

‘Cloven Tongues’: Theology and the Translation of the Scriptures

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‘Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtaine, that we may looke into the most Holy Place; that remooueth the couer of the well, that wee may come by the water, euen as Iacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well... In-deede, without translation into the vulgar tongue, the vnlearned are but like children at Iacobs well (which was deepe) without a bucket or some thing to draw with’ (para.5).

Miles Smith’s typically elegant phrasing in the prefatory essay to the 1611 Bible (‘The Translators to the Reader’) hints strongly at a focal theological theme: the two most vivid metaphors are Christological. The ‘putting aside’ of the curtain in front of the Holy of Holies is bound to evoke the tearing of the veil of the Temple at the death of Christ, as narrated in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke; and the reference to Jacob’s well and its depth takes us directly to the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in the fourth chapter of John’s gospel. Smith is positioning the translator at the heart of the event of salvation; the translator is aligned with the work of Christ in his ministry and his passion, breaking open the path to saving knowledge and the vision of God. In such terms, translation is no mere tool for study; its effect is the effect of the incarnation and the cross. It becomes a kind of sacramental act – remembering that, for the Reformed theological tradition in England, the sacraments were both a ‘text’ in which the godly might read the full meaning of the recorded acts of God and a demonstration of the effects of the passion of Christ. Bishop Jewel, in the sermons comprising his *Treatise of the Sacraments* (published posthumously in 1583), anticipates Smith when he speaks of the frustration of the unbeliever who is faced by a book that he cannot read (‘He may turn over all the leaves, and look upon all, and see nothing’) compared to the believer who, through the sacramental action, is able to ‘behold the secret and unknown mercies of God’. And he later describes the Eucharist as the place where we may ‘see the shame of the cross, the darkness over the world, the earth to quake, the stones to cleave asunder, the graves to open and the dead to rise’ – alluding to the passage in the gospel of Matthew (28, 51 ff.) which begins with the tearing of the Temple veil at the moment of Jesus’ death.

To translate is to be taken up into the divine act of uncovering, deciphering the world, God’s ‘publishing’ of a readable text in which we can see both the meaning of what he has done and the present effects of it. Smith’s prefatory essay moves on to relate how Scripture in one language alone was sufficient at the time when God’s work was confined to the Hebrews; but Providence, on the eve of the coming of Christ, looking forward to the spread of the Gospel beyond the Hebrew world, stirred up the King of Egypt (a useful royal precedent for 1611) to commission the Septuagint and so inaugurate a history of translation into

Greek. But at this point a complication arises in the argument, one that Smith will have to deal with at greater length before the end of the essay. The Septuagint is an imperfect rendering; why did not the apostles themselves undertake a new translation? It is clear from the Christian Scriptures and the early history of the Church that the first generations of Christians used the Septuagint freely, despite its faults – though New Testament citations from the Hebrew Scriptures do not invariably follow the Septuagint, as Smith notes. His answer is that the apostles felt free to correct the existing version on an ad hoc basis, but refrained from making a complete new translation because they did not wish to invite the reproach of producing a partisan rendering. There is enough accuracy in the Septuagint for most practical purposes. But this, of course, undermines any claim (such as was sometimes made in the patristic period) that the Septuagintal translators were ‘prophets’; a translator need not be inspired to be an adequate translator. And consequently it is fully understandable that there should have been efforts to make a more satisfactory rendering of the Hebrew Scriptures, as in the work of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus (para.6).

