

# FOUNDERS JOURNAL

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# KJV

# 400 Years



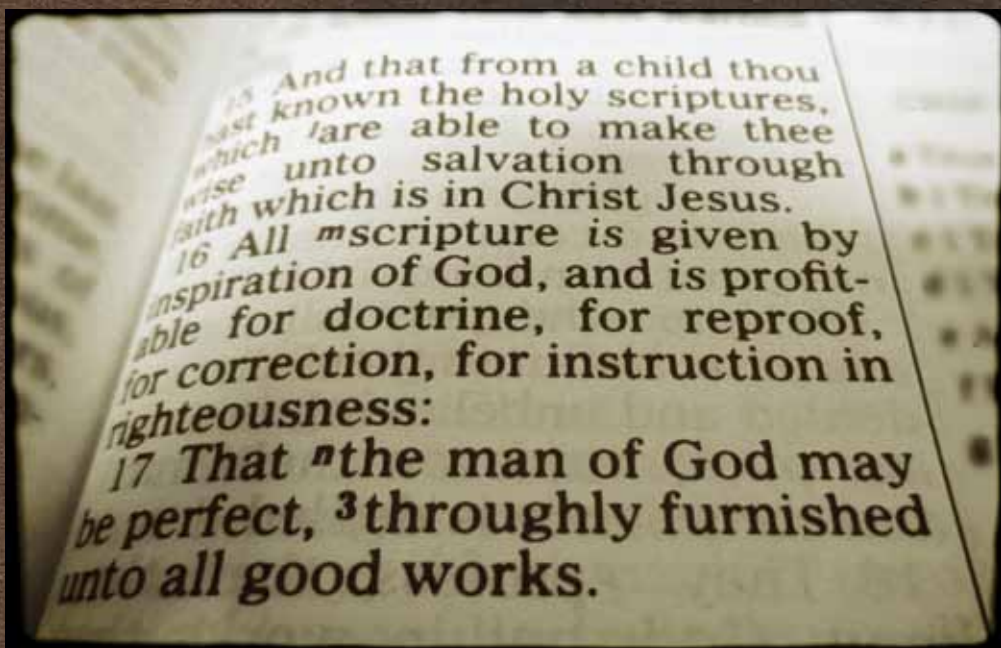
# The Founders Journal



Committed to historic Baptist principles

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Fall 2011



KJV  
400 Years

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# The Founders Journal



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# Thank God for the King James Bible

*Tom Ascol*

English-speakers have had such ready access to the Bible in our language for so long that it is easy to take the Scripture's availability for granted. It is appropriate, therefore, occasionally to pause and reflect on God's kindness in giving us His written Word and in providing and preserving it in our language. The 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Version (KJV) of the English Bible provides such an occasion.

How we got our English Bible is a fascinating story. From Wycliffe to Tyndale to the Geneva Bible to the King James "Authorized" Bible, the effort to make God's inscripturated Word available to the English speaking world reveals the providential ordering of men and movements. As the two major articles in this issue make plain, the King James version of the English Bible, as well as the predecessors that led up to it, have been mightily used of God to spread His truth throughout the world.

One need not acquiesce to the superstitions of the extreme forms of "King-James-Onlyism" in order to appreciate the accuracy, beauty and eloquence that were attained by the translators of the Authorized Version. It has been and continues to be a wonderful, useful English translation of Scripture. The story of its development reminds us that our Book has come to us from blood-stained hands. Furthermore, when one compares the vibrancy of Christian faith that characterized the Puritan era that gave us the KJV to that of the modern era with all of our modern translations, it becomes painfully obvious that a multitude of translations does not necessarily mean an increase in spiritual health.

So on this auspicious occasion of its 400th anniversary, let all English speaking Christians thank God for His mercy in giving us the Scriptures in our heart language. And let us likewise pray that He will raise up others who will do the hard work to make His Word known in the languages of the world's remaining unreached people groups so that His truth will continue to spread throughout the earth. ☺

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# “Zeal to Promote the Common Good”

## *The Story of the King James Bible<sup>1</sup>*

*Michael A.G. Haykin*

This article was published in *The Banner of Truth* magazine, issue 572 (June 2011). Reprinted by permission.

“Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water...” —Miles Smith<sup>2</sup>

The sixteenth century was one of the great eras of English Bible translation. Between 1526, when William Tyndale’s superlative rendition of the New Testament was printed, and 1611, when the King James Bible (KJB), or Authorized Bible, appeared, no less than ten English-language Bible versions were published.<sup>3</sup> The translators of the KJB were quite conscious of their deep indebtedness to this beehive of translation activity that preceded their work. As they noted in the “Preface” of the KJB, drawn up by the Puritan Miles Smith (1554–1624), who had been among those responsible for the translation of the Old Testament prophets and who had also taken part in the final revision of the entirety of the Old Testament, they had not sought to “make a new translation.” Rather, it had been their “endeavour” or “mark” to “make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one.”<sup>4</sup> And of those many good versions that preceded the KJB, two especially deserve mention in any sketch of the history of the KJB: Tyndale’s New Testament and the Geneva Bible.

### William Tyndale and his duty

“Widely acknowledged as the most formative influence on the text of the King James Bible,”<sup>5</sup> the New Testament of William Tyndale (c.1494–1536) comprises some four-fifths of the KJB New Testament.<sup>6</sup> Tyndale’s deep-rooted conviction, formed by the early 1520s, that the Scriptures were essential to the reformation of the Church in England had led him ultimately to Germany, where

he found a competent die-cutter and printer, Peter Schöffer the younger, to publish his newly-translated New Testament in 1526 at his print-shop in Worms. Schöffer initially ran off a print-run of either three or six thousand copies.<sup>7</sup> The seven hundred or so pages of text of this New Testament was in a black-letter or Gothic font and printed in a compact octavo format, clearly designed to be carried with ease. There were no verse divisions, which did not come into vogue until the Geneva New Testament of 1557, but only simple chapter breaks. It was devoid of prologue and marginal notes, both of which would be found in later editions of the Tyndale New Testament and other later Tudor Bibles. Only three copies survive today: an imperfect one in the library of St. Paul's Cathedral that is lacking the first seventy-one leaves; a copy that was owned by Bristol Baptist College, the oldest Baptist seminary in the world, since the mid-eighteenth century and that was sold in 1994 to the British Library for over a million pounds to be the centrepiece of an celebratory exhibit on the life of Tyndale; and a third copy recently discovered in the Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart, Germany.<sup>8</sup>

