### Table of Contents

**Walther and the Revival of Confessional Lutheranism**
Martin R. Noland ................................................................. 195

**Grabau Versus Walther: The Use of the *Book of Concord* in the American Lutheran Debate on Church and Ministry in the Nineteenth Century**
Benjamin T.G. Mayes .......................................................... 217

**C.F.W. Walther’s Use of Luther**
Cameron A. MacKenzie .......................................................... 253

**Mission through Witness, Mercy, Life Together in Walther and the First Fathers of Missouri**
Albert B. Collier ........................................................................ 275

**Eduard Preuss and C.F.W. Walther**
Roland F. Ziegler ...................................................................... 289

**Wilhelm Löhe: His Voice Still Heard in Walther’s Church**
John T. Pless ............................................................................ 311

**Walther, the Third Use of the Law, and Contemporary Issues**
David P. Scaer ......................................................................... 329

**The King James Version: The Beginning or the End?**
Cameron A. MacKenzie ........................................................... 343
Observing Two Anniversaries

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born on October 25, 1811, in Langenwardsdorf, Saxony, Germany. It is appropriate that this issue honor C.F.W. Walther on this 200th anniversary of his birth because of his significant influence as the first and third president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (1847-1850 and 1864-1878) and also president and professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1850–1887). Most of the articles below, which were first presented at the 2011 Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions in Fort Wayne, reflect his influence in many areas of biblical teaching, confessional subscription, and the life of the church in mission. These historical and theological studies are offered here so that Walther may be understood in his context and continue to be a blessed voice in our synod as we face the future.

This issue also recognizes one other anniversary. The venerated King James Version of the Bible, first printed in 1611, is now 400 years old. The article below on the King James Version was originally given as a paper at the 2011 Symposium on Exegetical Theology in honor of this anniversary. The importance of this translation for the English-speaking world is widely acknowledged. Although many may think that its day has passed, this article demonstrates the ongoing influence of the King James Version through other translations.

The Editors
The King James Version: 
The Beginning or the End? 
Cameron A. MacKenzie

When asked to write something for the 400th anniversary of the King 
James Bible, I thought it would be an exercise in nostalgia, a fond remem­
brance of a Bible that few in the audience could actually recall but that at 
least I and a handful of others would recognize as the Bible of our child­
hood from which we first learned the word of God. The days when the 
King James Version was the Bible in the English-speaking world are long 
gone, and it survives today more as a museum piece than as a vehicle for 
Christian proclamation and piety. At least, that is what I thought was true 
when I began my work, and it probably is true in an assembly like this; but 
it is not as true as I had originally thought.

According to the most recent list of best sellers compiled by the CBA 
(formerly the Christian Booksellers Association), the King James Version 
(KJV) was second only to the New International Version (NIV) among 
number of Bibles sold in the U.S., and the New King James Version (NKJV) 
was third!! Given all the competition—to say nothing of the obvious 
changes in language and scholarship since 1611—that is really amazing. 
Now, of course, just because people buy a version does not mean they 
actually read it; nonetheless, these figures suggest that, 400 years after it 
first was published, the King James Version of the Bible still has a lot of life 
left. Moreover, besides the New King James, one other translation included 
in the list of the CBA’s 10 best sellers also had direct connections with the 
King James, viz., the English Standard Version (ESV), which comes in fifth 
place. So both on its own and in its successors, the King James Version 
remains a powerful force in shaping the biblical message in the English-

/BSLs/Bible_Translations.pdf (accessed on January 16, 2011). When I first accessed this 
site (Nov. 24, 2010), it was posting the “December 2010 CBA Best Sellers.” The list was 
very similar. According to the website, the list is based on “actual sales in Christian 
retail stores in the United States through January 1, 2011, using CROSS. SCAN as the 
source for the data collection.” The positions of NIV, KJV, and NKJV were the same in 
both the list determined by unit sales and in the one determined by dollar sales.

Cameron A. MacKenzie is the Ellis Professor of Historical Theology and 
Chairman of the Department of Historical Theology at Concordia Theological 
Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
speaking world. Whether this is a good thing or not is another question, one to which I will return shortly; but before I do so, I will consider briefly how this happened in the first place. How did the King James Version achieve such eminence in the English-speaking world?