Smith is thus conceding the crucial point that translation is always in some measure provisional; there is no final version, even if there is now for England and Scotland an authoritative version guaranteed by political power (we should not forget that the 1611 version was, among other things, a profoundly political project – though also one, as we shall see, that made possible a good many ideas and ideals beyond those King James might have had in mind). And this acceptance that there is no final version, as Smith will argue later on in the text, is part of the rationale for a new translation in English. Does the fact of a new version mean that earlier believers were in some way deluded or denied the full truth? No: an imperfect version may still rightly be called the Word of God, just as we may call a man handsome even if he has warts on his hand. Quoting Augustine’s *de doctrina* 9, Smith is confident that in all matters touching faith, hope and charity, Scripture is clear and consistent, whatever variations in wording may be possible. As to other things, there may be texts where a final resolution of the meaning is simply not possible – where there is a unique use of a Hebrew word, or where the names of exotic plants, animals and minerals are in question (para.15). There is therefore an inescapable element of indeterminacy about the wording of Scripture: the 1611 translation includes marginalia noting departures from the literal meaning of the original languages, or possible alternative renderings of a word or phrase. ‘As S. Augustine saith, that varietie of Translations is profitable for the finding out the sense of the Scriptures: so diversitie of signification and sense in the margine, where the text is not so cleare, must needes doe good, yea, is necessary, as we are perswaded’ (ibid.). Further, the translator has the liberty to vary the way in which a single word in the original should be rendered, and the notion that a translation is unfaithful if it allows such variation suggests an unchristian bondage to the letter; ‘is the kingdome of God become words or syllables?’ (para.16).

The overall picture of the theology of translation here is a nuanced one. On the one hand, the translator in some sense participates in the ongoing effect

of the self-revealing of God through the incarnate life and redeeming death of Jesus; on the other, the translator draws attention to what is still hidden by recognising the unfinished business of translation, the unavoidable marginal alternatives, a shadow text that makes the main column of print questionable and provisional. The very fact of revising a translation shows that there is always more work to be done: not, indeed, in reconstructing the main doctrinal themes of Scripture, which can be spelt out in their consistency even when clothed in slightly diverse vocabularies, but in the appropriation of the language and narrative of Scripture into our own native tongue. The bare fact is that an English translator may quite fairly represent a single word in Hebrew by two or more in English: lexical fields are best mapped by locals. But all this amounts to saying both that the translator clarifies and that the translator makes difficult. The initial images of letting in the light, breaking the shell or removing the curtain might in themselves be taken to presuppose that the text contains a simple ‘message’ to be digested by the reader when the obstacles of unintelligibility have been removed. But it is plain that the actual process of translation rather destabilises such a picture. We come to see that God’s meaning requires us to listen over and over again, to work, to acknowledge our need of the Spirit and ‘to seek ayd of our brethren by conference, and neuer scorne those that be not in all respects so complete as they should bee’ (para.15). Translation generates humility and the recognition that we cannot apprehend ‘God’s secret and unknown mercies’ – to borrow Jewel’s phrase once more – in isolation from the believing community.

Some of these themes are already present in the dispute, nearly a century earlier, between Tyndale and More over the legitimacy of Englishing the Scriptures as is clear from a reading of Brian Cummings’ seminal study of *The Literary Culture of the Reformation* (Oxford 2002, pp.190-206). More is insistent that a vernacular Bible opens a Pandora’s box of diverse and warring interpretations, since there is no ‘canonical’ tradition of reading an English text: the effect is ‘equyuoacion’, words being used to mean whatever an individual reader wants. But, as Cummings shows, Tyndale’s response is in effect to convict More of exactly the same thing. More can only show that a Tyndalean rendering is false or arbitrary by a philological argument; he cannot – any more than his opponent – take for granted a canonical sense for an English text, and must seek to persuade the reader of the authority of one translation over another. And Tyndale argues further that this is what More never really does; he never undertakes the painstaking job of showing how the use of a word or phrase in context establishes its meaning and simply appeals to a received convention in a way that ignores the subtle shifts and variations of a word’s signification that appear in usage over a prolonged argument or exposition. In his treatise on *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale had already raised and answered the challenge that a translation would necessarily lead to uncontrollable diversity of interpretation: what do we have clergy for if not to offer an authoritative and unified account of what is in Scripture? And when Scripture is available in the native tongue of the congregation, the laity are enabled to judge for themselves whether the priest is really making sense of the text or not (‘they should see by the order of the text,

whether thou jugglest or not'; Obedience, ed. David Daniell, Penguin 2000, p.16). Translation may not in itself guarantee an immediate consensus about meanings; what it does is to enable mutual instruction and correction in reading, a corporate discernment – one of the leading themes of several of the early Reformers, traceable in Calvin's early works as much as in Tyndale. It is, as Cummings points out (pp.196, 198-9), clear evidence that Tyndale is no less a 'humanist' than More in his sensitivity to literary rather than simply dogmatic criteria in the search for meaning.

