

THE WORDS ARE DIFFERENT, AND SO IS THE MEANING

By Dr. Bill R. Bradley

A review of **The Battle for the Spanish Bible** by Calvin George

Recently I was given a copy of Calvin George's *The Battle for the Spanish Bible*. The title of the book was the first thing that caught my attention, because I, too, have been "battling for the Bible" (KJV 1611 and the pure Bible texts upon which it was based) since being exposed to the Bible Translation issue shortly after coming to Christ in 1986. As I read this book, it soon became very clear that many of the "alleged contradictions with the King James Version" (see subtitle – *The Battle for the Spanish Bible*) were not "alleged contradictions" at all, but genuine contradictions with the King James Bible. I concede to Brother George that many defenders of the KJV, in their zeal to defend their position, often go too far, and I won't deny that "some false allegations that attempt to discredit the Spanish Bible" (again, see subtitle- *The Battle for the Spanish Bible*) have obviously been made. I will not concede, however, that all of the allegations made by Bible-believing fundamentalists against the 1960 Reina-Valera are false or groundless; in fact, many of the allegations are verifiably true, and for this reason I offer my review of this book.

*Note- This is by no means an exhaustive commentary on Calvin George's book, but I believe it is a good representation of issues he raises that require a response.

From George's "Open Letter" on pp.11-15, refuting "those who accuse the RV 1960 of being the equivalent of the RSV: "My copy the RSV does not state who was manifest in the flesh in I Timothy 3:16. Does not your copy of the 1960 state that God was manifest in the flesh?" I'm glad the 1960 got it right here. The TR Greek dictates that the proper translation is "God was manifest in the flesh."

Why then, just a few paragraphs later (on p. 16) do we learn from Mr. George that "In some of these cases, 'Jesus' was replaced with the personal pronoun 'he' in the Spanish Bible. The use of personal pronouns in these cases is really not a problem, as long as there is no question as to whom the person (spoken about) is." Could not the producers of the RSV present the same argument for their rendition of I Timothy 3:16? Why was it wrong for them but it was not wrong for the RV 1960? If the Greek TR calls for 'Jesus', when would it ever be proper to ignore the text and substitute something not found in the text, or something found in a faulty, corrupted text?

Chapter Three, *The source Underlying the Text of the Spanish Bible*, begins with this question: "Was the Reina -Valera New Testament translated from the Textus Receptus?" The answer, according to Mr. George, "Certainly!" Boy, that's a relief! But then we read on p.32, in reference to both the 1909 and RV's. "a few 'Alexandrian' corruptions have apparently slipped into them sometime during their history." Same page (32): "It is apparent that there are some differences between the Reina-Valera 1960 and the King James Bible and/or the Textus Receptus Greek Text (sic) that underlies it...there are some readings (in the 1960 RV) which do follow the critical text ... the RV 1960 does have some readings which do not occur in any standard TR ... the RV 1960 is not based upon the Critical Text, ... although (it contains) some Critical Text readings (Nestle's)."

On p.34 we read, "It is admitted that there are differences between the 1960 and the KJV/TR, but not to the degree of the modern versions." Oh, so that makes it okay?! Let me ask you this, just how many "Alexandrian Corruptions" have to "slip in" before we draw the line and say the text has been corrupted? Bury your head in the sand, or face the truth; those are the options. I didn't write Brother George's book; I'm merely quoting it!

I lost count of just how many times George concludes a paragraph in his book, when justifying a difference in readings between the King James Bible and the RV 1960, with, "The words are different, yet the meaning is the same." To quote a deep theological truth from Dr. Mickey Carter, "Things that are different are not the same"!! Words that are different do not mean the same thing. One example should suffice for argument's sake: From the chapter entitled Problem Passages (p.26), the question is asked: "Why does Revelation 22:14 in the KJV say 'Blessed are they that do his commandments,' whereas the Reina-Valera 1960 reads, 'Blessed are they that wash their robes'?"

Without commenting on George's list of "respected commentators who do not have a problem" with changing this text, I can answer this question quite plainly, truthfully, and simply. "Do his commandments" is the correct Textus Receptus reading; "wash their robes" is also an accurate translation -- of the Nestle-Aland (Westcott & Hort) Greek text, and is the reading chosen by the RSV committee. If the RV 1960 reading of Revelation 22:14 is right, then the KJV reading of Revelation 22:14 is wrong . Is that what you believe about your KJV? George asserts: "The words are different, yet the meaning is the same." The words surely are different, and so is the meaning!