To answer that question, we need to review a little history and recall, first of all, that the King James Version was the culmination of much translation work that came before it during the Reformation. Or, to put it another way, the King James Version represents the end of the beginning in the story of the English Bible.2

The beginning of the beginning is, of course, the work of William Tyndale.3 His pioneering efforts resulted in an English New Testament in 1526 and parts of the Old Testament thereafter.4 Subsequent translations in the 16th century usually began with Tyndale. That was still true with respect to the King James Version. In the preface to the latter, Miles Smith indicated its relationship to its Protestant predecessors in answer to Catholics who criticized Protestants for publishing new versions of the English Bible:

We never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one ... but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against, that hath been our endeavour, that our mark.5


4 Besides the Pentateuch and Jonah that appeared in print during Tyndale’s lifetime, both Mozley, *Tyndale*, 179–186, and Daniell, *Tyndale*, 333–337, credit him with the translation of the historical books, Joshua through 2 Chronicles (Mozley) or Nehemiah (Daniell), that appeared in Matthew’s Bible and became the basis for subsequent 16th-century translations.

Improving on their predecessors—but not repudiating them—was the goal of the King James translators right from the beginning. In fact, in the "rules" provided for the translators, the first of them specified that "the ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit," and a subsequent rule told the translators to use these versions—Tyndale's, Matthew's, and Coverdale's Bibles, the Great Bible, and the Geneva Bible—in places where they were more accurate than the Bishops' Bible. Moreover, all of these versions incorporated huge amounts of Tyndale, and none of them besides his began totally afresh from the original languages. Together, they constitute a family of closely related versions known as the Great Tradition. The similarities are quite evident when one compares particular passages.

Here are a couple of examples. Let's start with the first two verses of Genesis:

Tyndale: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.

Coverdale: In the beginning God created heaven and earth; and the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.

Matthew's: In the beginning GOD created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the water.
Great Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth. The earth was void and empty; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Geneva: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the waters.

Bishops': In the beginning GOD created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and was void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

King James: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

A New Testament example, Matthew 6:7, shows how a difference in understanding the Greek could affect the tradition. Should ἀστραφθήναι be rendered "babble" or "vain repetitions"? Then again, maybe it was just a matter of style: Does "babble" belong in the mouth of our Lord or is "vain repetitions" more fitting? Whatever their thinking, the translators in the Great Tradition had a hard time making up their minds.

Tyndale: And when ye pray, babble not much, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard, for their much babbling's sake.

11 Unless otherwise noted, Matthew's Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1549 text available in The Bible in English at http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htm, (accessed November 30, 2010).
12 Unless otherwise noted, Great Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1540 text available in The Bible in English at http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htm, (accessed November 30, 2010).
14 Unless otherwise noted, Bishops' Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1568 text available in The Bible in English at http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htm, (accessed November 30, 2010).
Coverdale: And when ye pray, babble not much, as the heathen do, for they think that they shall be heard, for their much babbling's sake.

Matthew's: But when ye pray, babble not much as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard, for their much babbling sake.

Great Bible: But when ye pray babble not much, as the heathen do: for they think it will come to pass that they shall be heard for their much babbling's sake.

Geneva: Also when ye pray, use no vain repetitions as the heathen, for they think to be heard for their much babbling.

Bishops': But when ye pray, babble not much, as the heathen do. For they think it will come to pass that they shall be heard, for their much babbling's sake.

King James: But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

For the sake of contrast with the Great Tradition, consider two modern language versions, the Revised English Bible16 (REB) and the Good News Bible17 (GNB), in order to see that the Tyndale rendering is not inevitable.

First, Genesis 1:1-2:

REB: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was a vast waste, darkness covered the deep, and the spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water.

Verse one sounds like Tyndale, but verse two certainly does not. The difference is even more pronounced in GNB.

GNB: In the beginning, when God created the universe, the earth was formless and desolate. The raging ocean that covered everything was engulfed in total darkness, and the power of God was moving over the water.

Similar departures from the Tyndale tradition are evident in Matthew 6:7 also:

REB: In your prayers do not go babbling on like the heathen, who imagine that the more they say the more likely they are to be heard.

16 The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha (Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1989).

GNB: When you pray, do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that God will hear them because their prayers are long.

These passages show that an English translation does not have to sound like William Tyndale, but the 16th-century versions to which the King James translators referred all show a reliance upon the first version, that of Tyndale. Therefore, the King James Version was just one more step in the development of this particular line of Bibles. Of course, it was a very impressive step since it involved dozens of translators from both Oxford and Cambridge as well as scholars outside the universities, and they committed themselves first of all to faithfulness to the original languages. After all, Rule #1 directed the translators to follow the Bishops’ Bible only insofar as “the Truth of the original will permit.” Nonetheless, when the work was finished more than seven years after the king had first agreed to it, the end result remained quite close to its predecessors. In fact, one estimate is that 90% of the King James is Tyndale, at least in those portions that Tyndale had completed before his death: the entire New Testament, the Pentateuch, Jonah, and very probably Joshua through 2 Chronicles.

For Lutherans, it is probably also worth noting that Tyndale was indebted to Martin Luther for both his Bible translation and his theology. In fact, the history books sometimes call him “Lutheran.”

