

requested by the Canterbury Convocation. Shortly thereafter, the English reformer and editor John Rogers produced a slightly revised edition of Tyndale's Bible. This appeared in 1537 and was called Matthew's Bible. In 1538 the English scholar Richard Taverner issued another revision. At about the same time, Oliver Cromwell commissioned Coverdale to produce a new Bible, which appeared in six editions between 1539 and 1568. This Bible, called the Great Bible, in its final revision in 1568 by scholars and bishops of the Anglican church was known as the Bishops' Bible. The Bishops' Bible was designed to replace not only the Great Bible, which was primarily a pulpit Bible, but also a translation for the laity, produced in Geneva in 1560 by English Protestants in exile, called the Geneva Bible. The Bishops' Bible was the second authorized Bible.

The Douay and Other Roman Catholic Versions

The Douay or Douay-Rheims (spelled also Douai-Reims) Bible, completed between 1582 and 1609, was commonly used by Roman Catholics in English-speaking countries until the 1900s, when it was considerably revised by the English bishop Richard Challoner. The Douay Bible was translated from the Latin Vulgate, primarily by two English exiles in France, William Allen and Gregory Martin. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the Douay and Challoner Bibles were replaced with other translations by Roman Catholics. In the United States, one of the most widely used is the New American Bible of 1970, the first complete Bible to be translated from Hebrew and Greek by American Roman Catholics.

The King James Version and Its Revisions

In 1604 King James I commissioned a new revision of the English Bible; it was completed in 1611. Following Tyndale primarily, this Authorized Version, also known as the King James Version, was widely acclaimed for its beauty and simplicity of style. In the years that followed, the Authorized Version underwent several revisions, the most notable being the English Revised Version (1881-85), the American Standard Version (1901), and the revision of the American Standard Version undertaken by the International Council of Religious Education, representing 40 Protestant denominations in the U.S. and Canada. This Revised Standard Version (RSV) appeared between 1946 and 1952. Widely accepted by Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic Christians, it provided the basis for the first ecumenical English Bible. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989) eliminated much archaic and ambiguous usage. The New King James Bible, with contemporary American vocabulary, was published in 1982.

Other Modern Translations

In the first half of the 20th century many modern speech translations, mostly by individuals, appeared: Weymouth (1903); Goodspeed and Smith (1923-27); Moffatt (1924-26); Phillips (1947); and others. Since 1960, major translation projects have been underway to produce English Bibles that are not revisions of the Tyndale-King James-RSV tradition. The more significant among these are the following: the Jerusalem Bible (1966), an English translation of the work of French Dominicans (1956); Today's English Version (1966-76) in idiomatic English by the American Bible Society; the New English Bible, commissioned in 1946 by the Church of Scotland and designed to be neither stilted

nor colloquial; the New International Bible (1973-79), a revision by conservative American Protestants based largely on the King James Version and similar to the New American Standard Version; and the Living Bible (1962-71), not a translation but a paraphrase into the modern American idiom. The latter was designed by its author, Kenneth Taylor, to make the Bible interesting, but to propagate “a rigid evangelical position.” The multivolume Anchor Bible (1964-), an international and interfaith project, offers modern readers an exact translation, with extended exegesis (exposition). Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible into English have been appearing for two centuries. A new translation, sponsored by the Jewish Publication Society of America, was published in three segments in 1962, 1974, and 1983. It is called the New Jewish Version. The continuing flow of new translations testifies to the changing nature of language, the discovery of new manuscript evidence, and most of all the abiding desire to read and to understand the Bible.