The polymathic Canadian poet and translator Robert Bringhurst says of one of his own complex and many-voiced poems (involving three layers of text to be read/spoken simultaneously) that 'The ideal reader for this poem...is not a person with three heads but a person with two friends' (Everywhere being is Dancing. *Twenty Pieces of Thinking*, p.215). Smith's acknowledgement of the indeterminate element in the sacred text and his defence of printing marginal alternatives goes some way towards suggesting that the ideal reader of Scripture is a person with two (or more) friends. Bringhurst argues – at the end of an essay entitled 'What's Found in Translation?' – that 'Translation precedes language. It is where the talking starts' (ibid. p.89); the difficult recognition that human beings have to work to develop a language in common means that each speaker is bound to speak in the awareness that there is something s/he is not saying, and that there is another set of things to say – which is at the heart of the translator's awareness, as it is at the heart, for Bringhurst, of the poet's awareness. 'I routinely have the sense, in composing a poem, that I'm engaged in making something – and that I'm doing so in the presence of something else. I don't have the sense that I'm making anything up. So I'm quite happy with the thought that composition is itself a form of translation' (ibid. p.73).

Translation then is not removing an obstacle – except in the sense that it removes the obstacle of a pervasive and seductive mistake, the mistake of thinking that there is a single primitive, and thus privileged, language. To use Bringhurst's terminology again, it is the realisation of an 'ecology' of the mind (ibid., p.282), of the fact that the mind itself 'embodies' what is inaccessible to itself (p.283) and is constantly reorganising or re-balancing itself around the presence of something else – a re-balancing that is only possible through the continued interplay of diverse tongues requiring to be interpreted, made accessible to each other, yet not ever made convertible and reducible. Rather than nailing down or exhausting the essential meaning of an 'original', translation intensifies and extends that meaning. And so, linking this back to the theological horizon of Miles Smith and his colleagues, the overspill of possibilities into the margins of the 'authorised' text may introduce a kind of provisionality; but it is not a provisionality of vagueness or anarchy, rather an everlasting and incurable uncertainty as to whether the adequate word has been found for meanings that exceed what any one tongue might say and are constantly generating fresh layers of significance. The translation announces that the text means at least this in another tongue; and so it invites a continuing interchange both with God in prayer and with other believers in the conversations of exegesis. The Christological significance of

the translator and his or her work, which we noted at the outset in Smith's choice of biblical metaphor, still holds. The translator is producing a 'sacramental' reality in which the meaning and effect of the incarnation and the cross become plain; but, as in the sacramental actions of the Church's liturgy, the purpose is an entry into a larger world of reference and possibility. If the focus of sacramental translation is the specific saving humanity of Jesus, the hinterland into which it leads is the inexhaustible 'meaning' of his divinity.