As Henry Wansbrough has noted, Tyndale's translation is "a staggering achievement," for he translated the entirety of the Greek New Testament into English, without any access to other similar English-language translations, for there were none.<sup>9</sup> However, when Tyndale's version appeared in England, it received vitriolic criticism by such literary and ecclesial figures as Thomas More (1478–1535) and Cuthbert Tunstall (1474–1559), the Bishop of London, who said that it was "naughtily translated."<sup>10</sup> More, for example, criticized Tyndale for translating *πρεσβύτερος* by the term "elder" or "senior" instead of "priest" and for rendering *ἐκκλησία* as "congregation" and not "church." The English term "priest" actually derives from the Greek *πρεσβύτερος* and is therefore not at all a translation of the Greek word. Moreover, embedded in it is the idea of one who performs sacrifice, which is hardly an associated idea of *πρεσβύτερος*. As for the use of congregation instead of church as a translation of *ἐκκλησία*, the latter had become solely a technical term in ecclesiastical jargon, which was hardly the case with regard to *ἐκκλησία* the New Testament era.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Tyndale was also following the example of Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), a friend of both Tunstall and More, who sometimes rendered *ἐκκλησία* as *congregatio* in his own Latin rendition of the Greek New Testament he prepared to accompany his editions of the Greek text from 1516 onwards.<sup>12</sup>

Today it is clear that Tyndale had a solid handle on the Greek language, its grammar and idioms, shades of meaning and idiosyncrasies. A further example of his knowledge of Greek is found in Philemon 7, which Tyndale rightly translates, "For by thee (brother) the saints' hearts are comforted."<sup>13</sup> The KJB translators later rendered this verse as "the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother," taking the Greek word *σπλάγχνα* literally as "bowels." But Tyndale rightly recognized that *σπλάγχνα* is a metaphor for "heart" and thus should not be translated literally.

Equally important was Tyndale's impressive grasp of the words and rhythms of the spoken English of his day. He knew how to render the Scriptures into the

English vernacular so that they spoke with verve and power. In fact, as David Daniell notes, what strikes a present-day reader is how modern Tyndale's translation seems.<sup>14</sup> For instance, in contrast to the KJB rendering of Romans 5:2—"we have access by faith"—Tyndale has the much more modern sounding "we have a way in through faith."<sup>15</sup> "It is a sure thing" (Philippians 3:1)<sup>16</sup> is far more contemporary an expression than "it is safe" (KJB). Or consider his punchy version of 2 Kings 4:28—he began to work on the Old Testament in early 1530s—"thou shouldest not bring me in a fool's paradise." The KJB version is quite sedate in comparison, "do not deceive me."<sup>17</sup>

In 1528 Tyndale allowed his name to appear in print for the first time with the publication in Antwerp of his exposition of Luke 16:1–12, *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*.<sup>18</sup> In his prologue "To the Reader" Tyndale noted that some people asked him why he had bothered writing the book since his Roman Catholic opponents would burn it, "seeing they burnt the gospel [that is, the New Testament]," a reference to the burning of a significant quantity of the 1526 Worms New Testament at Cuthbert Tunstall's behest. Tyndale's response takes us to the very heart of his understanding of his calling to be a translator: "In burning the new Testament they did none other thing than that I looked for: no more shall they do, if they burn me also, if it be God's will it shall so be. Nevertheless, in translating the New Testament I did my duty..."<sup>19</sup>

The impact of Tyndale's doing his duty is well seen in an event that took place nearly thirty years after he wrote these words. One of his friends, John Rogers (1500–1555), who played the central role in the 1537 publication of "Matthew's Bible" that included much of Tyndale's translation work, was on trial for heresy. It was during the reign of Mary I (1516–1558), known to history as "bloody Mary" because of her brutal execution of nearly three hundred Protestants in a misguided attempt to take the evangelical Church of England back to Rome.<sup>20</sup> Rogers' case was being heard by Stephen Gardiner (d.1555), Mary I's Lord Chancellor. At one point, Gardiner told Rogers: "thou canst prove nothing by the Scripture, the Scripture is dead: it must have a lively [i.e. living] expositor." "No," Rogers replied, "the Scripture is alive."<sup>21</sup> Undoubtedly Rogers is thinking of Hebrews 4:12, but his conviction is also rooted in the fact that Tyndale's rendering of the Scriptures in "English plain style"<sup>22</sup> had played a key role, by God's grace, in the Scriptures becoming a vehicle of life-changing power among the English people.<sup>23</sup>

## The Geneva Bible

During the Marian reign of terror, about a thousand English and Scottish Protestants fled to the European continent, and found places of refuge in Reformed locales like Zurich and Geneva. At this time Geneva was a major centre of biblical scholarship with more than thirty publishing houses. In the 1550s alone these publishers printed new editions of both the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, supervised at least eight printings of the French Bible and translations of the Scriptures into Italian and Spanish.<sup>24</sup> It is not at all surprising that in such a cli-

mate the English and Scottish exiles began to plan a new translation of the Bible in 1556 that would eventually be published four years later and that would come to be known as the Geneva Bible. Like all of the English Bibles of this era, except for that of Tyndale, it was the joint product of a group of scholars.