---


19 Pollard, Records, 53.


22 E.g., Conrad Russell, “The Reformation and the Creation of the Church of England, 1500-1640,” in The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain, ed. John
tirely accurate, especially regarding the sacraments, but Tyndale did use Luther's works to create his own, often just translating or paraphrasing Luther's German into English, e.g., his An Exposition Upon the V. VI. VII Chapters of Matthew,23 and other times, just integrating large portions of Luther's own material, e.g., The Parable of the Wicked Mammon.24 The same is true of the materials that accompany his Bible translations, e.g., about 75 percent of Tyndale's prologue to Romans in his 1534 Testament is a translation of Luther's preface that first appeared in 1522.25 Tyndale even arranged the books of the New Testament the way Luther did and so placed Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation at the end without numbering them.26

Finally, Tyndale also translated like Luther in that he employed a natural vernacular instead of a more stilted and latinate style that often characterized the pre-Reformation versions27 and, again, like Luther, avoided terminology that reinforced the aberrant theology of the Middle Ages. For example, Tyndale used "congregation" for εκκλησία instead of "church" (Luther used gemeine); "elder" for προστάτης instead of priest (Luther used Elltiste); and "repent" for μετανοεῖτε instead of "do penance" (Luther used bessert euch).28


24 Daniell, Tyndale, 156–169, discusses this work, including its relation to Luther.

25 Daniell, Tyndale, 156–169; Westcott, General View, 147–148. For Luther, see LW 35:284. For Luther's influence on Tyndale as a translator, see especially Heinz Bluhm, Martin Luther: Creative Translator, reprint ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984, c. 1965), 169–180, and Heinz Bluhm, "Martin Luther and the English Bible:
Some of this material made it into the King James version, e.g., "elder" and "repent." But in general, there is little direct influence from Luther on the King James Version. Coverdale omitted the prefaces, the Great Bible reintegrated Luther's antilegomena into the New Testament canon, and Geneva brought back in "the church." In fact, the King James translators were ordered to use "the old Ecclesiastical Words ... the Word Church not to be translated Congregation, etc." Moreover, by the time we get to the second half of the 16th century, the most direct influences upon the English versions were Reformed scholars like Theodore Beza; the so-called Geneva versions of the English Bible were heavily marked by Reformed theology. Nonetheless, the Elizabethan Bibles continued to imitate Tyndale’s and Luther’s versions in that they used notes and prologues to advance a particular theological position. The King James version did not.

Once again, the rules instructed the KJV translators not to add marginal notes (except to explain difficulties in the original languages) and the king himself had expressed a dislike for the notes attached to the Geneva version. So, compared to its immediate predecessors (Bishops’ as well as Geneva), the King James Version was much less polemical. It was still overtly Protestant. After all, the Apocrypha was still set apart from the Old Testament (incidentally, another of the Lutheran elements that survived in the KJV). One can also detect a theological point of view in things like the chapter summaries. The one for Romans 3, for example, includes an entry, ”Therefore no flesh is justified by the Law, but all, without difference, by faith only”; and the one for Hebrews 10 reads, ”The sacrifice of Christ’s body once offered, forever, hath taken away sinness.” There is also a preface, entitled ”The Translators to the Reader,” that includes an argument on behalf of vernacular Scriptures to answer Roman Catholic critics. It explicitly indicts the "Church of Rome" for its hostility toward the vernacular. Even so, compared to its Elizabethan predecessors, there is relatively little material designed to advance a specific version of the Christian faith. This is especially true when one looks for...
something that would favor one side or another in the internal Protestant
debates of the period, e.g., between presbyterians and episcopalians. After
all, not only "elders" but also "bishops" made it into the text of the King
James.34
Perhaps that is one reason why the King James Version eventually
became the Bible of the Protestant sects that fought so bitterly in England
over the course of the 17th century. Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregation­
lists, and Quakers all ended up using the King James Version just like the
Anglicans.35 Nonetheless, we should not imagine that the King James
Version was an immediate success in 1611 and that everyone acknowl­
edged it as a kind of stopping point in the process of preparing English
Bibles. We are calling it the end of the beginning, but contemp­oraries did
not realize that for all practical purposes the King James Version would
become the Bible in English for more than three centuries.
For an entire generation after 1611, the Geneva Bible remained in print,
being published in Amsterdam and then imported for sale in England.36
Right from the beginning there were also suggestions and sometimes even
plans for revision of the KJV. When it first appeared, the Hebrew scholar,
Hugh Broughton, published a Censure of the Late Translation, in which he
explained that the new translation produced in him a "sadnes that will
geomve me while I have breath. It is so ill done," although his tract went on
to criticize only twelve passages and not very persuasively.37