The polyphony implied by translation is not, of course, imagined here as a centreless plurality of possible significances: historically the initial stimulus for translation of Scripture was, for the translators of 1611, as we have seen, the imminent coming of 'the Sunne of righteousnesse, the Sonne of God' (para.6; the theological pun itself alerts us to something about polysemy in relation to Christ): God prompted King Ptolemy Philadelphus to commission the Septuagint just in time for the first Christmas, so to speak. It is the universal community of the redeemed that Christ's coming makes possible which, for Smith, necessitates the beginning of the history of biblical translation. God's work is no longer 'known onely in Iacob' (a skilful and stylish transition in the argument, given that Smith has just been talking about Jacob's well). The polyphony is thus genuine polyphony, not a cacophony. Reading or hearing this with such a musical analogy in mind may evoke at least one other significant voice among the theologians of the English Reformed Church at this period. Hooker, defending antiphonal singing in the liturgy in Book V of the *Lawes* (ch 38), speaks of how it is a sign of 'our common imbecility', our need of one another and our service of one another in the Body of Christ. But closer still to Miles Smith, we can trace some related arguments in the sermons of his fellow-translator, Lancelot Andrewes, whose sermons for Pentecost in 1606 and 1608 give us a glimpse of what was going on in the mind of one of the most expert and sophisticated of King James' translators in the years during which the work of translation was advancing.

Both of these sermons deal with the description in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles in 'cloven tongues as they had been of fire' (Andrewes cites the Geneva Bible, as indeed he continues to do even after 1611). The tongue, says Andrewes, may be 'cleft' either by God or by the devil: the serpent in Eden is given a 'forked tongue 'to speak that which was contrary to his knowledge and meaning'; but God also cleaves the tongue, because to 'speak their mind' to anyone except their own people the apostles need more than one language (*Ninety-Six Sermons*, Oxford/London 1875, vol. III, pp.122-3). Diabolic cleaving is thus to conceal what is in the mind, divine cleaving is to reveal it to strangers. Thus too the effect of the devil's cleaving is disorder, confusion and mistrust, while that of God's work is union. 'With their many tongues they spake one thing and that univoce' (124). Andrews sums it up epigrammatically: 'With divers tongues to utter one and the same sense, that is God's cloven tongue; that is the division of Sion, serving to edification. With one tongue, aequivoce, to utter divers meanings; that is none of God's, it is the serpent's forked tongue, the very division of Babel, and tendeth to nothing but confusion' (124). The plurality of language created by the Spirit

at Pentecost manifests an ultimately univocal practice, since the divine purpose is to spread the one truth of Christ and to form the one fellowship of the Church in all lands. As the sermon goes on to argue, the miracle of Pentecost is a coming together of Christ as Head of the Church and the Spirit as its heart — a communication of the truth which sustains and generates a ‘heat’ that invigorates the whole body (124–5). And the Spirit is not an occasional visitor to the body but (Andrewes quotes the Hebrew of Psalm 51.10) a ‘constant Spirit’, received as a ‘habit’ rather than an impulse (126).

The rejection here of equivocation recalls the More-Tyndale dispute. Once plurality has been identified as part of God’s method in revelation, the distinction has to be sharply drawn between a plurality of meanings that in effect licenses an arbitrary approach to our language, a practice in which there is no established connection between what is said and what is thought or between what is said on one occasion and what is said on another, and a plurality that is always conceived as returning to a point of consistency, a plurality that manifests the constancy of the Spirit, a sameness in difference. Translation in the context of Andrewes’ argument in this sermon is a means of showing triumphantly that the diversity of speech in the world is the sign not of an irremediable fragmentation of meaning but of the persistence of Word and Spirit in what is undoubtedly a context of persisting difference between cultures and languages. The communication of the gospel may indeed be univoce; but a theologian of a certain colour might want to suggest that what Andrewes is describing is that register that lies between univocal and equivocal speech which we call ‘analogical’.

Be that as it may, Andrewes returns to the same text two years later, offering another perspective on the theme of plurality. He returns to the image of God cleaving the tongue, shifting the emphasis slightly so that the sudden and deliberate violence evoked by ‘cleaving’ becomes a way of pointing up the miraculous nature of the gift: new languages came to the apostles ‘with a cleft only’ (139). But this is not simply a multiplying of languages: it is in some sense a multiplying of identities: ‘every Apostle, look how many tongues he could speak, so many Apostles was he, as serving for so many sundry men as must else have been used for the speaking so many sundry tongues to so many sundry nations’ (139–40). The apostle equipped with a multiplicity of languages has become a multiplicity of selves in one through identification with the speech of diverse communities. And this is the vehicle by which the single truth of the gospel comes to be celebrated by a universal diversity of voices. ‘It was not meet one tongue only should be employed that way, as before but one was. It was too poor and slender, like the music of a monochord. Far more meet was it that many tongues, yea, that all tongues should do it; which, as a concert of many instruments, might yield a full harmony’ (140).

