

# Concordia Theological Quarterly



Volume 75:3-4

July/October 2011

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Walther and the Revival of Confessional Lutheranism</b>	
Martin R. Noland.....	195
<b>Grabau Versus Walther: The Use of the <i>Book of Concord</i> in the American Lutheran Debate on Church and Ministry in the Nineteenth Century</b>	
Benjamin T.G. Mayes .....	217
<b>C.F.W. Walther's Use of Luther</b>	
Cameron A. MacKenzie.....	253
<b>Mission through Witness, Mercy, Life Together in Walther and the First Fathers of Missouri</b>	
Albert B. Collver .....	275
<b>Eduard Preuss and C.F.W. Walther</b>	
Roland F. Ziegler .....	289
<b>Wilhelm Löhe: His Voice Still Heard in Walther's Church</b>	
John T. Pless .....	311
<b>Walther, the Third Use of the Law, and Contemporary Issues</b>	
David P. Scaer .....	329
<b>The King James Version: The Beginning or the End?</b>	
Cameron A. MacKenzie.....	343

**Theological Observer** ..... 367  
    Dean Wenthe: An Appreciation  
    An Old Seminary, a New President, and the Unfolding  
    of Divine History  
    The Sacred Character of Human Life

**Book Reviews** ..... 372

**Books Received** ..... 381

**Indices for Volume 75 (2011)**..... 382

## Observing Two Anniversaries

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born on October 25, 1811, in Langenchursdorf, 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 remembrance 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 childhood 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!<sup>1</sup> 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-

---

<sup>1</sup> "February 2011 CBA Best Sellers" [http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/documents/BSLs/Bible\\_Translations.pdf](http://www.cbaonline.org/nm/documents/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.<sup>2</sup>

The beginning of the beginning is, of course, the work of William Tyndale.<sup>3</sup> His pioneering efforts resulted in an English New Testament in 1526 and parts of the Old Testament thereafter.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A on 364. For the prehistory of the King James Version, see Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible*, 3rd rev. ed. by William Aldis Wright, reprint ed. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998); J. Isaacs, "The Sixteenth-Century English Versions," in *The Bible in Its Ancient and English Versions*, ed. H. Wheeler Robinson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 146-195; S.L. Greenslade, "English Versions of the Bible, 1525-1611," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3: *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, ed. S.L. Greenslade, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 141-163; and F.F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 24-95.

<sup>3</sup> For Tyndale's translation work, see J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (London: SPCK, 1937), 75-109, 173-186, and David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 108-116, 134-142, 283-315, 330-331.

<sup>4</sup> Besides the Pentateuch and Jonah that appeared in print during Tyndale's lifetime, both Mozley, *Tyndale*, 179-186, and Daniell, *Tyndale*, 333-357, 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.

<sup>5</sup> "The Translators to the Reader," in *The New Cambridge Paragraph Bible with the Apocrypha: King James Version*, ed. David Norton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University

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*.<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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:<sup>8</sup>

Tyndale:<sup>9</sup> 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:<sup>10</sup> 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:<sup>11</sup> 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.

---

Press, 2005), xxxi. Unless otherwise noted, all citations of the King James Version come from this edition. For the ascription of the preface to Miles Smith, see Bruce, *History*, 98.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred W. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible: The Documents Relating to the Translation and Publication of the Bible in English, 1525-1611* (London: Henry Frowde, Oxford University Press, 1911), 53–54.

<sup>7</sup> The first time I came across this designation, the Great Tradition, for the family of Bibles connected to the King James Version was in the title of Arthur L. Farstad, *The New King James Version in the Great Tradition* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> For ease of reading, I have either employed a modernized spelling and punctuation edition or else have updated it myself.