The main translator and editor appears to have been William Whittingham (c.1524–1579), a fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, who was one of the most competent Greek linguists of the day and also fluent in both French and German.<sup>25</sup> Among the sources that Whittingham used was the 1553 edition of the French Bible of Pierre Olivétain (1506–1538), whose New Testament had been corrected by Olivétain's cousin, the great Reformer John Calvin (1509–1564).<sup>26</sup> It is not clear whether Whittingham was responsible for the translation of the Old Testament. What is certain, according to David Daniell, is that the Geneva Bible's Old Testament has a "wonderful richness" and "Britain was truly blessed in the men who made it."<sup>27</sup>

Along with its superb translation of the Old and New Testaments, the Geneva Bible contained a running commentary on the whole Bible in the form of marginal notes, what Patrick Collinson has called a "portable library of divinity."<sup>28</sup> As shall be seen, some of these marginal notes would infuriate King James I and bias him against this version. The majority of the notes contain helpful explanations of the text. Occasionally there is exhortation and application. For example, with regard to Genesis 24:58 ("And they called Rebekah and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man?"), the marginal note commented: "This sheweth that parents have not authoritie to marry their children without consent of the parties." Contrary to an impression transmitted among some historians of the English Bible,<sup>29</sup> no more than ten of the original marginal notes, outside of the Book of Revelation, were barbed attacks on other religious perspectives of that era, notably that of the Roman Catholic Church. The marginal notes to the book of Revelation, however, do contain a significant amount of apocalyptic speculation some of which explicitly targets the Roman Church and the Papacy.<sup>30</sup> For example, the sternest marginal note in this regard is an explanation of the judgment of painful sores in Revelation 16:2. The note likens this judgment to that of the sixth plague of Egypt and that which "reigneth commonly among canons, monks, friars, nuns, priests, and such filthy vermin which bear the mark of the beast." This is strong stuff, but, as Daniell comments, its tone is not the norm even among the apocalyptic notes on Revelation.<sup>31</sup>

With the death of Queen Mary in 1558 and the accession of her half-sister Elizabeth to the throne—"our Deborah" and "our Judith," as Edwin Sandys (1519–1588), one of the Marian exiles and a translator of the Bishops' Bible, called her<sup>32</sup>—there was no longer any doubt that England and Wales were firmly in the Protestant orbit. The question that now came to the fore, though, was to what extent the Elizabethan church would be reformed. By the 1560s it was evident that Elizabeth was content with a church that was something of a hybrid: committed to Reformation truth but tolerating a variety of things in its worship that were left over from the Middle Ages for which there was no biblical sanction.<sup>33</sup>



It was as a response to this situation that the Puritans, many of them Marian exiles, emerged in the 1560s. Their expressed goal was to reform the Elizabethan church after the model of the churches in Protestant Switzerland, in particular those in Geneva and Zürich. And their Bible was the Geneva Bible. It was, in part, because of this identification of the Geneva Bible with the Puritan party that the episcopal establishment promoted a new translation, the Bishops' Bible, which saw the light of day in 1568. Though accurate in much of its rendering of the Hebrew and Greek, the Bible was a massive disappointment. Derek Wilson explains: the Bible was "rendered in stiff, cold English. It lacked the fluidity, the warmth of the version which the close-knit group of exiles had infused into the Geneva Bible."<sup>34</sup>

The failure of the Bishops' Bible to replace the popularity of the Geneva Bible is well seen by comparing the number of editions of these two Bibles. Between 1560 and 1611, there over 120 editions of the Geneva Bible, with an edition every year from 1575 to 1618 (seven years after the appearance of the King James Bible). By comparison there were only twenty-two editions of the Bishops' Bible between 1568 and 1611.<sup>35</sup> It is noteworthy that it was the Geneva Bible that was the Bible of that premier Elizabethan and Jacobean word-smith, William Shakespeare (1564–1616), not the Bishops' Bible.

### A Puritan proposal of a new translation

The accession of James VI (1566–1625) of Scotland to the English throne as James I was greeted by the Puritans with a deep measure of joyful expectation, for James had been raised within the bosom of the Church of Scotland, one of the most Reformed bodies in Europe. They wrongly assumed that a man with such a pedigree would be amenable to their theological and liturgical concerns, which were quite similar to those of their Scottish brethren. They were wrong. James was imbued with a deeply-rooted conviction of the divine right of kings, namely, that the monarch derives his political legitimacy from God alone and therefore cannot be held accountable by any earthly authority. As such he found the fundamental hierarchical arrangement of the episcopal Church of England much more to his liking than the more egalitarian presbyterianism of Scotland, which was far more difficult for a monarch with James' convictions to control.<sup>36</sup> As James said early on in his reign in England, presbyterianism "agreeth as well with a monarchy as God and the devil!"<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, when James was presented with a list of Puritan grievances in what has come to be called the *Millenary Petition* (1603) at the very outset of his reign, he agreed to listen to them at a duly-called conference at Hampton Court near London in January, 1604.<sup>38</sup>

Four moderate Puritans were invited to present the concerns of their fellows to the king: John Rainolds (1549–1607), president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who acted as the spokesman; Laurence Chaderton (1537–1640), master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, a distinguished Hebraist and Greek scholar and also one of the great preachers of that era;<sup>39</sup> John Knewstubs (1544–1624),

a Suffolk rector and Thomas Sparke (1548–1616), a minister from Lincolnshire. Also invited to the conference, which stretched over five days, from Saturday, January 14 to Wednesday, January 18, were nine bishops of the Church of England, including Richard Bancroft (1544–1610), the Bishop of London who became the Archbishop of Canterbury a couple of months later, and seven deans, one of whom was the famous Lancelot Andrewes (1555–1626), whose mastery of fifteen languages and a wealth of theological and ecclesiastical knowledge rightly earned him the reputation of being one of the most learned men in England. Andrewes would be among the KJB translators.

It needs noting that some of the bishops were actually good friends of their Puritan counterparts. Rainolds' oldest friend was there the first day of the conference, Henry Robinson (c.1553–1616), the Bishop of Carlisle, an evangelical Calvinist like Rainolds and the other Puritans. As Adam Nicolson has rightly noted, "there was more uniting these [two] men than dividing them."<sup>40</sup> Chaderton and Knewstubs used to regularly spend time with Andrewes when the three of them were students at Cambridge, and Chaderton was actually at one time Bancroft's best friend, though the latter was now rabidly opposed to the Puritanism represented by Chaderton.<sup>41</sup> In total, there were eighteen adversaries of the Puritan party at the conference. The odds were clearly stacked in favour of the episcopal opposition to the Puritans and, in the final analysis, none of the Puritans' concerns were really addressed. Although the king's dealings with the bishops could hardly be called mild, he was sternness itself with the Puritans. He later said that he had "peppered them" and forced them so to flee "from argument to argument" that none of them could answer him directly.<sup>42</sup> The total failure of the conference from the point of view of the Puritans led to the radicalization of certain figures in the movement, who became committed to congregationalism, despairing of any hope of further magisterial reform.<sup>43</sup>

