The priorities were being side-tracked. This remains the greatest danger to pastors today. Pastors are leaving the word of God and serving tables. The call is to "prayer and the ministry of the word." There is more involved in "the ministry of the word" than preaching. The study and preparation of the preaching and the preaching is certainly a major factor in ministry—but, I am convinced that these phrases ("It is not reason that we should leave the word of God" and "we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.") *have a much broader intent.*

1. "Leaving the word" is a description of doing something that is not in accord with Scripture.
2. "The ministry of the word" is a description of following the pattern of ministry as depicted in the Scriptures.

This is not an article on pastors—but the connection is required because of the very fact that it forms the basis for the office of deacons. The ministry of the pastor is primarily the caring of the flock, the sheep, individually and collectively. They must be fed and watered—that is teaching and preaching. They must be protected—that is watchcare. They must be called to the sheepfold—that is assembling them. They must be sheared—that is like the pruning of the tree—if it is not done the tree and the sheep never reach the potential and, instead, grow sickly and weakened. Shearing has to do with fruitfulness—and I speak of the sense of spiritual fruit, not of "fleecing" the flock. The shepherd is never to take advantage of the sheep. There are more parallels, but you surely understand the picture conveyed by the word "shepherd."

When any one of these areas becomes the *all of the time* consuming responsibility of the pastors, they need helpers to relieve that burden. The pastors were not too good to serve tables—one of the first things the LORD Jesus had them do as HE prepared them for ministry was to have them do twice exactly that for larger numbers. When HE fed the multitudes, HE organized the multitudes and had the disciples feed them. Now they were in the capacity as shepherd as HE had been and they did not have the abilities that HE had. They needed help. They needed someone or, more precisely, seven somebodies *to relieve the burdens that hindered them in the fulfillment of the office of bishop.*

Notice that the apostles did not act upon their own authority to select the men for this office; the eleven and the one chosen to fill Judas's place, the twelve, go to the church with a request for the church to select these men.

It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve [*This is the same root word translated "deacons."*] tables. **Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.** But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

The church was asked to determine which men should be entrusted with the business of "serving tables." I recall a man who thought the deacons should handle all the business of the church because the word "business" was used in this passage—he had no desire however to *serve tables*. The deacons were *to relieve the burdens that hindered* the pastors from prayer and the ministry of the word. It is essential that churches observe that the congregation selected, but the pastors appointed. The responsibility of

selecting the deacons is to rest in the vote of the congregation. On the other hand, the authority to do the business comes by the appointment of the pastors *because it is an extension of, a part of, their ministries*. In our constitution, this church has enumerated certain burden-lifting hindrances that the deacons are to do. This church is not controlled *by the pastor* or *by the deacons* or *by the pastor and the deacons*. The control of this church resides in the vote of the congregation. Deacons are not selected by the church and appointed by the pastors to control the church. Deacons are not chosen to represent the church. The Heritage Baptist Church of Pensacola selects men *to relieve the burdens that hinder the pastors from prayer and from the ministry of the word*. Chief among their responsibilities would be the role of counselors. Their resource of wisdom and advice is valuable to the pastors. Deacons hold confidence on many things. The pastors need sound, faithful men to help with the charting the course of the church. One man or two men in the pastorate are not sufficient for these things. The burden is too great. This is why the qualifications are so high for deacons. The office of deacon is not to be treated lightly by the man in the office or by the congregation in her selection of the man for the office.

Deacons are servants of the church that are given to the pastor(s) to help them to fulfill the office of bishop. This does not empower them to select the messages of the pastor, but to free him for the preparation of the message. They are not to intrude into the role of the elder, but must in their own lives become an example to the believers. Specifically, the apostles assigned them the task of assisting with the “business” of serving tables. While this certainly includes the realm of benevolence, the charitable acts of the church, it goes beyond to the daily functioning of that business of the church that detracts the pastor from prayer and the ministry of the word.

Frankly, I do not believe that we who are the bishops, the pastors, adequately understand that prayer should be the first priority in one’s pastorate. This failure exists even though it is listed first in this passage. I believe that prayer and the ministry of the word are the chief concerns of the ministry and in the order established here. The demands upon the time of the present day pastor are largely far removed from prayer and the ministry of the word. Surveys indicate that “administrative tasks” and “public relations activities” consume the hours of the day for most pastors. Some of whom are so absorbed with these “essentials of bigness” that they have no time for antiquated shepherding task such as making hospital visits, answering the telephone, personal counseling of members, or preparing their own sermons. [Before the blood pressure rises into the stroke level, my reader should consider that the multiple sermonic programs offered in publications and by mailed solicitations have a large circulation. Several times each year, this pastor receives opportunities to purchase prepared sermons in whatever format I might choose. The presence of the multitude of offers indicates that there is a strong market for such products.] In short, contemporary pastors are often chief executive officers of corporations involved in expansion of the market share and a successful bottom line.

Sadly, this entire generation of believers does not generally rank prayer as being either work or labor. Prayer does not seem to be the vital ingredient of modern life as it appears to have been for previous generations of the children of God. Honesty will compel most believers to admit that times of tragedy and extreme burden provide the motivations that drive us to prayer; when life is normal, we can manage quite well without more than perfunctory prayers. We grow most urgent in praying for the salvation of our loved ones whenever there is danger, disease, or approaching death in their lives. Moreover, seldom does the time dedicated for praying override the issues of life. More often than not, we are prone to allocate only whatever leftover time there might be to prayer rather than to dedicate the chief hours of the day. While I understand that prayer is something that we may do while we accomplish other tasks; I feel a great deficiency in my life for times irrevocably devoted to prayer. I have no rocks to throw at anyone; I can recognize failure in my life easier than in someone else’s, because I know the person involved better.

—Pastor Manley