

THOSE NASTY⁷⁶ THEES AND THOUS

from BY DEFINITION by James W. Knox

The most common complaint raised by those who pick up an **Authorized Version**⁷⁷ for the first time is the use of “thees⁷⁸,” “thous⁷⁹” and similar words. The reader is frightened by these unfamiliar terms and, all too often, flees for the supposed comfort of a modern translation.

The religious advertisers do not differ at all from secular advertisers, in that both will sacrifice their **consciences**⁸⁰ and lie as often as necessary to make a profit. Thus, religious television and magazines are filled with **sales pitches**⁸¹ claiming that the modern language translations are *easier to understand*. To convince the reader of this supposed truth, they need only to point to a “ye” or a “thine” in the A.V. text, and the unsuspecting public is convinced.

The whole problem, falsely so called, can be solved in four paragraphs. Follow closely.

In modern English, if a man addresses fifty people he says, “I am glad *you* are here today.” If he addresses one person he says, “I am glad *you* are here today.” A reader, seeing only the statement, does not know if a plurality of listeners, or just one, is being addressed.

In 1611, if King James had been addressing fifty-four translators he would have said, “I am glad *you* are here to day.” If fifty-three had the **day off**⁸² and one came to visit, the monarch would have said, “I am glad to see *thee* to day.”

Simply stated, the Authorized Version makes a distinction between the second-person (*you*) pronouns and adjectives relating to *number*. This distinction is not available to the readers of any other English version.

Where one sees the “t” an individual is being addressed. Where one sees a “y” two or more persons are being addressed.

The singular forms are:

nominative: “thou”

objective: “thee”

possessive adjective: “thy”

possessive pronoun: “thine”

The plural forms are:

nominative: “ye”

⁷⁶ **nasty** [ˈnɑːsti] *a* отвратительный, отталкивающий; мерзкий, противный

⁷⁷ **Authorized Version** [ˌɔːθəraɪzdˈvɜːʃ(ə)n] «Официальный вариант» (английский перевод Библии 1611 г., одобренный королём Яковом), дальше KJV

⁷⁸ **thee** [ðiː] *pers. pron.* (*косв. п. от thou*) тебя, тебе, тобой

⁷⁹ **thou** [ðau] *pers. pron.* ты

⁸⁰ **conscience** [ˈkɒnʃ(ə)ns] совесть

⁸¹ **sales pitch** — убедительная подача продаваемого (предлагаемого) товара

⁸² **day off** — выходной день

objective: “you”
possessive adjective: “your”
possessive pronoun: “yours”

This five-minute lesson in Elizabethan [ɪˌlɪzəˈbiːθ(ə)n] grammar opens up vast areas of truth in the Authorized Version which are closed to readers of today’s English versions.

THOSE DREADFUL WORDS IN ITALICS

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Another objection frequently raised against the Authorized Version is that its translators added words. The critic will point to the italicized words in the King James Bible and the **babe-in-Christ**⁸³ looks at them with a mixture of dread, embarrassment, and unbelief. “To think the book I trusted has been **toyed**⁸⁴ with,” comes the thought of doubt, sown as skillfully as it was in Eden.

First, there are words in the Authorized Version which are not found in the Hebrew and Greek texts. In fact, there are over 773,670 of them. Apart from an occasional *allelujah*, *cumi* or *Apollyon*, none of the words in an English Bible are found in the scriptures of any Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic manuscript.

Second, we have translations because languages are different. I’m not trying to be insulting, but we live in a generation that does not know how to think logically. Since languages are different one must use different words in one language to make the EXACT statement contained in another language. Failure to use the necessary words would result in an interpretation or a paraphrase, but not a translation.

For example: I go to Mexico for a visit. I forget my toothbrush. Needing one to maintain relationships, I go down to the corner store. I ask for a “cepillo de dientes.” I need three words in Spanish to say the very same thing which one word covers in English. I am accurately translating.

Whenever the translators of the Authorized Version met with such a situation, they put the words in italics. This consent to absolute honesty stands as one of the great arguments *for* the A.V. text and the **integrity**⁸⁵ of its translators. All versions *must* make such “additions” in order to bring a manuscript from one language to another.

The producers of the new Bibles not only fail to identify such places in their work, but, by pointing scornfully to the italicized words in the A.V., imply that they did not use such methods. Naughty, naughty!

CAPITALIZATION OF PRONOUNS RELATING TO DEITY

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One of the selling points used by the marketing specialists hired to increase the sale of new translations of the Bible is that many of the modern versions capitalize pronouns relating to deity.

The thought behind such an action is that God deserves special honor and reverence, and so any “he,” “him,” “his,” etc. which refers to a member of the Trinity will be capitalized.

This sounds like a great idea, and were it possible to carry out such a plan with consistency and accuracy, we would never speak a word of opposition.

There will be only a few spots in the gospels, most notably in John, where anyone could question whether or not a particular reference is to Jesus Christ, the Father, or the Holy Spirit. Other writers have ably pointed out the places where the new versions have failed to capitalize obvious references to God. Such details are not within the scope of this volume.

The problem with capitalizing all references to deity lies in the prophetic passages, particularly the Psalms. Nearly every Psalm contains some direct or veiled reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. If these pronouns were capitalized the passages in which they are found would lose their practical, historical and **devotional**¹¹⁴ teaching.

Psalms 55:12–13 would read: **For it was not an enemy that reproached Me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated Me that did magnify himself against Me; then I would have hid Myself from him: But it was thou, a man Mine equal, My guide, and Mine acquaintance.**

No true Bible student can fail to miss the forward look, in the 55th Psalm, at the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. But, to capitalize the references to Christ is to take away the **heartache**¹¹⁵ of David when his own trusted companion turned against him and all that we learn from his walk of faith.

There are literally hundreds of Old Testament passages which have reference to an event in history, recorded for our learning and **admonition**¹¹⁶, which also point prophetically to the Lord Jesus. By capitalizing the references to Christ the reader is robbed of up to three-fourths of the truth available in such passages.

The Holy Spirit will lead the saved, spiritually-minded reader to see the Lord in all His word. Let us leave this sacred work to the Spirit of truth, lest, in our attempts to reveal one truth we obscure another.