George lists 16 "Significant Portions of Verses Omitted" from the RV 1960 that appear in the KJV/TR (p.34); 18 "Omissions of the name of our Lord God", 51 "Other Differences that Have a Substantial Effect on the Meaning" (But I thought "the words are different, yet the meaning is the same"!!); in total, 136 instances are cited by George in Everett Fowler's Evaluating Versions of the New Testament where the 1960 RV departs from the KJV/TR. That's not corruption?! Would you allow someone to omit "significant portions of verses" from your KJV? Would you allow 18 "omissions of the name of our Lord God" from your KJV? Would you allow 51 changes "that have a substantial effect on the meaning" in your KJV? Would you allow someone to take your King James Bible and change it in more than 130 places, and still call it a King James Bible? Aren't you part of the same crowd that gets mad when "thoroughly" is printed instead of "throughly," and when "Saviour" isn't spelled right?

On p.35 the question is posed by Mr. George: "How close do the Reina-Valera Bibles come to the modern English translations?" His answer to himself is, "Not as close as some people have made them out to be." Would you settle for an English "bible" that was at all close to the modern translations? Why are you willing to settle for it in Spanish?

A chart on page 37 shows that the RVA (Reina-Valera Actualizada) 1995 departs from the TR 795 times. On page 39 the comment is made: "It is sad to see how much the Reina-Valera Actualizada distances itself from the TR. Without question, that Bible does not deserve 'Reina-Valera' included in the title. That is deceitful." The same chart (p.37) shows that the RV 1960 only left the TR 186 times, so that makes it a good Bible. (Am I the only one missing something here?)

On page 41 we are confronted with this question: "Why should any difference between the Reina-Valera and the KJV automatically be labeled an 'error.' " (Answer –Because many of those differences were borrowed from an erroneous text - the W&H Critical text.)

Page 42- "I cannot deny that there are some deviations in the Reina-Valera 1909 and the 1960 that most likely cannot be traced to differences in the TR editions ... a few departures come from a critical text" – Calvin George. Then why are so many fundamental Baptists, both English-speaking and Spanish speaking, attempting to deny the undeniable?! We must at least credit Mr. George for his honesty and forthrightness.

There's a representative list of Common Complaints Against the Reina-Valera 1960 on p.29. In Matthew 17:20 "unbelief" (TR and KJV) was changed to "little faith" (RV 1960, Wescott and Hort, and RSV). In John 12:47 "and believe not" (TR and KJV) was changed to "and does not keep them" (RV 1960, W&H, and RSV). In Acts 15:17 "who doeth all these things" (TR and KJV) is omitted from the RV 1960 (as in the W& H and the RSV). No explanation or defense is offered for these departures in the 1960 in favor of the critical text readings. None is necessary.

Again, in his chapter The Problem Passages in the Spanish Bible, Mr. George poses the question: "Why do some RV's (including the 1960) read 'As it is written in Isaiah the prophet...' in Mark 1:2, when the KJV says 'As it is written in the prophets...'? He dedicates the rest of the page to "answering" his self-posed question, without ever really answering it. He concludes: "Why not give the Spanish Bible the benefit of the doubt?" To which I pose this question: "Why not translate according to the proper Greek Text?" The TR does not have "Isaiah" in Mark 1:2 like the RV 1960 does; it has "prophets," but the 1960 producers chose to follow the Wescott & Hort text and the RSV here.

In addressing the discrepancy in Daniel 3:25 ("like a son of the gods" – 1960 RV, "like unto the Son of God" –KJV) Mr. George makes this interesting assertion: "Nebuchadnezzar did not say 'is a son of the gods', he said, 'is like a son of the gods.'" (p.21). If that's what Nebuchadnezzar said, then the KJV got it wrong. Do you believe Daniel 3:25 in the KJV is wrong? The RSV translators did; that's why they changed Daniel 3:25 to read "like a son of the gods," just like the 1960 RV

The debate over the versions of the Bible presented by Mr. George in this book is not limited to sparring over which Bible is right for the Spanish-speaking Christian. The following quotations from his book amount to a different view of the inspiration and preservation of the Scriptures - in Spanish, English, or any other language!

In George's Introduction (p.6) he states: "Nowhere in this book will you find me stating that there are errors in the KJV." Yet, in his Final Thoughts (p. 114) he says: "I believe it is possible for the current KJV ... to contain human error." Do you believe that your KJV "contains human error"?