34 In fact, both terms went all the way back to Tyndale. Cf. Titus 1: 5, 7. Deacons,
too (e.g., 1 Tim 3: 8).
University Press, 1993) 2: 225-228; and Campbell, Bible, 127.
Norton also points out that there were nine editions of the KJV between 1641 and 1715
that incorporated the Geneva notes.
37 Hugh Broughton, A Censure of the Late Translation for Our G1Urches Sent unto a
Right Worshipfull Knight, Attendant upon the King [Middleburg: R. Schilders, 1611?], STC
/search/full_rec?source=pgimages.cfg&action=bvid&id=99850031&file=...
/session/129
380446_18747&searchscreen=default&vid=15214&pageno=1&zoom=&viewp...
Broughton's criticism came to nothing, but at the time of the English Civil War, and especially after defeat of Charles I, there was a flurry of activity in favor of a new version by the victorious Puritan party. The Hebrew scholar, John Lightfoot, called for revision in a sermon preached before the Long Parliament in 1645 and cited the need for a Bible that would unite the English speakers of the British Isles in understanding "the proper and genuine reading of the Scripture, by an exact, vigorous, and lively translation." Unfortunately, he did not offer any specifics of what he thought "amisse" with the current version. Subsequently, other tracts and treatises did appear that offered a range of complaints. Though not widespread, the criticisms of the King James Version were extensive. William Kilburne published only a small tract of 15 pages, but Robert Gell's *An Essay Toward the Amendment of the Last English Translation of the Bible* was 800 pages long. The arguments raised in such works ranged from criticizing printers' errors to demanding a more literal translation.

---

38 Nor did that of Ambrose Ussher (d. 1629), brother to the more famous, James Ussher, who constructed a biblical chronology that found a place in King James Versions for centuries. The former translated most of the Bible and composed a dedication to King James in which he indicated some of the reasons behind his work. However, neither translation nor dedication was ever published. They survive only in manuscript. See Norton, *Bible as Literature* 1: 215-216.


Oh, yes, there were also complaints about the "prelatical" terminology employed in some verses, e.g., "Easter" used to translate πάσχα instead of "Passover" (Acts 12:4), "Bishoprick" for ἐπίσκοπον (Acts 1:20), and "Robbers of Churches, for Robbers of the Temple, namely of Diana, Acts 19:37. As if there were Treasures, as Copes, Surplices, Hangings, Plate, etc. in the meeting place of God's worship." According to J.I. Mombert, a bill was introduced into the Long Parliament in 1653 (presumably the Rump Parliament), calling for a revision of the Bible and naming a committee to do it. Although short on specifics, the legislation indicated a concern "to remove the stumbling-blocks and offence of the weak, or the cavils of others when they hear in sermons preached or printed, or in other treatises, that the original bears it better thus and thus." 

Not long thereafter, Cromwell sent the Rump Parliament packing and the proposed revision never went forward. A few years later the project surfaced again. Parliament's Grand Committee for Religion instructed a sub-committee to consider the proposal, but it came to nothing when parliament dissolved. This occurred just shortly before Cromwell's death in 1658 and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy in 1660. From that point forward until the second half of the 19th century, the King James Version reigned supreme in the English-speaking world.


During that long period of time, there were occasional efforts to improve the English text of the Bible, even if no complete revision on the basis of the original languages took place. The most important of these efforts were those of F.S. Parris on behalf of the University of Cambridge Press in the 1740s and those of Benjamin Blayney for the University Press at Oxford about 25 years later. Making use of Parris's work, Blayney modified the King James Version in thousands of places, and Oxford published the results in 1769. This edition became the standard King James Version of the Bible and remains so today.

As an indication of what Parris and Blayney had to deal with, here is Genesis 1:2 as printed in 1611:

And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

To "modernize" texts like these, Parris and Blayney had to make many changes, each one of which addressed an apparently minor point, (e.g., dropping the silent "e" from many words and adjusting the print font for "u's" and "v's"), but which all together were an enormous undertaking. In addition to the changes needed for this verse, they also inserted possessive apostrophes throughout the text since these were not used in the 1611 version. Many of their changes were simply matters of spelling (e.g., "moe" to "more" and "then" to "than") or pronunciation (e.g., "crudled" to "curdled" [Job 10:10] and "neesed" to "sneezed" [2 Kings 4:35]). Some of their changes to the text reflected a greater commitment to consistency than the original translators felt necessary. For example, they were stricter about employing "ye" for the nominative and vocative and "you" for the other cases of the second person plural pronoun. In a few places, they changed singulars to plurals either because the original demanded it or because the sense did (e.g., "words" to "word" in Matt 26:75 and "hands" to "hand" in Acts 7:35). Perhaps the most dramatic change was that of Parris who replaced "fourscore" with "eightieth" in 1 Kings 6:1.