God’s truth is declared in its fullness by a harmonious plurality; the praise of God must be drawn out of every existing human tongue, and so is necessarily diverse. Thus translation serves this fullness of thanksgiving, and the difference of human language ‘which was the destroying of Babel, the very same is here made to work the building of Sion’ (ib.). The instantaneous cleaving of the

tongue by the gift of the Spirit is no longer essential, as the gospel has indeed now spread to ‘most’ of the nations of the earth; but this does not mean that we can ignore the present utility of learning languages. All agree that one cleft in the tongue is ‘requisite’, to be able to speak ‘one tongue more than our mothers taught us’. This presumably refers to the universal assumption in Andrewes’ world that an educated man would speak at least one language other than English – namely Latin. But we are specially blessed ‘if the cleft, which God hath made in His word, in the tongues of the Old and New Testament, be in our tongues too.’ The argument is not entirely plain, but it sounds as though Andrewes is suggesting that the internal linguistic plurality of Scripture, its use of both Greek and Hebrew, is something that we should hope to replicate in our own skills. Without this particular cleft in the tongue, we are always receiving God’s ‘embassage’ through an interpreter.

The argument thus circles back on itself. Translation from the original tongues is a necessary moment in the ‘division of Sion’, the creation of a City of God characterised by harmonious plurality. One tongue alone cannot express the fullness of God’s work, and the diversity of tongues intensifies our sense of the scale of what God has done; as Smith implies, we are all invited to recognise that this world of tantalising and shifting lights cast on a single mystery through the (limited but real) degree of indeterminacy in meaning that translation makes manifest is a world in which we cannot avoid mutual dependence – any more than we can in the performance of a complex musical exercise, a concert or consort of voice and instrument. And in the course of this process of recreating the same meaning in the abiding otherness of another language, we as individual speakers have to assume a plural identity, an identification with the stranger. Yet, once the work of translation is done, we cannot then rest with the conclusion that the labour of interpretation is over: we may well be drawn back towards the original tongues, so as to hear God speak more clearly. We are prompted to trace the translation back to its source. It is clear that this does not mean that the translation is no more than an intermediate stage on the way to re-establishing the unique authority of the ‘sacred’ tongues. The positive valuation of plurality is not so easily cancelled, and the idea that the original tongue is inherently more ‘complete’ is not one that sits well with the evocation of the ‘division of Sion’. Yet the original – and this is a point made clearly by Smith and indeed by every Reformed translator from Tyndale onwards – retains an authority; and familiarity with the original is a curb on the ingenuity of interpreters (a point consonant with the general Protestant impatience with appeals to the non-literal senses of Scripture). The believer who has acquired the cleft in the tongue that enables him to understand the dual language of Scripture is better placed to join in the common discernment we have already identified as central to this style of Reformed hermeneutic. And it would not be going too far to say that the acquisition of the biblical languages by the non-native speaker brings to the reading of Scripture a new dimension inaccessible to the native speaker: we, on the far side of the cleaving of tongues that has brought Scripture to us in our own language

now know something of the splitting and recombining of meanings that the original has made possible as it ‘incarnates’ itself in other linguistic worlds.