It was on the second day of the conference, Monday, January 16, as the mid-winter sun was going down in the afternoon, that Rainolds proposed that there be "one only translation of the Bible to be authentic and read in the churches."<sup>44</sup> This seems a surprising proposal, coming as it did from a Puritan who would have been expected to have been content with the Geneva Bible, so beloved of the Puritan party. Adam Nicolson plausibly suggests Rainolds might have had in mind a revision of the Bishops' Bible, which Elizabeth I, had promoted as the official Bible of the English church, and which, despite the sumptuousness of its printed appearance, had never been popular with either the people or the Puritans, as already noted. Moreover, it was undoubtedly the poorest translation overall of the Tudor Bibles.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, David Daniell, followed by Derek Wilson, believes that Rainolds was thinking of the advances that had been made in Hebrew and Greek scholarship over the fifty years that lay between his proposal and the publication of the Geneva Bible and that this alone necessitated a new work.<sup>46</sup>

Whatever Rainolds' motivation, James leapt upon the new proposal with zest, for he despised the Puritans' Geneva Bible. This had been the version that his redoubtable tutor, George Buchanan (1506–1582), had drilled into him when he

was a young boy.<sup>47</sup> It was also this version that was favoured by the Scottish presbytery, of whom James was not enamoured, as has been seen.<sup>48</sup> At a number of places this translation challenged his concept of an absolute monarchy. The word “tyrant,” for instance, appeared around thirty times in the 1599 edition of the Geneva Bible. It is not found even once in the version that James will authorize.<sup>49</sup> Then, in the notes accompanying the text of Exodus 1, the midwives are commended for their disobedience of Pharaoh’s command to kill the newborn Hebrew males at birth. “Their disobedience herein was lawful,” the note to verse 19 read, though their lying to Pharaoh to cover up their disobedience was plainly designated as “evil.” It should occasion no surprise that, in the list of guidelines for the new translation James would specify that “no marginal notes at all [were] to be affixed” to the text except those that were absolutely necessary for the explanation of the underlying Hebrew or Greek.<sup>50</sup>

### Translating for King James

In the days following the Hampton Court Conference, six panels of translators were appointed: two to work at Westminster on Genesis through to 2 Kings and on the letters of the New Testament; two at Cambridge University on 1 Chronicles to the Song of Songs and on the Apocrypha; and two at Oxford University translating the prophets as well as the Gospels, Acts and Revelation. There is no scholarly consensus about the total number of those involved first in translating and then in editing and revising. Of scholars writing recently on the history of the KJB, Alister McGrath lists forty-seven actual translators, while Gordon Campbell’s list, which includes those involved in the later stages of revision, comes in at fifty-seven.<sup>51</sup> Of these, there were only half a dozen or so, including Rainolds and Chaderton, who were clearly Puritan in their sympathies. Moreover, they were, for the most part, seasoned scholars. In the words of Gordon Campbell, “the learning embodied in the men of these six companies is daunting.”<sup>52</sup>

James actually wanted the Bishops’ Bible retained as the standard, and the new translation more of a revision than actual translation. The royal printer, Robert Barker (d.1645), thus provided forty copies of the 1602 printing of the Bishops’ Bible for the use of the translators.<sup>53</sup> As it turned out, though, the KJB was very much a fresh translation with the major literary influence, as has been observed, being that of Tyndale and not the Bishops’ Bible.

Each of the six companies worked separately at first on the portion of the Bible assigned to it. Historians have only the sparsest of details about exactly how the translators carried out their work—it is still quite “mysterious,” is the way that David Norton puts it.<sup>54</sup> Part of the evidence about the work of translation is a list of fifteen instructions drawn up by Bancroft as essential guidelines for the six companies. The close use of the Bishops’ Bible as an exemplar was the first of these instructions, although the fourteenth directive allowed the translators to look at other earlier translations, including Tyndale’s and the Geneva Bible. There is every indication that the other instructions were also carefully observed.<sup>55</sup> For instance,

Bancroft had instructed the translators to keep “the old ecclesiastical words,” so that “the word *church*” was “not to be translated *congregation*.” This is obviously a rejection of Tyndale’s preferred way of translating ἐκκλησία. As a result, although the word congregation is frequently used for the people of God in the Old Testament, it is never used for the church in the New Testament.<sup>56</sup> But observance of this instruction was also a way of rejecting some elements of Puritan theology, as Miles Smith’s “Preface” noted: “we have...avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave the old ecclesiastical words, and betake them to other, as when they put *washing* for *baptism* and *congregation* instead of *church*.”<sup>57</sup>

Work on the translation had definitely begun by August 1604, and all of the companies seemed to have completed their assignments by 1608. These initial drafts were then vetted in 1610 over a period of nine months by a special review committee of between six and twelve men that met in London. We know the names of only three, possibly four, of the individuals on this review committee.<sup>58</sup> One of them was John Bois (1560–1643), a former fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge, whose notes from the discussions of the committee of revisers are the only ones extant and which will be discussed in more detail below.<sup>59</sup> The work of this committee then went through the hands of two more men, one of whom was Miles Smith, who wrote the “Preface” to the KJB. Finally it was looked over by Archbishop Bancroft. So, towards the close of 1610, the manuscript was given to the royal printer, Robert Barker, to print.<sup>60</sup>

### John Bois’ notebooks

A fascinating glimpse into the mechanics of the revision committee is provided by the notes of John Bois, which were long thought lost, but two copies of which have been discovered by Ward Allen and David Norton in 1969 and 1996 respectively.<sup>61</sup> Bois had been reading Greek and Hebrew from the age of at least six, having been tutored by his father. Not surprisingly, by the time that he studied at Cambridge his knowledge of the biblical languages was extensive. After he married in 1596, he resigned his fellowship and took a small country parsonage in the village of Boxworth, eight miles north-west of Cambridge. He would ride over to Cambridge each week to work with the committee assigned the translation of the Apocrypha. And later, when the revision committee was assembled in 1610, Bois was asked to serve on it. Up to this point neither he nor any of his fellow translators had received any financial remuneration for their labours, but during the course of the nine months that Bois was in London, he, along with the other members of the revision committee, was given thirty shillings per week.<sup>62</sup>