<sup>9</sup> David Daniell, ed., *Tyndale’s Old Testament: Being the Pentateuch of 1530, Joshua to 2 Chronicles of 1537, and Jonah, Translated by William Tyndale* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Coverdale Bible citations are from the electronic version of the 1535 text available in *The Bible in English* at <http://collections.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/bie/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=frameset.htx>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

Great Bible:<sup>12</sup> 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:<sup>13</sup> 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':<sup>14</sup> 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 βατταλογέω 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:<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.htx>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>12</sup> 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.htx>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Geneva Bible citations are from *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, intro. Lloyd E. Berry (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> 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.htx>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Tyndale New Testament citations are from David Daniell, ed., *Tyndale's New Testament Translated from the Greek by William Tyndale in 1534*, modern spelling ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

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 Bible<sup>16</sup> (REB) and the Good News Bible<sup>17</sup> (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.

---

<sup>16</sup> *The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* (Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> *Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1976).

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,<sup>18</sup> 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."<sup>19</sup> 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,<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>

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."<sup>22</sup> This is not en-

---

<sup>18</sup> For the origins and organization of the King James translation, see Westcott, 107–121; J. Isaacs, "The Authorized Version and After," in Robinson, *Ancient and English*, 196–204; Bruce, *History*, 96–112; and Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611–2011* (Oxford: University Press, 2010), 32–85. Also very informative are the following (although aimed more at a popular audience than an academic one): Gustavus S. Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959, paperback ed., 1977); Olga S. Opfell, *The King James Bible Translators* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1982); Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); and Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> Pollard, *Records*, 53.

<sup>20</sup> See G. E. Duffield, "Introduction," in *The Work of William Tyndale* (Appleford, Bershire, England: The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1964), xxxv–xxxvi, but Campbell, *Bible*, 15, says only 83 percent.

<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the best book demonstrating the literary connections between the King James Version and its predecessors is Charles C. Butterworth, *The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible, 1340–1611* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), but see also Gerald Hammond, *The Making of the English Bible* (Manchester, Great Britain: Carcanet Press, 1982); Isaacs, "Authorized Version," 204–223; and Westcott, 123–284.

<sup>22</sup> 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 Uppon the V. VI. VII Chapters of Matthew*,<sup>23</sup> and other times, just integrating large portions of Luther into his own material, e.g., *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> 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.<sup>26</sup>

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 versions<sup>27</sup> and, again, like Luther, avoided terminology that reinforced the aberrant theology of the Middle Ages. For example, Tyndale used "congregation" for ἐκκλησία instead of "church" (Luther used *gemeyne*); "elder" for πρεσβύτερος instead of *priest* (Luther used *Elltiste*); and "repent" for μετανοείτε instead of "do penance" (Luther used *bessert euch*).<sup>28</sup>

---

Morrill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 267, and Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 113.

<sup>23</sup> Duffield, *Work*, 180–304. For Luther, see Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 21: 1–294 (hereafter *LW*).

<sup>24</sup> Daniell, *Tyndale*, 156–169, discusses this work, including its relation to Luther.

<sup>25</sup> Duffield, *Work*, 119–146; Westcott, *General View*, 147–148. For Luther, see *LW* 35: 365–380.

<sup>26</sup> For the degree of Tyndale's dependence upon Luther in the material that accompanied the biblical text, see Westcott, *General View*, 139–153, and Daniell, *Tyndale*, 113–133.

<sup>27</sup> For medieval vernacular versions, see "The Vernacular Scriptures," in *The Cambridge History of the English Bible*, vol. 2: *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), 338–491.

<sup>28</sup> For examples of each of these, see Matt 18:17 ("congregation"), Titus 1:5 ("elders" —Tyndale's first edition used "seniors"), and Matt 3:2 ("repent"). For references to Luther's Bible, I have used Martin Luther, *Das Neue Testament Deutsch Wittenberg 1522: Septembertestament*, facsimile ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

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."<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

Once again, the rules instructed the KJV translators *not* to add marginal notes (except to explain difficulties in the original languages)<sup>31</sup> and the king himself had expressed a dislike for the notes attached to the Geneva version.<sup>32</sup> 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 the entry, "Therefore no flesh is justified by the Law, but all, without difference, by faith onely"; and the one for Hebrews 10 reads, "The sacrifice of Christ's body once offered, forever, hath taken away sinnes." 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.<sup>33</sup> 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

---

Tyndale and Coverdale," in *Martin Luther Quincentennial*, ed. G. Dünnhaupt, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984), 112-125.