It is ironic that a text like the 1611 Bible should have acquired in popular Anglophone Christian culture the status of an irreformable and unimprovable rendering. No doubt the increasingly general practice of publishing Bibles without either the Translators’ Preface or the marginalia reinforced this. And you may still read defences of the 1611 version which affirm its superiority on the grounds of the impeccable Reformed orthodoxy of its translators (as opposed to the suspected liberalism of modern scholars, a point already being made at the time of the publication of the Revised Version in 1881), defences which seem a little shaky in the light of Andrewes’ theology, say. Certainly the apologia offered by Miles Smith neither claims irreformable correctness for the translation nor appeals to the orthodoxy of the translators as surety for the quality of their work. One of the major points of the preface is to insist that there is a proper degree of labour involved in hearing and digesting Scripture; and the short cut of resolving all difficulties by positing an inspired and fixed translated text is specifically ruled out of court by Smith’s observations on the Septuagint – a translation for which ‘inspiration’ had been claimed. As in Tyndale’s theology, the unique and final authority of Scripture is not separated from the continuing practice of shared discernment in its reading; and the objection to unreformed Catholic uses of Scripture is not only an objection to fanciful or subjective readings dictated by the interests of undisciplined devotion, but a concern that the Christian laity are not being given the tools with which to challenge subjective fancy in the name of a sacred text equally accessible to teacher and learner.

God’s meanings in revelation are clear, but they are also fluid in their boundaries: there is a normative story to be told, one which, for the 1611 translators is focused upon the sovereignty of grace and the consequent impotence of human mediation between God and the world. Everything has to be read against the backdrop which alone makes sense of Scripture as a whole – the unique divinity of Christ and the gift of absolving and transforming grace to all who repudiate trust in their own works. The translators were not all in precisely the same place in the complex map of internal Protestant controversy in the early seventeenth century, but all would have subscribed to this overall view. This being said, however, the exact way in which the words of Scripture are seen and read as transparent to these mysteries will not be settled once and for all by this or that particular bit of human hermeneutical enterprise. Thus, knowing what is going on in the work of translation is a stimulus to recognising the ‘common imbecility’ of which Hooker speaks and so to deeper involvement in the common life of the congregation. The qualified indeterminacy of Scripture, manifest in the sheer fact of the translatability of Scripture and the diverse possibilities of saying what it says, becomes an ecclesiological matter: it brings into focus the biblical vision of mutual edification within the Body of Christ. And insofar as it thus becomes part of the opening up of the believer to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, we can see that the Christological hints which we noted in Smith’s preface are indeed not simply about removing obstacles to a clear and straightforward message

but connected with the strengthening of the common life in which alone revelation is rightly received.

And as it is received, it generates the awareness that the process of interpretation is potentially endless. As Scripture is re-expressed in one tongue after another, so that the harmony of praise constantly swells, so there is a deepened recognition of the plural possibilities within the original tongues, which may, as Andrewes suggests, prompt us to seek for that cleaving of our tongues that will equip us in Greek and Hebrew. The original tongues are not just a contingency – as though God merely had to use some language for His initial communication, but it doesn't much matter what. Translation does not mean – despite Smith's metaphor of shell and kernel – extracting a timeless and contextless message; there is something necessary about struggling with the historical specifics of the original tongues, and a good translation, rather than pretending to give you the 'essential message', should be drawing you into the struggle with those specifics. Translation moves back and forth between original and derivative, enlarging the semiotic field of both.

This perhaps throws more light on Bringham's description of composing poetry as making something 'in the presence of something else'. The translator offers one reading, aware that the original is not exhausted; there is a residue, a remaining otherness. Likewise the reader will study the translation with the same consciousness of a hinterland not yet explored and never to be mapped once and for all. But even the reader familiar with the original will turn back to it from the translation conscious that the original text now carries with it the 'marginal' dimension of what it can mean in another context, another tongue. Andrewes has hinted that the primordial 'cleft' in hermeneutics lies in the duality of sacred languages in Scripture itself: even in the beginnings of revelation, God declares that there is more than one way of speaking His word, and that the indeterminacy of translatability is always present. The Word of God is never simply identical with a human dialect. So when the Word is spoken in human language, it is precisely in a mode that evokes the something else of which the poet writes.