Bois’ notes, taken down during the course of daily meetings, reveal the revisers discussing the various shades of meaning a word can have, making grammatical points and debating them, sometimes with great vehemence, but always striving to find translations acceptable to the majority of the committee. Few of the suggested translations in the notes appear to have made it into the 1611 KJB. One that did was Bois’ suggestion at 2 Corinthians 7:1 that the Greek ἐπιτελούντες

ἀγιωσύνην should be translated as “perfecting holynesse.”<sup>63</sup> Another of Bois’ suggestions that was adopted at this revision stage was the phrase “being knit together in love” from Colossians 2:2.<sup>64</sup> Often, though, Bois’ wordings were passed up in favour of another, better rendering. When, at Titus 2:10, Bois wanted “no filchers,” an Elizabethan slang term for a petty thief, the committee stuck with “not purloining”—both equally obscure words for today’s reader.<sup>65</sup>

On occasion Bois included the suggestions of the other revisers. For example, Bois notes that Andrew Downes (c.1549–1628), who had been his Greek tutor at Cambridge and who had been quite reluctant to spend nine months in the English capital, remarked that if the words about Christ in Hebrews 13:8 were arranged in this manner “yesterday, and today the same, and for ever,” then “the statement will seem more majestic.”<sup>66</sup> His fellow committee members, though, went with “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” Adam Nicolson rightly observes that Downes’ remark about the phrase appearing more “majestic” reveals a key aspect of the translation that the revisers wanted it to have beyond fidelity to the original and clarity, and that is majesty and grandeur of style.<sup>67</sup>

## The initial reception of the KJB

The early printings of the KJB, David Norton observes, were challenging for the printer Robert Barker since he was under considerable pressure “to produce as much as possible as fast as possible.”<sup>68</sup> Thus, early print-runs were marred by a variety of typographical errors, of which the most famous was probably the “Wicked Bible” (1631), so named because the word “not” was omitted from the seventh commandment of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:14), turning it into a positive admonition: “Thou shalt commit adultery.”<sup>69</sup> A close runner-up to this typo has to be the one that occurred in a 1612 printing, the first octavo edition. Where the Psalmist says, “Princes have persecuted me without a cause” (119:161), this edition reads, “Printers have persecuted me without a cause.” Norton thinks this must have been an “error” deliberately introduced into the text by a disgruntled employee in Barker’s workshop!<sup>70</sup>

Despite such typos as these the episcopal establishment enthusiastically supported the new translation. They hoped it would help stem the tide of radical Puritanism and promote ecclesial unity.<sup>71</sup> The Puritan wing of the Church of England were not so enthusiastic, and they continued to support the printing of the Geneva Bible, the last edition of which rolled off the press as late as 1644. It would not be until the early pastoral ministry of the Puritan John Bunyan (1628–1688) in the late 1650s that the KJB would begin to shake the hold of the Geneva Bible over the English Puritan community. In fact, it is fascinating to find a spiritual descendant of these Puritans, a London Baptist by the name of Richard Hall (1729–1801), using a 1578 edition of the Geneva Bible as the family Bible in the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup> The Geneva Bible long retained its hold on the mindset of those committed to religious radicalism.

The severest critic of the KJB, though, has to have been Hugh Broughton (1549–1612), possibly the most distinguished Hebraist in Europe and who expected to have been among the translators of the KJB but was passed over, probably because of his combative spirit and violent temper. In the 1590s Broughton had tried without success to convince the Archbishop of Canterbury, then John Whitgift (c.1530–1604), to establish a committee of six scholars, including himself, to revise the English Bible.<sup>73</sup> He was sent a copy of the KJB almost as soon as it came off the press with the hope that he would give it a positive commendation. Vain hope! His response was a blistering eight-page pamphlet, which pointed out some of the faults of the new translation and which began thus:

The late Bible...was sent to me to censure: which bred in me a sadness that will grieve me while I breathe. It is so ill done. ...I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses, than any such translation by my consent should be urged upon poor churches. ...The new edition crosseth me, I require it be burnt.<sup>74</sup>

In the “Preface” attached to the KJB when it was first published, the author of this prefatory text, Miles Smith, commented about the ultimate reason for the translation of the KJB and what it would undoubtedly engender. It was “zeal to promote the common good” that had led the translators to labour on the KJB. Such a zeal “deserveth certainly much respect and esteem,” but if truth be told, Smith went on, it “findeth but cold entertainment in the world.”<sup>75</sup> Broughton’s diatribe therefore would not have surprised Smith and his fellow translators. But thankfully no one listened to Broughton; the KJB was not burnt; and, in the due course of providence, it became *the* version of the English Bible that made the English-speaking peoples a people of the Book.<sup>76</sup>☺

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> This paper was originally given as one of two lectures in the Staley Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series at Charleston Southern University, Charleston, SC, March 8, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> “Preface to the Authorised (King James) Version, 1611”, par. 5 [Gerald Bray, *Translating the Bible from William Tyndale to King James* (London: The Latimer Trust, 2010), 211–212].

<sup>3</sup> The major ones were, in chronological order, the Bible of Miles Coverdale (1535), “Matthew’s Bible” (1537), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishops’ Bible (1568), and the Roman Catholic Douai-Rheims Bible (1582/1610). For details, see David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003). For an older, but still very useful, study of these various versions, see F.F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English: From the earliest versions* (3rd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> “Preface to the Authorised (King James) Version, 1611”, par. 13 [Gerald Bray, *Translating the Bible from William Tyndale to King James* (London: The Latimer Trust, 2010), 228]. On Smith, see Edward Irving Carlyle “Smith, Miles”, *The Compact Edition*

of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), II, 1948; Gustavus S. Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version* (1959 ed.; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), *passim*; John Tiller, “In the Steps of William Tyndale: Miles Smith as Bible Translator” (Paper given at Gloucester Cathedral, October 6, 1998; <http://www.tyndale.org/TSJ/11/tiller.html>).

<sup>5</sup> 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), 67.

<sup>6</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 136. In his definitive biography of Tyndale, Daniell speaks of “nine-tenths” of the KJB New Testament having come from the Tyndale New Testament [*William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1994), 1]. Henry Wansbrough has a lower percentage: “for the portions of the Bible translated by Tyndale, between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the King James Version is verbatim Tyndale’s version” [“Tyndale” in Richard Griffiths, ed., *The Bible in the Renaissance: Essays on Biblical Commentary and Translation in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Aldershot, Hampshire/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), 127–128].