Besides changing the biblical text itself, the two men also redid the italics in the text that translators used to indicate words not actually in the Hebrew or Greek, and they improved the marginal notes—cross references and alternative translations. The result of their combined efforts was a modernized biblical text but hardly a modern one. Nevertheless, the

---

46 Campbell, Bible, 235, says 16,000.
efforts to standardization on the part of these early publishers. Cambridge University Press (Cambridge Press, Blayney and Oxford University Press (King James Press) did some of these things, but not all. Here is a point in the history of the King James Version.

With the death of King James I in 1625, the monopoly of the King James Version began to weaken. The next century and a half saw many changes in the English Bible. The King James Version was not the only version in circulation, and other versions began to challenge its dominance. Some of these versions, such as the Authorized Version, were stricter in their adherence to the original text, while others, such as the Revised Standard Version, were more liberal in their translation of the Bible.

In other words, the King James Version was not the only English Bible in circulation, and other versions began to challenge its dominance. Some of these versions, such as the Authorized Version, were stricter in their adherence to the original text, while others, such as the Revised Standard Version, were more liberal in their translation of the Bible.

But the end of that monopoly was coming, and in the changed circumstances of the 19th and 20th centuries, the King James Version became the starting point for a wide array of subsequent English versions. What was originally the end of one process now became the beginning of another. Not all modern translations can trace their lineage back to the King James, but many of them can and do. In other words, many of the new versions attempt to retain the "sound" of the KJV—its vocabulary and syntax—while also accommodating contemporary concerns. The nature of these concerns, as well as the degree to which the translators committed themselves to the King James and related versions, accounts for substantial differences among them, but they nevertheless bear a family resemblance and constitute another phase of the Great Tradition (see Appendix B, 365). Here, for example, is John 3:16 in four of the more recent members of this group, along with the KJV itself.

King James Version: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

New King James Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

MacKenzie: The King James Version

Parris/Blayney version helped to maintain the monopoly of the King James for another century. But the end of that monopoly was coming, and in the changed circumstances of the 19th and 20th centuries, the King James Version became the starting point for a wide array of subsequent English versions. What was originally the end of one process now became the beginning of another. Not all modern translations can trace their lineage back to the King James, but many of them can and do. In other words, many of the new versions attempt to retain the "sound" of the KJV—its vocabulary and syntax—while also accommodating contemporary concerns. The nature of these concerns, as well as the degree to which the translators committed themselves to the King James and related versions, accounts for substantial differences among them, but they nevertheless bear a family resemblance and constitute another phase of the Great Tradition (see Appendix B, 365). Here, for example, is John 3:16 in four of the more recent members of this group, along with the KJV itself.

King James Version: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

New King James Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

MacKenzie: The King James Version

Parris/Blayney version helped to maintain the monopoly of the King James for another century. But the end of that monopoly was coming, and in the changed circumstances of the 19th and 20th centuries, the King James Version became the starting point for a wide array of subsequent English versions. What was originally the end of one process now became the beginning of another. Not all modern translations can trace their lineage back to the King James, but many of them can and do. In other words, many of the new versions attempt to retain the "sound" of the KJV—its vocabulary and syntax—while also accommodating contemporary concerns. The nature of these concerns, as well as the degree to which the translators committed themselves to the King James and related versions, accounts for substantial differences among them, but they nevertheless bear a family resemblance and constitute another phase of the Great Tradition (see Appendix B, 365). Here, for example, is John 3:16 in four of the more recent members of this group, along with the KJV itself.

King James Version: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

New King James Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

MacKenzie: The King James Version

Parris/Blayney version helped to maintain the monopoly of the King James for another century. But the end of that monopoly was coming, and in the changed circumstances of the 19th and 20th centuries, the King James Version became the starting point for a wide array of subsequent English versions. What was originally the end of one process now became the beginning of another. Not all modern translations can trace their lineage back to the King James, but many of them can and do. In other words, many of the new versions attempt to retain the "sound" of the KJV—its vocabulary and syntax—while also accommodating contemporary concerns. The nature of these concerns, as well as the degree to which the translators committed themselves to the King James and related versions, accounts for substantial differences among them, but they nevertheless bear a family resemblance and constitute another phase of the Great Tradition (see Appendix B, 365). Here, for example, is John 3:16 in four of the more recent members of this group, along with the KJV itself.

King James Version: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

New King James Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

MacKenzie: The King James Version

Parris/Blayney version helped to maintain the monopoly of the King James for another century. But the end of that monopoly was coming, and in the changed circumstances of the 19th and 20th centuries, the King James Version became the starting point for a wide array of subsequent English versions. What was originally the end of one process now became the beginning of another. Not all modern translations can trace their lineage back to the King James, but many of them can and do. In other words, many of the new versions attempt to retain the "sound" of the KJV—its vocabulary and syntax—while also accommodating contemporary concerns. The nature of these concerns, as well as the degree to which the translators committed themselves to the King James and related versions, accounts for substantial differences among them, but they nevertheless bear a family resemblance and constitute another phase of the Great Tradition (see Appendix B, 365). Here, for example, is John 3:16 in four of the more recent members of this group, along with the KJV itself.