It would be intriguing to compare this with what Calvinist theology was saying – over against Lutheranism and Catholicism – about Christology and the sacraments at this period. In Christology, the principle known as the extra calvinisticum denied that the eternal reality of the second Person of the Trinity could be wholly contained within its incarnate form; there was life (so to speak) 'outside' the humanity of Jesus. Similarly, Calvinist Eucharistic doctrine repudiated the idea of a substantial, quasi-material presence of the Body of Christ in the sacrament: the bread and wine were a vehicle for grace, ordained and covenanted as such, but in no way constituting a localised presence, something circumscribed by the material world (hence Jewel's stress, in the passage already quoted, on the sacrament as showing the effect of divine agency and opening the way for such effects to be repeated in the present experience of the communicant). In both these contexts, the essential Reformed principle about revelation is asserted: God reveals the innate inadequacy of the created vehicle of revelation even in the act of revealing; He reveals infallible truth about Himself, but also re-

veals the fact of an impenetrable hinterland never to be fully sounded by created minds. Against such a background, the theology of translation which we have been tracing here makes much sense. The translator is not either assuming or trying to create a perfectly transparent vehicle for the Word of God – which remains the Word of God even in a faulty rendering, as Smith makes clear. Rather he is trying to set up a movement between original and derivative texts within which the community may develop a habit of response to the Word that is critical (in the sense of being ready to ask questions of unsupported exegetical proposals), reverent (in its assumption of mysteries yet to be discovered) and thus humble (in reinforcing the recognition that no single mind or voice is adequate to the task of interpretation).

In her intriguing book on *Sacramental Poetics at the Dawn of Secularism* (Stanford 2008), Regina Schwartz argues that the rejection of the doctrine of transubstantiation by the Reformed Church meant that, in the absence of a true sacramental embodiment of final meaning, the early modern state stepped in as the ‘substantial body’ to which ultimate loyalty is due (pp.34-5). Her subsequent discussion looks in turn at the ways in which the absence of a substantial body and the anxieties arising from this are handled by Shakespeare, Milton, Donne and Herbert, and at how, despite the theological aporia, Donne and Herbert, at least, succeed in reclaiming through their poetic practice a sense of gift or grace returning, community being reconstituted by way of new voices being created in dialogue with God. The sacramental awareness of primordial gift, the Eucharistic mystery, can still be enacted in words as in ceremony – in Donne’s passionate affirmations about the body’s meanings and destiny, in Herbert’s carefully crafted acts of poetic ‘resignation’ to the Spirit in his rhetoric of both protest and praise. Schwartz rightly connects this aspect of Herbert to precisely those themes in Calvin that we have just noted (pp.120-2): ‘External signs, language, invite us’, in Calvin’s theology, ‘beyond themselves to God’(121). She is a persuasive reader of Donne and Herbert, and the thesis about the ‘substantialising’ of the state in the wake of what might seem a repudiation of the sacramental as once understood is a compelling one in many ways. But if the analysis I have suggested here of the theology of the 1611 translators is correct, the same process of chastened re-enchantment that she finds in Donne and Herbert is going on in this new Scriptural text as well. Chastened re-enchantment: because what is now advanced is not, indeed, a substantial presence in the sense of a local and definitive embodying of sacred meanings, but a presence in the interaction of a community bound together by mutual acknowledgment of need and imperfection in the face of the mystery of Christ. The cloven tongues of translation and linguistic diversity require a many-voiced articulation of what has been revealed, and the nature of the presence of revealed truth in the world comes to be bound up with the very nature of the Church as holding the to-ing and fro-ing of understanding between original sacred texts and their translations as well as between different Christian voices. No substantial body; but a body of interaction and common speech, always readjusting itself around the unchanging narrative and invitation of what Scripture encodes. The translator is involved in the tearing of the Temple

veil, as Smith has it, in a division that is meant to make visible the depth of what is spoken and enacted in the one mystery of biblical revelation, lowering the bucket into Jacob's well where the waters never fail.

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