Again, from Final Thoughts (p.114): "I believe that the KJV and the Reina-Valera, as accurate translations of the preserved Word of God, are the inspired Word of God in their respective languages." (So far, so good) "I believe they have derived their inspiration from the text upon which they were based." (Okay by me!) Now, p.115: "I believe the Wescott and Hort texts can be consulted in the process of translating (such

as was the case in the Reina-Valera 1909 and 1960)." (Uh oh!) Do you believe the Westcott & Hort texts can (or should) be consulted in the process of translating? Do you believe the Westcott & Hort texts can (or should) be preferred over the TR in the process of translating? (The producers of the 1960 RV did!)

Mr. George says, "The KJV...had to go through a purification process after (it) was issued." Do you believe that about your KJV?

On p.44 George quotes M.L. Moser, Jr., who says, "There are places in the Spanish 'Antigua Version Reina y Valera' which... (have) a more accurate translation than the KJV." Do you believe there are places where your KJV is not accurate?

Calvin George states, on p. 117, " The standard for me in English is the KJV, mainly because I believe it reflects the best manuscript evidence." Is that why the KJV is the standard in English for you? You mean, it's not the inerrant, infallible, inspired, preserved, perfect Word of God for the English –speaking world?

Mr. George states, on p.68: "Unknown to most Christians, the King James '1611' we use today is not a true 1611." Is that what you believe about your Bible? "There have been more than 400 textual changes (some say the textual changes were to correct printing errors)"-p.68 Isn't that what you say?"

"Honest defenders of the KJV concede that a purification process has taken place in English Bibles before and after the KJV of 1611" (p.69). Do you concede that? Just what exactly has this "purification process" amounted to in the years since 1611? Are you telling me the translators didn't get it right back then? Who came to their rescue and straightened them out?

P.69 continued – "The same can be said of the Spanish Bible, except that the process took longer, and was more extensive." And the same is said by the modern bible advocates, promoters, producers, and propagators. A "more extensive" process is quite an understatement. On p.119 George quotes an article from a 1961 issue of Bible Translator (produced by the American Bible Society, producers of the 1960 RV): "Since 1909 ... more than 100,000 changes of spelling, orthography, and punctuation were introduced and well over 60,000 changes of wording." Compare that to the alleged "400 textual changes" in the KJV over the last nearly 400 years!

Mr. George goes to great lengths in his book to point out the harshness, the meanness and the vitriol of those who oppose his position on this issue, but then peppers his book with the same harshness, meanness and vitriol he condemns in others. In the spirit of Christian love he employs such words and phrases describing his adversaries and their conduct in this conflict as "slander," "outlandish charges," "carnal rhetoric," "spewing out...anti-1960 venom," "Mentira!" ("liar!"), "dysfunctional preachers," "caustic," "blasphemous," "bitter," "ruckmanite," and "unethical."

I'm not "slandering" anyone with "outlandish charges in order to gain devotees and raise money" for my project (p.10). I don't even have a project. I do, however, have dear Christian friends who have been the victims of "slandering" and "outlandish charges" because of their stand for the pure Bible text. I'm not a "ruckmanite" (p.50). I'm not "spewing out... anti-1960 venom" with "carnal rhetoric" (p.58). In my heart of hearts I

don't believe I'm part of the group whose "lack of ethics... seems to have no bounds" (p.61). I don't believe I've been "caustic" or "angry" (p.95) in my rebuttal of this book. I'm not even a "dysfunctional preacher" (p.96) and I'm certainly not a part of a "Satanic attack" upon the Spanish people or their Bible. I'm a Bible-believer. I believe the whole Bible, every Word of it, is the Word of God, and is preserved for us in the English-speaking world in the King James 1611 Bible. I believe that the insertion into the pure text of Scripture of corrupt, Alexandrian, Westcott and Hort, Nestle- Aland, American Bible Society, Critical text readings is wrong, in great or in small measure. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Cor. 5:6 - KJV).

To Calvin George, there is really no issue. He believes "the Wescott and Hort text can be consulted in the process of translating" (p.115). He readily admits the inclusion of Critical text readings in the RV 1960, and to him that presents no problem. I can appreciate his candor and sincerity. But what about those of you who claim to be King James-only, Textus Receptus-only, anti-Westcott and Hort, anti-modern English "bibles," anti-RSV, anti-Critical Text? How can you consistently stand for the KJV and the RV 1960, containing readings you supposedly cannot endorse nor tolerate? The answer is – you can't.

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