<sup>7</sup> It is not clear how large the first print-run was. See Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 134.

<sup>8</sup> David Daniell, “Introduction” to William Tyndale, trans., *The New Testament. A Facsimile of the 1526 Edition* (London: The British Library/Peabody, MA, 2008), [ix–x].

<sup>9</sup> There was, of course, the Lollard Bible, but that was a translation out of Latin. Wansbrough believes Tyndale was familiar with this Bible. See “Tyndale” in Griffiths, ed., *Bible in the Renaissance*, 129–131.

<sup>10</sup> Cited Wansbrough, “Tyndale” in Griffiths, ed., *Bible in the Renaissance*, 129, modernized.

<sup>11</sup> Wansbrough, “Tyndale” in Griffiths, ed., *Bible in the Renaissance*, 128–129.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, 41.

<sup>13</sup> In the citations of Tyndale, I am using David Daniell’s modern-spelling edition of the 1534 edition of Tyndale’s New Testament: *Tyndale’s New Testament* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995). Philemon 7 can be found on page 324.

<sup>14</sup> Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 135.

<sup>15</sup> *Tyndale’s New Testament*, 229. For this example and those that follow, I am indebted to Daniell, *Bible in English*, 137.

<sup>16</sup> *Tyndale’s New Testament*, 291.

<sup>17</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 137.

<sup>18</sup> On this book, see Daniell, *William Tyndale*, 155–173.

<sup>19</sup> *Doctrinal Treatises and Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures*, ed. Henry Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848), 43–44.

<sup>20</sup> For an excellent, albeit popular, overview of Mary’s reign of religious terror, see Andrew Atherstone, *The Martyrs of Mary Tudor* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2005). For a recent revisionist perspective, see Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. Stephen Reed Cattle (London: R.B. Seeley & W. Burnside, 1838), VI, 596. On Rogers, see especially Tim Shenton, *John Rogers—sealed with blood* (Leominster, Hertfordshire: Day One Publications, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 158.

<sup>23</sup> See Daniell, *Bible in English*, 157–159 for his discussion of the legacy of Tyndale.

<sup>24</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 292–293; Lloyd E. Berry, “Introduction to the Facsimile Edition” in *The Geneva Bible. A Facsimile of the 1560 edition* (Madison, WI/London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 7.

<sup>25</sup> Berry, “Introduction to the Facsimile Edition”, 8. For an excellent discussion of

Whittingham as an editor, see Basil Hall, "The Genevan Version of the English Bible: Its Aims and Achievements" in W. P. Stephens, ed., *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church: Essays in Honour of James Atkinson* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 127–137. On the Geneva Bible, see Daniell, *Bible in English*, 275–319.

<sup>26</sup> Hall, "Genevan Version of the English Bible" in Stephens, ed., *Bible, the Reformation and the Church*, 140–143. Whittingham was related to Calvin through marriage to his wife's sister, Katherine.

<sup>27</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 315.

<sup>28</sup> Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967 ed.; reprint, New York: Methuen & co., 1982), 365.

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Milton P. Brown, *To Hear the Word. Invitation to Serious Study of the Bible* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 126: "with the Geneva Bible marginal notes became a vehicle of Protestant propaganda"; Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 249, where mention is made of the Geneva Bible's "highly contentious notes"; and Derek Wilson, *The People's Bible: The Remarkable History of the King James Version* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010), 66: "The notes made the book the most effective piece of propaganda the Calvinist party ever produced."

<sup>30</sup> Hall, "Genevan Version of the English Bible" in Stephens, ed., *Bible, the Reformation and the Church*, 143–144.

<sup>31</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 313. With successive editions of the Geneva Bible, the notes underwent significant expansion. By 1599, the notes to the New Testament had been significantly increased with additions by Laurence Thomson, one of the original translators of the Geneva Bible. Thomson's annotations to the Book of Revelation came from the Huguenot author Franciscus Junius the Elder (1545–1602). See Berry, "Introduction to the Facsimile Edition", 16–17.

<sup>32</sup> *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys. D.D.*, ed. John Ayre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1841), 81.

<sup>33</sup> Robert C. Walton, *The Gathered Community* (London: The Carey Press, 1946), 59.

<sup>34</sup> Wilson, *People's Bible*, 69.

<sup>35</sup> Berry, "Introduction to the Facsimile Edition", 14.

<sup>36</sup> Wilson, *People's Bible*, 80–81.

<sup>37</sup> Cited Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 56, modernized.

<sup>38</sup> For the *Millenary Petition*, see Lawrence A. Sasek, ed., *Images of English Puritanism: A Collection of Contemporary Sources 1589–1646* (Baton Rouge/London: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 338–341.

<sup>39</sup> The story is told of one occasion when Chaderton had been preaching for two hours, and fearing to tax his hearers' patience any more, he prepared to bring his sermon to a close. The congregation, however, cried out, "For God's sake, sir, go on, go on!" Cited Wilson, *People's Bible*, 83. For Chaderton, see H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 239–241 and Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 130–131.

<sup>40</sup> Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 45.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 45–46.

<sup>42</sup> Cited Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 54, modernized.

<sup>43</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 432. See Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 42–61 for the details of the conference.

<sup>44</sup> Cited Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 57, modernized.

<sup>45</sup> On the Bishops' Bible, see Daniell, *Bible in English*, 338–347.



<sup>46</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 435–436; Wilson, *People's Bible*, 86–87. Either Nicolson's suggestion or that of Daniell would answer the query of Leland Ryken: "Why did the Puritans ask for a new translation of the Bible when their preferred Bible—the Geneva—was the well-established best seller of its day?" [*The Legacy of the King James Bible. Celebrating 400 Years of the Most Influential English Translation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 46].

<sup>47</sup> On Buchanan and his tutelage of the young King James, see the recent popular sketch in David Teems, *Majestie: The King Behind the King James Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 40–49.

<sup>48</sup> Basil Hall, "The Genevan Version of the English Bible: Its Aims and Achievements" in W. P. Stephens, ed., *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church: Essays in Honour of James Atkinson* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 125–126.