Preface to PDF Version of the King James Version of the Holy Bible

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THE TRANSLATORS TO THE READER

Preface to the King James Version of 1611

THE BEST THINGS HAVE BEEN CULMINATED

Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which hath been laboured by others, deserveth certainly much respect and esteem, but yet findeth but cold entertainment in the world. It is welcomed with suspicion instead of love, and with emulation instead of thanks: and if there be any hole left for cavil to enter, (and cavil, if it do not find a hole, will make one) it is sure to be misconstrued, and in danger to be condemned. This will easily be granted by as many as know story, or have any experience. For, was there ever any-projected, that savoured any way of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying, or opposition? A man would think that Civility, wholesome Laws, learning and eloquence, Synods, and Church-maintenance, (that we speak of no more things of this kind) should be as safe as a Sanctuary, and out of shot, as they say, that no man would lift up the heel, no, nor dog move his tongue against the motioners of them. For by the first, we are distinguished from brute beasts lead with sensuality; By the second, we are bridled and restrained from outrageous behaviour, and from doing of injuries, whether by fraud or by violence; By the third, we are enabled to inform and reform others, by the light and feeling that we have attained unto ourselves; Briefly, by the fourth being brought together to a parley face to face, we sooner compose our differences than by writings which are endless; And lastly, that the Church be sufficiently provided for, is so agreeable to good reason and conscience, that those mothers are holden to be less cruel, that kill their children as soon as they are born, than those nursing fathers and mothers (wheresoever they be) that withdraw from them who hang upon their breasts (and upon whose breasts again themselves do hang to receive the Spiritual and sincere milk of the word) livelihood and support fit for their estates. Thus it is apparent, that these things which we speak of, are of most necessary use, and therefore, that none, either without absurdity can speak against them, or without note of wickedness can spurn against them.

Yet for all that, the learned know that certain worthy men [Anacharsis with others] have been brought to untimely death for none other fault, but for seeking to reduce their Countrymen to god order and discipline; and that in some Commonwealths [e.g. Locri] it was made a capital crime, once to motion the making of a new Law for the abrogating of an old, though the same were most pernicious; And that certain [Cato the elder], which would be counted pillars of the State, and patterns of Virtue and Prudence, could not be brought for a long time to give way to good Letters and refined speech, but bare themselves as averse from them, as from rocks or boxes of poison; And fourthly, that he was no babe, but a great clerk [Gregory the Divine], that gave forth (and in writing to remain to posterity) in passion peradventure, but yet he gave forth, that he had not seen any profit to come by any Synod, or meeting of the Clergy, but rather the contrary; And lastly, against Church-maintenance and allowance, in such sort, as the Ambassadors and messengers of the great King of Kings should be furnished, it is not unknown what a fiction or fable (so it is esteemed, and for no better by the reporter himself [Nauclerus], though superstitious) was devised; Namely, that at such a time as the professors and teachers of Christianity in the Church of Rome, then a true Church, were liberally endowed, a voice forsooth was heard from heaven, saying: Now is poison poured down into the Church, etc. Thus not only as oft as we speak, as one saith, but also as oft as we do anything of note or consequence, we subject ourselves to everyone's censure, and happy is he that is least tossed upon tongues; for utterly to escape the snatch of them it is impossible. If any man conceit, that this is the lot and portion of the meaner sort only, and that Princes are privileged by their high estate, he is deceived. "As the sword devoureth as well one as the other," as it is in Samuel [2 Sam 11:25], nay as the great Commander charged his soldiers in a certain battle, to strike at no part of the enemy, but at the face; And as the King of Syria commanded his chief Captains to "fight neither with small nor great, save only against the King of Israel:" [1 Kings 22:31] so it is too true, that Envy striketh most spitefully at the fairest, and at the chieftest. David was a worthy Prince, and no man to be compared to him for his first deeds, and yet for as worthy as act as ever he did (even for bringing back the Ark of God in solemnity) he was scorned and scoffed at by his own wife [2 Sam

6:16]. Solomon was greater than David, though not in virtue, yet in power: and by his power and wisdom he built a Temple to the Lord, such a one as was the glory of the land of Israel, and the wonder of the whole world. But was that his magnificence liked of by all? We doubt it. Otherwise, why do they lay it in his son's dish, and call unto him for easing the burden, "Make", say they, "the grievous servitude of thy father, and his sore yoke, lighter?" [1 Kings 12:4] Belike he had charged them with some levies, and troubled them with some carriages; Hereupon they raise up a tragedy, and wish in their heart the Temple had never been built. So hard a thing it is to please all, even when we please God best, and do seek to approve ourselves to every ones conscience.