King James Version: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

New King James Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

MacKenzie: The King James Version
New American Standard Bible (Updated ed.): 50 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

New Revised Standard Version: 51 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

English Standard Version: 52 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

Clearly, all of these renderings are very similar to each other, and this is deliberate. An English translation does not, however, have to sound like the King James Version. 53 Here, for example, is John 3:16 in the Contemporary English Version.

Contemporary English Version: 54 "God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die."

For the most part, the contemporary versions that belong to the Great Tradition want readers to know their lineage. The preface to New Revised Standard Version (1989), for example, described the version this way,

The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is an authorized revision of the Revised Standard Version, published in 1952, which was a revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, which, in turn, embodied earlier revisions of the King James Version, published in 1611. 55

The English Standard Version had a similar statement. 56 As its title already indicates, the New King James Version stressed its commitment to the 1611

---

53 Even if many of them do: Cf. John 3:16 in Today’s New International Version (2005), New Living Bible (1996), and Revised English Bible (1989) for contemporary versions that are not a part of the Great Tradition but nevertheless sound like the KJV on this particular verse.
56 “Preface,” ESV, vii. Besides the versions mentioned by the NRSV, the ESV claims a connection also to the Revised Version (1885) and to Tyndale’s pioneering work.
What is it that accounts for this proliferation of versions, these variations on a theme, so to speak? Why not just stick with the King James? We can identify three distinct factors that have motivated the new translations since the end of the 19th century: text, language, and ideology. First of all, the text. Many have become convinced that the underlying Hebrew and Greek of the King James Version are not the original texts of the Scriptures. Therefore, the new translations often differ from the King James on account of different views about which Hebrew and Greek text to translate.59

The first major attempt to replace the King James Version was the Revised Version of the 1880s, and its motivation was very much textual considerations, especially in regard to the New Testament.60 In fact, the Revised Version did not attempt to modernize the English language. The rules for the translators directed them to use "the language of the Authorised and earlier English versions" when making changes,61 changes that were necessitated by faithfulness to the original texts. Thus, the revisers ended up constructing a deliberately archaic text so that it would continue to sound like the King James. But that did not keep their achievement from generating controversy because their textual changes were traumatic. Among other things, they raised doubts about the last twelve verses of Mark and omitted from the biblical text the conclusion to the

57 "Preface," NKJV, iii.
58 "Forward," NASB (Updated), v. Although the most recent editions of the NASB simply refer to preserving the "values" of the American Standard Version (1901), the earlier editions described the NASB as "a revision" of the ASV. Cf. "Forward," New American Standard Bible: New Testament (Washington, DC: Christianity Today, 1963), iii.
60 For the story of the Revised Version, see C.J. Cadoux, "The Revised Version and After," in Ancient and English, ed. Robinson, 235–266; Bruce, History, 135–152; Campbell, Bible, 212–227; and Norton, Bible as Literature 2: 218–255.
61 See Bruce, History, 137, for the eight "Principles of Revision."
Lord’s Prayer and the so-called Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7, 8), the latter of which served as a proof passage for the doctrine of the Trinity.62

In the 20th century, textual issues continued to provoke new translations. On the one hand, especially with the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls but also out of increasing respect for the ancient translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, some translations have reflected new ideas about the text of the Old Testament.63 The New Revised Standard Version, for example, made extensive use of the Qumran materials in 1 Samuel. This has resulted in many new readings, including an extra four sentences at the end of chapter 10.64 Evidence from the ancient versions accounted for several other changes from the KJV text, like the inclusion of Cain’s statement to Abel, “Let us go out to the field” in Genesis 4:8, that is not in the Hebrew.65

On the other hand, beginning already in the 1880s, people have come to varying conclusions regarding the new texts, and this accounts in part for the different versions. For example, the ESV employed a Greek text that was very similar to the one used by the NRSV, but for the Old Testament, the ESV took a more conservative approach than the NRSV (1 Samuel 10 and Genesis 4:8 stayed as they are in the KJV) without excluding the newer evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls.66 In the 20th century, the Revised New Testament appeared as a response to textual issues in the New Testament.67

62 Advocates for a new critical Greek text of the New Testament and also members of the revision committees were B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, whose Greek text appeared almost simultaneously with the Revised New Testament (Bruce, History, 139). A leading spokesman in defense of the Greek text of the King James Version was John W. Burgon. His work, The Revision Revised (London: J. Murray, 1883), took issue with the entire enterprise of revision. Even today, advocates of using the King James only as their English Bible still employ Burgon’s arguments. See, for example, Which Bible?, ed. David O. Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 2000), and the home-page of the Dean Burgon Society [sic] which maintains, “The God-honored Authorized King James Bible has been, and continues to be, the only accurate English translation of the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and preserved original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of God for the English-speaking people.” http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/ (accessed March 2, 2011).