<sup>49</sup> Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 58, alerted me to this fact, though he claims that "tyrant" "occurs over 400 times" in the text of the Geneva Bible. A search of a PDF of the 1599 edition yielded only thirty or so occurrences. Is he referring to the text of the original 1560 edition?

<sup>50</sup> For all of the guidelines, see David Norton, *A Textual History of The King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 7–8.

<sup>51</sup> McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 178–182; Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611–2011* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 276–293. For the division of labour among the six companies, see McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 178–182; Wilson, *People's Bible*, 92. It is interesting that virtually all of those involved in the translation were from the south of England (McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 182).

<sup>52</sup> Campbell, *Bible*, 55.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 56–57. On certain peculiarities of the Bishops' Bible, see Norton, *Textual History*, 35–36.

<sup>54</sup> For the sources available, see Norton, *Textual History*, 11–28. For the quote, see Norton, *Textual History*, 27.

<sup>55</sup> For the list, see Campbell, *Bible*, 35–42.

<sup>56</sup> The sole instance of the term in the New Testament is in Acts 13:43.

<sup>57</sup> "Preface to the Authorised (King James) Version, 1611", par. 15 (Bray, *Translating the Bible*, 234).

<sup>58</sup> For the chronology, see Anthony Walker, *The Life of that famous Grecian Mr. John Bois* 5.8–9 [in Ward Allen, trans. and ed., *Translating for King James* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 139–140]; Campbell, *Bible*, 61.

<sup>59</sup> For these notes, see Allen, trans. and ed., *Translating for King James*, 36–113. For a discussion of Bois and his notes, see also Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*, 201–215. Nicolson suggests that Bois served as the committee's amanuensis and that his notes might have been the only ones written down (*God's Secretaries*, 208–209).

<sup>60</sup> On Barker, see McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 197–199 and Daniell, *Bible in English*, 452–455.

<sup>61</sup> Campbell, *Bible*, 64.

<sup>62</sup> Walker, Mr. John Bois 5.9 (in Allen, trans. and ed., *Translating for King James*, 141).

<sup>63</sup> Allen, trans. and ed., *Translating for King James*, 51.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>67</sup> *God's Secretaries*, 211–212.

<sup>68</sup> Norton, *Textual History*, 64.

<sup>69</sup> Daniell, *Bible in English*, 460.

<sup>70</sup> Roger A. Bullard, “Zeal to Promote the Common Good (the King James Version)” in Lloyd R. Bailey, ed., *The Word of God. A Guide to English Versions of the Bible* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 193; Norton, *Textual History*, 25, 74.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson, *People’s Bible*, 124.

<sup>72</sup> Mike Rendell, ed., *The Journal of A Georgian Gentleman: The Life and Times of Richard Hall, 1729–1801* (Brighton, Sussex: Book Guild Publishing, 2011), 30–32.

<sup>73</sup> Norton, *Textual History*, 5, n.2.

<sup>74</sup> *A Censure of the late translation for our Churches* ([Middleburg: R. Schilders, 1611?]), [1, 3].

<sup>75</sup> “Preface to the Authorised (King James) Version, 1611”, par. 1 (Bray, *Translating the Bible*, 203).

<sup>76</sup> In fact, as Patrick Collinson has pointed out: “the English Bible became the prime text of the Reformation to an extent not seen anywhere else in Europe. A Victorian historian of the English people was able to say that by the lifetime of Shakespeare they had become the people of a book, the Book. Modern bibliographical research has borne out J. R. Green” [*The Reformation. A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 44].

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# The Geneva Bible and Its Influence on the King James Bible

*Matthew Barrett*

The year 2011 brings the four hundredth anniversary of the King James Bible (1611). Numerous publications abound this year, retelling the story of the KJV as well as the impact it has had on English literature since the seventeenth century. However, what cannot be ignored as we celebrate the fine translation of the KJV is the version that preceded it, the Geneva Bible (GB). It is the purpose of this essay to briefly explore the relationship between the GB and the KJV, especially the negative and positive influence the former had on the latter.

## The Geneva Bible

### Marian Exiles in Geneva

The Protestant Reformation first ignited by Martin Luther in 1517 was a contagious fire, impossible to put out. To the frustration of Rome, the *solas* of the Reformation would not be contained with Luther in Wittenberg but would be propagated internationally by many other reformers, perhaps one of the most important being John Calvin (1509–64). Calvin brought the Reformation to Geneva and in no time at all Geneva “became a symbol of the Protestant Reformation,” a city on a hill “whose light could not be hidden.”<sup>1</sup> However, in contrast to the monarchies of surrounding territories, the city of Geneva stood in a unique situation as a republic, which certainly challenged the traditional establishment of church and state. Therefore, when Protestants began being persecuted not only in France but also in England, many sought safe haven in Geneva, taking advantage of the opportunity to study under Calvin. The influx of refugees was so enormous that from 1500 to 1550 the population escalated from 5,000 to 13,100. In 1560 the population had climbed to over 21,400.

While French refugees were the majority in Geneva, there were many Marian exiles as well. Protestants in England had fled to Geneva due to the persecution enforced by Mary Tudor beginning in 1553. Before Mary, Edward VI, a Protestant, invited fellow evangelicals to England, including Regius chair at Oxford Peter Martyr Vermigli and Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge Martin Bucer. However, Edward’s reign (1547–53) came to an abrupt halt at his death in 1553 and with Mary Tudor’s ascension came the establishment of Roman Catholicism

and the persecution of Protestants, earning her the infamous title “Bloody Mary.” At least 800 Protestants fled to cities like Zurich or Geneva (as well as Aarau, Basel, Emden, Frankfurt and Strasbourg). The exile, which some would compare to the exile of Israel to Babylon, would last six years. Yet, these six years (1553–58) were not to be wasted but rather utilized to prepare, study and train for an awaited return to the homeland where the hopes of reformation would again grow into fruition.<sup>2</sup> Such was the case with those Marian exiles in Geneva. There could be no better place for preparation than Calvin’s Geneva, for, as John Knox famously said, Geneva was the most perfect school of Christ. As Alister McGrath observes, one of the most vital weapons the Marian exiles had in their efforts to one day establish a Protestant national church in England was the printing press.<sup>3</sup> The printing press was a tremendous resource for furthering the Reformation, as was evident with the publication of John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, an account of those Foxe knew who were martyred under Henry VIII and Mary Tudor. However, Geneva was also a “center for biblical textual scholarship which resulted in new editions of the Greek and Hebrew texts”<sup>4</sup> and it was the English translation of the Bible in Geneva that would be the “most important single literary production of the Marian exiles.”<sup>5</sup>