If we will descend to later times, we shall find many the like examples of such kind, or rather unkind acceptance. The first Roman Emperor [C. Caesar. Plutarch] did never do a more pleasing deed to the learned, nor more profitable to posterity, for conserving the record of times in true supputation; than when he corrected the Calendar, and ordered the year according to the course of the Sun; and yet this was imputed to him for novelty, and arrogance, and procured to him great obloquy. So the first Christened Emperor [Constantine] (at the least-wise that openly professed the faith himself, and allowed others to do the like) for strengthening the Empire at his great charges, and providing for the Church, as he did, got for his labour the name Pupillus, as who would say, a wasteful Prince, that had need of a Guardian or overseer [Aurel. Victor]. So the best Christened Emperor [Theodosius], for the love that he bare unto peace, thereby to enrich both himself and his subjects, and because he did not see war but find it, was judged to be no man at arms [Zosimus], (though indeed he excelled in feats of chivalry, and showed so much when he was provoked) and condemned for giving himself to his ease, and to his pleasure. To be short, the most learned Emperor of former times [Justinian], (at the least, the greatest politician) what thanks had he for cutting off the superfluities of the laws, and digesting them into some order and method? This, that he had been blotted by some to be an Epitomist, that is, one that extinguishes worthy whole volumes, to bring his abridgments into request. This is the measure that hath been rendered to excellent Princes in former times, even, Cum bene facerent, male audire, For their good deeds to be evil spoken of. Neither is there any likelihood, that envy and malignity died, and were buried with the ancient. No, no, the reproof of Moses taketh hold of most ages; "You are risen up in your fathers' stead, and increase of sinful men." [Num 32:14] "What is that that hath been done? that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the Sun," saith the wiseman: [Ecc 1:9] and S. Stephen, "As your fathers did, so do you." [Acts 7:51]

HIS MAJESTY'S CONSTANCY, NOTWITHSTANDING CULMINATION, FOR THE SURVEY OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

This, and more to this purpose, His Majesty that now reigneth (and long, and long may he reign, and his offspring forever, "Himself and children, and children's always) knew full well, according to the singular wisdom given unto him by God, and the rare learning and experience that he hath attained unto; namely that whosoever attempteth anything for the public (especially if it pertain to Religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himself upon a stage to be gloated upon by every evil eye, yea, he casteth himself headlong upon pikes, to be gored by every sharp tongue. For he that medleth with men's Religion in any part, medleth with their custom, nay, with their freehold; and though they find no content in that which they have, yet they cannot abide to hear of altering. Notwithstanding his Royal heart was not daunted or discouraged for this that colour, but stood resolute, "as a statue immovable, and an anvil not easy to be beaten into plates," as one [Suidas] saith; he knew who had chosen him to be a Soldier, or rather a Captain, and being assured that the course which he intended made for the glory of God, and the building up of his Church, he would not suffer it to be broken off for whatsoever speeches or practices.

It doth certainly belong unto Kings, yea, it doth specially belong unto them, to have care of Religion, yea, it doth specially belong unto them, to have care of Religion, yea, to know it aright, yea, to profess it zealously, yea to promote it to the uttermost of their power. This is their glory before all nations which mean well, and this will bring unto them a far most excellent weight of glory in the day of the Lord Jesus. For the Scripture saith not in vain, "Them that honor me, I will honor," [1 Sam 2:30] neither was it a vain word that Eusebius delivered long ago, that piety towards God was the weapon

and the only weapon, that both preserved Constantine's person, and avenged him of his enemies [Eusebius lib 10 cap 8].