<sup>29</sup> Pollard, *Records*, 53. See also Isaacs, "Sixteenth Century," 183; Greenslade, *Cambridge*, 149; and Bruce, *History*, 78.

<sup>30</sup> For the theology of the Elizabethan Bibles, see my *The Battle for the Bible in England, 1557-1582* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002).

<sup>31</sup> Pollard, *Records*, 54.

<sup>32</sup> Apparently, James objected especially to notes that he perceived as justifying seditious and treason. See Campbell, *Bible*, 28, 37, and Bruce, *History*, 96-97.

<sup>33</sup> Norton, *New Cambridge*, xxv-xxxii.

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.<sup>34</sup>

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, Congregationalists, and Quakers all ended up using the King James Version just like the Anglicans.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, we should not imagine that the King James Version was an immediate success in 1611 and that everyone acknowledged 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.<sup>36</sup> 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 complained that the new translation produced in him a "sadnes that will greeve me while I have breath. It is so ill done," although his tract went on to criticize only twelve passages and not very persuasively.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> In fact, both terms went all the way back to Tyndale. Cf. Titus 1: 5, 7. Deacons, too (e.g., 1 Tim 3: 8).

<sup>35</sup> David Norton, *A History of the Bible as Literature*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 2: 225-228; and Campbell, *Bible*, 127.

<sup>36</sup> The last such edition appeared in 1644. Norton, *Bible as Literature* 1: 210-215. Norton also points out that there were nine editions of the KJV between 1641 and 1715 that incorporated the Geneva notes.

<sup>37</sup> Hugh Broughton, *A Censure of the Late Translation for Our Churches Sent unto a Right Worshipfull Knight, Attendant upon the King* [Middleburg: R. Schilders, 1611?], STC (2nd ed.) 3847. Electronic edition: [http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full\\_rec?source=pgimages.cfg&action=byid&id=99850031&file=../session/1293804446\\_18747&searchscreen=default&vid=15214&pageno=1&zoom=&viewport=&searchconfig=config.cfg&display=author&highlight\\_keyword](http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=pgimages.cfg&action=byid&id=99850031&file=../session/1293804446_18747&searchscreen=default&vid=15214&pageno=1&zoom=&viewport=&searchconfig=config.cfg&display=author&highlight_keyword) (accessed December, 31, 2010).

Indicative of Broughton's concerns were his criticism of three KJV renderings in Stephen's sermon in Acts 7. The issues he raised had to do with harmonizing Stephen's account of Israel's history with the Old Testament. He also objected to the placing of the parenthesis in Luke 3 regarding the genealogy of Jesus: are the ancestors those of Joseph? Broughton did not think so. For an assessment of Broughton's criticism, see Norton, *Bible as Literature* 1: 139-144, 159-161.

Broughton's criticism came to nothing,<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> 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,<sup>40</sup> but Robert Gell's *An Essay Toward the Amendment of the Last English Translation of the Bible* was 800 pages long!<sup>41</sup> The arguments raised in such works ranged from criticizing printers' errors to demanding a more literal translation.