63 For a comparison of modern versions, including the NRSV and REB (but not the ESV), regarding the influence of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the text, see Harold Scanlin, The Dead Sea Scrolls & Modern Versions of the Old Testament (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993).

64 The NRSV departed from the Masoretic text in 1 Samuel about 110 times; the RSV 60; and the NIV only 15. See Scanlin, Dead Sea Scrolls, 25-26, 114-115, 119-120.

65 This particular reading from the Septuagint was already in the RSV; however, according to Jack P. Lewis, The English Bible from KJV to NIV: A History and Evaluation, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 380-382, the NRSV uses the evidence of the ancient versions much more than did the RSV.

66 A leading spokesman in defense of the Greek text of the King James Version was John W. Burgon. His work, The Revision Revised (London: J. Murray, 1883), took issue with the entire enterprise of revision. Even today, advocates of using the King James only as their English Bible still employ Burgon’s arguments. See, for example, Which Bible?, ed. David O. Fuller (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International Publications, 2000), and the home-page of the Dean Burgon Society [sic] which maintains, “The God-honored Authorized King James Bible has been, and continues to be, the only accurate English translation of the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and preserved original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Words of God for the English-speaking people.” http://www.deanburgonsociety.org/ (accessed March 2, 2011).

67 For a comparison of modern versions, including the NRSV and REB (but not the ESV), regarding the influence of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the text, see Harold Scanlin, The Dead Sea Scrolls & Modern Versions of the Old Testament (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993).

68 The NRSV departed from the Masoretic text in 1 Samuel about 110 times; the RSV 60; and the NIV only 15. See Scanlin, Dead Sea Scrolls, 25-26, 114-115, 119-120.

69 This particular reading from the Septuagint was already in the RSV; however, according to Jack P. Lewis, The English Bible from KJV to NIV: A History and Evaluation, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 380-382, the NRSV uses the evidence of the ancient versions much more than did the RSV.
Even more conservative on textual questions was the New King James Bible. It decided to use the same textual basis for the New Testament as did the original King James. Thus, the conclusion to the Lord's Prayer, the ending of Mark, and the Johannine Comma are back in.

If they were so committed to the traditional text, however, why did the translators prepare a New King James Bible in the first place? This brings us to the second factor that accounts for the new versions, viz., language, the English language. Even if the Revised Version of 1881 and 1885 did not update the language, all of its successors in the Great Tradition have done so,

King James Version: And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them.

New King James Version: Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them.

New American Standard Bible (Updated ed.): Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them.

The preface (p. ix) indicated the ESV translators' commitment to "translate difficult Hebrew passages as they stand in the Masoretic text" but left the door open to emendations or alternative readings in "exceptional, difficult cases." One online reviewer indicated that the ESV is much more conservative in this respect than even the original RSV, which emended the Hebrew text of Job 63 times. The ESV, in contrast, emended it only six times. Cf. Michael Marlow, "English Standard Version." http://www.bible-researcher.com/esv.html. (accessed January 3, 2011).
English Standard Version: When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them.

This example also indicates differences over the extent to which the translation should retain the idiom of the original. Although all the versions in the Great Tradition are basically literal translations, some are more literal than others. The New King James is probably the most literal. The preface called its translation philosophy "complete equivalence" because this version "seeks to preserve all of the information in the text." This even includes the interjections that other versions omit (e.g., "behold" in Luke 2:9).69

Probably the least literal of the newer translations in the Great Tradition is the New Revised Standard Version, but this, in turn, raises yet another explanation for the differences between the versions: not language per se, but ideology. In the case of the NRSV, the translators committed themselves to feminist terminology and deliberately avoided traditional English usage like generic "man" and indefinite "he."70 But in order to carry out this commitment, the NRSV departed in thousands of instances not only from the King James Version but also from the original Greek and Hebrew (e.g., turning singulars into plurals and third person pronouns

---

69 By "literal," I mean a translation that commits itself to translating the form of the original text into English, e.g., grammar, style, idioms, figures of speech, and individual vocabularies, to the degree possible still consistent with understanding. The opposite kind of translating commits itself to choosing the form in English that best expresses the meaning of the original without reference to its form in the original language. See David Dewey, A User's Guide to Bible Translations: Making the Most of Different Versions (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 29-89.