THE PRAISE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

But now what piety without truth? what truth (what saving truth) without the word of God? What word of God (whereof we may be sure) without the Scripture? The Scriptures we are commanded to search. John 5:39. Isa 8:20. They are commended that searched and studied them. Acts 17:11 and 8:28,29. They are reprov'd that were unskillful in them, or slow to believe them. Matt 22:29. Luke 24:25. They can make us wise unto salvation. 2 Tim 3:15. If we be ignorant, they will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us.

Tolle, lege; Tolle, lege, Take up and read, take up and read the Scriptures [S. August. confess. lib 8 cap 12], (for unto them was the direction) it was said unto S. Augustine by a supernatural voice. "Whatsoever is in the Scriptures, believe me," saith the same S. Augustine, "is high and divine; there is verily truth, and a doctrine most fit for the refreshing of men's minds, and truly so tempered, that everyone may draw from thence that which is sufficient for him, if he come to draw with a devout and pious mind, as true Religion requireth." [S. August. de utilitcredendi cap. 6] Thus S. Augustine. and S. Jerome: "Ama scripturas, et amabit te sapientia etc." [S. Jerome. ad Demetriad] Love the Scriptures, and wisdom will love thee. And S. Cyril against Julian; "Even boys that are bred up in the Scriptures, become most religious, etc. [S. Cyril. 7 contra Iulianum] But what mention we three or four uses of the Scripture, whereas whatsoever is to be believed or practiced, or hoped for, is contained in them? or three or four sentences of the Fathers, since whosoever is worthy the name of a Father, from Christ's time downward, hath likewise written not only of the riches, but also of the perfection of the Scripture? "I adore the fulness of the Scripture," saith Tertullian against Hermogenes. [Tertul. advers. Hermo.] And again, to Apelles an heretic of the like stamp, he saith; "I do not admit that which thou bringest in (or concludest) of thine own (head or store, de tuo) without Scripture." [Tertul. de carne Christi.] So Saint Justin Martyr before him; "We must know by all means," saith he, "that it is not lawful (or possible) to learn (anything) of God or of right piety, save only out of the Prophets, who teach us by divine inspiration." So Saint Basil after Tertullian, "It is a manifest falling way from the Faith, and a fault of presumption, either to reject any of those things that are written, or to bring in (upon the head of them) any of those things that are not written. We omit to cite to the same effect, S. Cyril B. of Jerusalem in his 4::Cataches., Saint Jerome against Helvidius, Saint Augustine in his 3::book against the letters of Petilian, and in very many other places of his works. Also we forbear to descend to later Fathers, because we will not weary the reader. The Scriptures then being acknowledged to be so full and so perfect, how can we excuse ourselves of negligence, if we do not study them, of curiosity, if we be not content with them? Men talk much of [an olive bow wrapped about with wood, whereupon did hang figs, and bread, honey in a pot, and oil], how many sweet and goodly things it had hanging on it; of the Philosopher's stone, that it turned copper into gold; of Cornucopia, that it had all things necessary for food in it, of Panaces the herb, that it was good for diseases, of Catholicon the drug, that it is instead of all purges; of Vulcan's armor, that it was an armor of proof against all thrusts, and all blows, etc. Well, that which they falsely or vainly attributed to these things for bodily god, we may justly and with full measure ascribe unto the Scripture, for spiritual. It is not only an armor, but also a whole armory of weapons, both offensive and defensive; whereby we may save ourselves and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree, or rather a whole paradise of trees of life, which bring forth fruit every month, and the fruit thereof is for meat, and the leaves for medicine. It is not a pot of Manna, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal's meat or two, but as it were a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be it never so great; and as it were a whole cellar full of oil vessels; whereby all our necessities may be provided for, and our debts discharged. In a word, it is a Panary of wholesome food, against fenowed traditions; a Physician's shop (Saint Basil called it) [S. Basil in Psal. primum.] of preservatives against poisoned heresies; a Pandect of profitable laws, against rebellious spirits; a treasury of most costly jewels, against beggarly rudiments; finally a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life. And what marvel? The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the inditer, the holy spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the Penmen such as were sanctified from the womb, and endued with a principal portion of God's spirit; the matter, verity, piety,