---

<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> John Lightfoot, *A sermon preached before the Honorable House of Commons: at Margarets Westminster, upon the 26. day of August 1645. being the day of their solempne monethly fast* (London: Printed by R.C. for Andrew Crook, 1645), Wing (2nd ed.) L2068, 30–31. Electronic edition: [http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full\\_recsourcesource=pgthumbs.cfg&action=byid&id=99861043&file=../session/1293805492\\_20776&searchscreen=citations&searchconfig=var\\_spell.cfg&display=author](http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_recsourcesource=pgthumbs.cfg&action=byid&id=99861043&file=../session/1293805492_20776&searchscreen=citations&searchconfig=var_spell.cfg&display=author) (accessed December, 31, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> William Kilburne, *Dangerous Errors in Several late printed Bibles* (Finsbury: n.p., 1659). Kilburne provides examples of printing mistakes in seven editions of the Bible printed in the 1650's. Electronic edition: [http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full\\_rec?source=var\\_spell.cfg&action=single&id=11931231&ecco=n&file=../session/1293811428\\_7201&searchscreen=citations&display=author&subset=1&entries=1&highlight\\_keyword=default](http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=var_spell.cfg&action=single&id=11931231&ecco=n&file=../session/1293811428_7201&searchscreen=citations&display=author&subset=1&entries=1&highlight_keyword=default) (accessed December, 31, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> Robert Gell, *An Essay Toward the Amendment of the Last English-Translation of the Bible* (London: R. Norton for Andrew Crook, 1659). In his preface, Gell seems to be calling for a very literal translation that will provide the basis for spiritually profitable interpretation. Online edition: [http://books.google.com/books?id=rcvbaaaacaj&printsec=frontcover&dq=gell+and+essay&hl=en&ei=uwAetfgmftctnqf8nemdq&sa=x&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0cdmq6aewaqa#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=rcvbaaaacaj&printsec=frontcover&dq=gell+and+essay&hl=en&ei=uwAetfgmftctnqf8nemdq&sa=x&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0cdmq6aewaqa#v=onepage&q&f=false) (accessed December 31, 2010).

Tai Liu, *Puritan London: A Study of Religion and Society in the City Parishes* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1986), 141, identifies Gell as an Anglican clergyman who managed to remain in his London parish during the entire Interregnum. See also Campbell, *Bible*, 127.

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 ἐπισκοπή (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 Gods worship.”<sup>42</sup> 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.”<sup>43</sup>

Not long thereafter, Cromwell sent the Rump Parliament packing and the proposed revision never went forward.<sup>44</sup> 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.<sup>45</sup> 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.

---

<sup>42</sup> Edward Whiston [?], *The life and death of Mr. Henry Jessy...* ([London: s.n.], 1671), Wing 1679, 48–49. According to Norton, *Bible as Literature*, 1: 219, Jessy was a Baptist divine and “the most active promoter of religion.” Electronic edition: [http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full\\_rec?source=var\\_spell.cfg&action=byid&id=18207164&ecco=undefined&file=../session/1293809818\\_533&searchscreen=citations&display=author&highlight\\_keyword=param\(highlight\\_keyword\)](http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=var_spell.cfg&action=byid&id=18207164&ecco=undefined&file=../session/1293809818_533&searchscreen=citations&display=author&highlight_keyword=param(highlight_keyword)). (accessed December 31, 2010)..

<sup>43</sup> J. I. Mombert, *English Versions of the Bible* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1907), 443. Online edition: [http://books.google.com/books?id=2HVbaaaamaaj&printsec=frontcover&dq=mombert+and+english+versions+of+the+Bible&hl=en&ei=z11ttbgik4sdlgekvinzba&sa=x&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0cd8Q6aewa#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=2HVbaaaamaaj&printsec=frontcover&dq=mombert+and+english+versions+of+the+Bible&hl=en&ei=z11ttbgik4sdlgekvinzba&sa=x&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0cd8Q6aewa#v=onepage&q&f=false). (accessed December 31, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> The best summary of the arguments put forth at this time is in Norton, *Bible as Literature*, 1: 215–225. For Cromwell and various forms of Parliament during the Interregnum, see Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England, 1485–1714* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 244–264, and for the Puritans in power, see John Spurr, *English Puritanism, 1603–1689* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 114–130.

<sup>45</sup> Norton, *Bible as Literature*, 1: 218–219, and Bulstrode Whitelocke, *Memorials of the English affairs, or, An historical account of what passed from the beginning of the reign of King Charles the First, to King Charles the Second his happy restauration* (London: Printed for Nathaniel Ponder, 1682), 645 (W1986). Electronic version: [http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full\\_rec?source=var\\_spell.cfg&action=byid&id=11832455&ecco=undefined&file=../session/1295274144\\_20477&searchscreen=citations&display=author&highlight\\_keyword=param\(highlight\\_keyword\)](http://eebo.chadwyck.com.ezproxy.lib.ipfw.edu/search/full_rec?source=var_spell.cfg&action=byid&id=11832455&ecco=undefined&file=../session/1295274144_20477&searchscreen=citations&display=author&highlight_keyword=param(highlight_keyword)). (accessed January 17, 2011).

