

The Translation That Refuses to Die

Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin
June 1997

A Review of *A New Hearing For the Authorized Version*, by Theodore P. Letis, Ph.D., The Institute for Renaissance and Reformation Biblical Studies, 6417 N. Fairhill, Philadelphia, PA 19126, 34 pp., \$6.95.

The latest book from the preeminent scholarly defender of the Received Greek text of Holy Scripture ("The Ecclesiastical Text," in Letis' language) is actually a primer about and introduction to the question of why English-speaking Protestants should retain the old King James Version. As such the booklet is readily accessible to the intelligent layman and quite suitable as a church staple to offer to inquirers about a church's official position regarding use of translations. Quantity purchase and wide distribution should be encouraged.

Letis deftly refutes the most common criticisms of retention of the KJV: it is based on relatively recent and therefore inferior manuscripts, its language is archaic or too hard, it's not in what the Reformers would consider "the language of the people," it can't keep up with the changes in modern language and is thus a barrier to understanding, and so forth. The author draws attention, moreover, to the embarrassing matter of the commercial motives of many of the modern translation enterprises.

Letis introduces his readers to the sentiments of Anglican John William Burgon, brilliant Victorian supporter of the Received text and KJV against the introduction not merely of a new manuscript base, but a new (and procedurally agnostic) approach to the handling of the Bible.

This book will especially benefit those saints who experience a vague uneasiness with the proliferation and use of modern English translations but who lack the equipment to counter with a principled rationale for retaining the old KJV.

The position Letis takes in this booklet is that for which Chalcedon has stood since its inception.

Supporters of the TR/KJV will be delighted to learn of two impending titles from Letis: *The Ecclesiastical Text: Text Criticism, Biblical Authority and the Popular Mind*, and *From Sacred Text to Religious Text: An Intellectual History of Lower Criticism on Dogma*. The author can be contacted at the Institute or at LetisT@aol.com.

Rev. P. Andrew Sandlin has written hundreds of scholarly and popular articles and several monographs.