70 "Preface," NKJV, iii. Here is Luke 2:9 in four Great Tradition versions:

KJV: And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

NKJV: And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

NASB (Updated ed.): And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

ESV: And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

71 In his preface to the NRSV, Bruce Metzger maintains that the NRSV "remains essentially a literal translation" but then admits that "paraphrastic renderings" were used to avoid indefinite "he." He also lays the groundwork for other changes by railing against the "linguistic sexism" of the English language.
The face of

The result of this is a tendentious translation, but one generally acceptable to the more liberal side of American Christianity.72

On the other side of the coin, the ESV is a conservative translation. In fact, the prime movers behind this version included many who were upset by the decision of the Committee on Bible Translation to revise the NIV in the interests of accommodating feminism.73 So, led by evangelical leader Wayne Grudem and publisher Lane Dennis, Crossway Bibles (a division of Good News Publishers) obtained the rights to the (1971) Revised Standard Version, which, when it first appeared in the 1940s and 1950s, had experienced withering criticism from conservatives for, among other things, its handling of Old Testament messianic prophecy.74 Therefore, the ESV revisers modified the RSV text so that once again Isaiah predicts the virgin birth (not “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14) and God promises Abraham an offspring in whom the nations of the earth will be blessed (instead of “descendants” by whom the nations will “bless themselves” in Genesis 22:18).75 In this way, the ESV combined traditional theology along with traditional language.76

Both the NRSV and the ESV belong to the Great Tradition and therefore echo the King James in many instances, but because of different ideological commitments they are very different versions of the English Bible. Thus ideology, along with decisions regarding text and language, has resulted in not just one but in many efforts to replace the King James. Yet the King James Version continues to sell. Why is that? Why do people

76 For a very fine comparison of the various versions on the basis of doctrine as well as language and text, see Comparative Study of Bible Translations, prepared by the Commission of Worship of the LCMS and available online at http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/Worship/BibleComp.pdf. For background to the ESV, see Michael Marlowe, “English Standard Version,” online article, http://www.bible-researcher.com/esv.html (accessed January 17, 2011); and Dewey, User’s Guide, 187-192.
continue to purchase and, presumably, read a 17th-century version of the Bible when there are so many contemporary Bibles that are modeled on the King James?

We can only speculate, but certainly a part of the explanation must be the appeal of tradition in a rapidly changing world. When everything is up for grabs—theology, morality, social mores, and the Word of God itself—the tried and the true has its appeal. Efforts to justify departures from the traditional English Bible, even if based only on language (let alone text or ideology), can easily look like an assault on true religion. Moreover, the change never ends, so that if someone decides that being Christian today demands accepting some change in the Bible, say, to the limited extent represented by the ESV, he soon finds out that there is more to come. For instance, the ESV published a new edition in 2007 only six years after the first appearance of the original!7 Obviously, only when you do not change, do you escape change.

When I first set out on this project, I had planned to call the second half of this paper “the beginning of the end for the King James Version,” since, I thought, after the first full scale revision of the 1880s, the Authorized Version would eventually lose out to its successors. But now, I do not think so. The King James Version has not arrived at the end, but is only somewhere in the middle of its history. With the demise of the evangelical consensus behind the NIV, there is absolutely no chance that a modern version will establish itself as the Bible among English-reading Christians, and more versions are certainly on the way. Textual considerations alone will see to that.78

More change means that there will still be a market for stability, which is exactly what the King James Version offers. The product of an era that acknowledged the Bible as God’s Word, prepared by the best biblical scholars of their day, and established as both a religious and cultural icon simply by the passage of time, the King James Version continues to appeal to religious conservatives put off by what is happening in the churches

78 There is a lot more to come from the Dead Sea scrolls (although Scanlin, Dead Sea Scrolls, 139-140, cautions against expecting any “dramatic” changes in the OT text) and textual critics are now sifting through the variants with help from the computer (Metzger, Text, 240-246) and arriving at some very different conclusions. See, for example, the changes from Nestle-Aland 27 in the new Editio Critica Maior, available at http://www-user.uni-bremen.de/~wie/ECM/ECM-index.html (accessed January 17, 2011).
today. Protestants are not supposed to believe in tradition, but many of them prefer a traditional Bible.
Appendix A
The Great Tradition of English Bibles, Part I

- William Tyndale (1525-26)
- Miles Coverdale (1535)
- Matthew's Bible (1537)
- Great Bible (1539)
- Geneva Bible (1560)
- Bishop's Bible (1568)
- King James Version (1611)
Appendix B
The Great Tradition of English Bibles, Part II

King James Version (1611)

- Revised Version (1881, 1885)
- American Standard Version (1901)

  - Revised Standard Version (1946, 1952)


- English Standard Version (2001)