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,<sup>46</sup> 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 forme, and voyd, and darkenesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the spirit of God mooued vpon 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 "neeeded" 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

---

<sup>46</sup> Campbell, *Bible*, 235, says 16,000.

Parris/Blayney version helped to maintain the monopoly of the King James for another century.<sup>47</sup>

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. In other words, the King James became the foundation for another line of English Bibles. 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.<sup>48</sup> 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:<sup>49</sup> “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.”

---

<sup>47</sup> Norton, *Text*, 104–114, notes 99 significant textual variants in Parris and 58 in Blayney, the majority of them matters of English usage and not translation. See also Isaacs, “Authorized Version,” 225; Campbell, *Bible*, 132–142; and F. H. A. Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611): Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives* (Cambridge: University Press, 1884), 28–35.

<sup>48</sup> And sometimes even those that do not belong to the Great Tradition feel compelled to acknowledge the excellence of the KJV. For example, the opening paragraph of *The Contemporary English Version*, first published by the American Bible Society in 1995, states bluntly, “The most important document in the history of the English language is the *King James Version* of the Bible” and then maintains that its own “translators . . . have diligently sought to *capture the spirit* of the *King James Version*” (italics mine). This from a translation that renders Genesis 1:2, “The earth was barren, with no form of life; it was under a roaring ocean covered with darkness. But the Spirit of God was moving over the water.” As the CEV acknowledged, the “spirit” of the KJV clearly did not include its form.

<sup>49</sup> *Holy Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982).

New American Standard Bible (Updated ed.):<sup>50</sup> "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:<sup>51</sup> "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:<sup>52</sup> "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.<sup>53</sup> Here, for example, is John 3:16 in the Contemporary English Version.

Contemporary English Version:<sup>54</sup> "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.<sup>55</sup>

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

<sup>50</sup> *New American Standard Bible: Reference Edition* (Anaheim, CA: Foundation Publications, 1995).

<sup>51</sup> *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, 1990).

<sup>52</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> 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.

<sup>54</sup> *Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1995).

<sup>55</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, "To the Reader," NRSV, vii.

<sup>56</sup> "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.

version.<sup>57</sup> Also, as indicated by its title, the New American Standard Bible singled out the American Standard Version as its direct predecessor but mentioned other Great Tradition translations as well.<sup>58</sup>

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.<sup>59</sup>

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.<sup>60</sup> 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,<sup>61</sup> 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

---

<sup>57</sup> “Preface,” NKJV, iii.

<sup>58</sup> “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.

<sup>59</sup> The question of the underlying text has been discussed and debated frequently and still is. Standard introductions include Bruce Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1995). A new edition of the latter work, prepared by Alexander Fischer, was published in 2009, *Der Text des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> 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.

<sup>61</sup> 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.<sup>62</sup>

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.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup> 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.<sup>65</sup>

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

---

<sup>62</sup> 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 homepage 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).

<sup>63</sup> 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 Translations of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993).

<sup>64</sup> 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.

<sup>65</sup> 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.

evidence entirely.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup>

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,<sup>68</sup> but the degree to which the newer versions have modernized their diction has varied. So, for example, "and it came to pass" in the King James survived in the New King James (although sometimes "and" became "now"), became "now it came about" in the NASB Update, and disappeared entirely from the ESV. Here is an example, Genesis 6:1.

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.

---

<sup>66</sup> 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).

<sup>67</sup> "Preface," NKJV, v. See also Lewis, *The English Bible*, 332-333, and Farstad, *New King James*, 110-117. However, the New King James translators (Preface, iv-v) were a little more adventuresome in the Old Testament and used an updated version of the Masoretic Hebrew rather than the 17th-century version. They also left the door open for the versions and the Dead Sea scrolls in difficult cases. See Farstad, *New King James*, 93-101. However, according to Scanlin, 34, "evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls is cited in only six footnotes in the entire Old Testament" of the NKJV and in just one case, Isaiah 49: 5, does the text actually follow the Qumran material.

<sup>68</sup> This began already with the 1901 American recension of the Revised Version which, for example, changed the Lord's Prayer from "Our Father, *which art in heaven*" to "who." See Lewis, *The English Bible*, 73-74, and Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 103-104.

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.<sup>69</sup> 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).<sup>70</sup>

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.”<sup>71</sup> 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

---

<sup>69</sup> 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 vocables, 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.

<sup>70</sup> “Preface,” NKJB, 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.

<sup>71</sup> 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.

into second). The result of this is a tendentious translation, but one generally acceptable to the more liberal side of American Christianity.<sup>72</sup>

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.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup> 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).<sup>75</sup> In this way, the ESV combined traditional theology along with traditional language.<sup>76</sup>

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

---

<sup>72</sup> See my “The English Bible in a Postmodern Age,” in *Mysteria Dei: Essays in Honor of Kurt Marquart*, ed. Paul T. McCain and John R. Stephenson (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1999), 155–168.

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Wayne Grudem, “A Brief Summary of Concerns about the TNIV,” *The Journal for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood* 7, no. 2 (Fall 2002), <http://www.cbmw.org/Journal/Vol-7-No-2/A-Brief-Summary-of-Concerns-About-the-TNIV> (accessed January, 4, 2011).

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, articles by C.P. Lincoln, Merrill F. Unger, and S. Lewis Johnson that first appeared in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 110 (Jan. 1953): 50–66, available online at <http://www.bible-researcher.com/rsv-bibsac.html> (accessed 3/3/11). For a history of the controversy, see Peter J. Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures: American Protestant Battles over Translating the Bible* (Oxford: University Press, 1999), 93–144.

<sup>75</sup> For RSV references, see *The Holy Bible. The Old Testament: Revised Standard Version*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952).

<sup>76</sup> 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!<sup>77</sup> 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.<sup>78</sup>

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

---

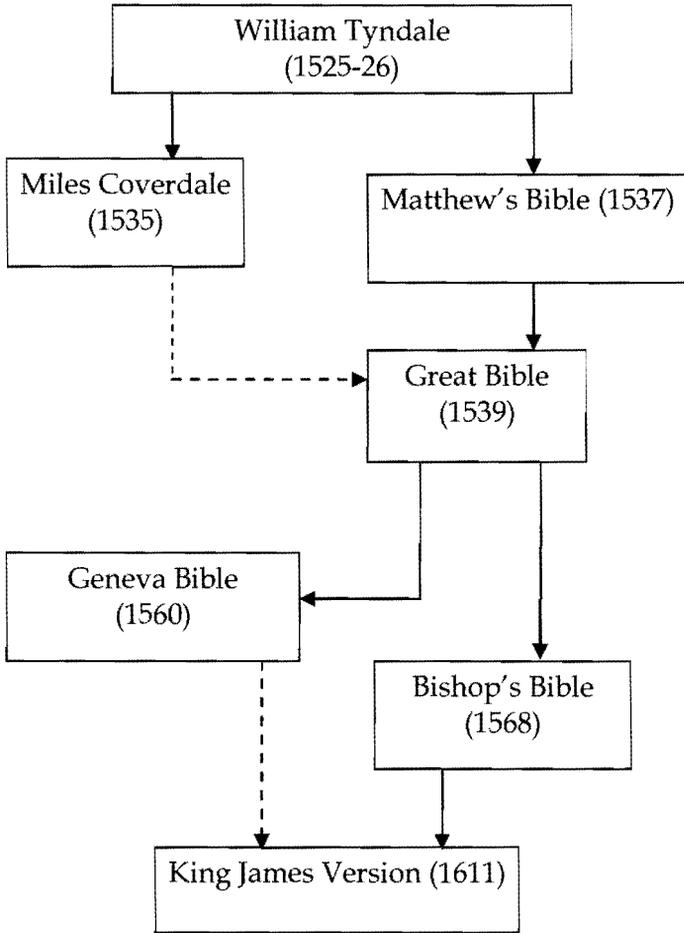
<sup>77</sup> Marlowe, “English Standard Version” (accessed January, 17, 2011).

<sup>78</sup> 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



## Appendix B

### The Great Tradition of English Bibles, Part II