## William Whittingham and the Geneva Bible

The Geneva Bible of 1560 was the product of William Whittingham (1524–79). Others contributed as well, including Anthony Gilby (who oversaw the translation of the OT), Thomas Sampson, Christopher Goodman, William Cole, and possibly John Knox, Laurence Tomson, and Miles Coverdale.<sup>6</sup> Whittingham of All Souls’ College, Oxford fled from Mary Tudor, first landing in Frankfurt. After facing discord there he eventually arrived in Geneva where an English speaking congregation was established with John Knox as pastor. Whittingham would succeed John Knox as pastor and marry Catherine Jaquemayne, the sister of Idelette de Bure, John Calvin’s wife. There was perhaps no better place to begin a new Bible translation and commentary. Geneva had the needed resources of theological treatises, biblical commentaries, and academic scholars a Bible translator would have to consult. For example, Theodore Beza, Calvin’s successor, purchased an early NT manuscript, Codex B (Cambridge Mss), and wrote a commentary on the NT titled *Annotations*.<sup>7</sup> Inspired and equipped by works like Beza’s *Annotations*, Whittingham published his translation of the New Testament in English in 1557, a work which relied heavily on Tyndale’s earlier translation in 1526 as well as the Latin translation of the New Testament in 1556 by Beza. The foreword to the translation was Calvin’s “Epistle,” sixteen pages on “Christ is the end of the Lawe.” Here was the beginnings of what would evolve into a translation of the entire Bible by Whittingham.

On November 17, 1558 Mary Tudor died and Elizabeth ascended to the throne, a change filled with good news for Protestant exiles as the Elizabethan “Settlement of Religion” in 1559 protected Protestants in England. Many if not most Marian exiles returned home but Whittingham, funded by John Bodley,

stayed in Geneva another year and a half in order to finish his translation. Upon completion, Whittingham's title page read as follows:

The Bible and Holy Scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testament. Translated according to the Hebrew and Greek, and conferred with the best translations in divers languages. With most profitable annotations upon all the hard places, and other things of great importance as may appear in the "Epistle to the Reader." "Fear not, stand still, and behold the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you this day." Exodus xiv. 13. At Geneva. Printed by Rowland Hall. M.D.LX.

Included was a woodcut, picturing the crossing of the Red Sea. On both sides of the woodcut are biblical passages, not without political meaning for the Marian exiles. The first is from Psalm 34:19, "Great are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth them out of all." The second is Exodus 14:14, "The Lord shall fight for you: therefore hold you your peace." Whittingham dedicated the Geneva Bible to Queen Elizabeth, likely comparing her to Zerubbabel, who rebuilt the Jerusalem temple after the Babylonian captivity, when he said she should be a builder of "the ruins of God's house." The dedication reads in part, "To the most virtuous and noble Queen Elizabeth, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, ... Your humble subjects of the English Church at Geneva, wish grace and peace from God the Father through Christ Jesus our Lord." The dedication, dated April 10, 1560, goes on to warn against the "Papistes" and the necessity of God's Word for the "reforming of religion." Here we see the hope of the Marian exiles for the future establishment of Protestantism in England and the instrumental role the GB could play in such a transition.

But the GB was no ordinary translation. Indeed, the translation was superior to all previous editions and the hallmark commentary became its distinguishing mark. Among others, Bruce Metzger and F. F. Bruce have observed several characteristics that set the GB apart.<sup>8</sup> (1) It pioneered several innovations in content and translation. For example, it used the word "church" when rendering the Greek *ekklesia* instead of Tyndale's and Coverdale's "congregation." Also, Paul is not named the author of Hebrews and James, Peter, 1 John and Jude are for the first time called "General Epistles" rather than the usual "Catholic Epistles" which earlier translations used in the tradition of the Vulgate (cf. the KJV and RV).<sup>9</sup> More significantly still, the OT translation is a "thorough revision of the Great Bible, especially in those books which Tyndale had not translated."<sup>10</sup> Such books had never been directly translated from the Hebrew (or Aramaic) into English. "Now the existing version of the prophetic books and the poetical and wisdom literature of the Old Testament was carefully brought into line with the Hebrew text, and even with the Hebrew idiom."<sup>11</sup> (2) The GB changed several aesthetic appearances. It used readable Roman typeface rather than the obscure Gothic black typeface. It was the first to use numbered verses, each of which began a new paragraph. It was printed in small (6 ½ by 9 ¾) quarto editions and was sold at an affordable price. Also, it was the first to use italics for words added by the transla-

tors, which were designed to make the text more comprehensible to English readers. (3) The GB was in a real sense the first “study” Bible. It provided annotations in the margins of the text, explaining, commenting, and interpreting the meaning of the text for the reader. These brief annotations were designed to help the reader with “all the hard places” and aid one with “words as are obscure.” Also, the GB included prefaces to books of the Bible, chronological charts, maps, illustrations (over 33 of them), and a dictionary of over nine hundred and fifty proper names at the end. While such innovations are common to Bible readers today, in the sixteenth century they were unprecedented. But more to the point, these innovations were grounded in the theological agenda of the Reformation, namely, to accommodate God’s Word for God’s people. No where was this more obvious than in its illustrations, prefaces, annotations, and marginal notes. McGrath explains,

Those who created the Geneva Bible had absorbed Calvin’s famous maxim concerning the need to “accommodate to the ability of the individual.” If God “accommodated himself to human capacity” in communicating with humanity—for example, by using visual images, such as “God as shepherd”—why should not Bibles follow this excellent precedent? The divine sanction for explanation and illustration underlies the distinctive approach of the entire Geneva project, which aims to make the engagement with Scripture as simply as possible for the reader.<sup>12</sup>

The preface to the Geneva Bible makes this very point,

Whereas certain places in the books of Moses, of the Kings and Ezekiel seemed so dark that by no description they could be made easy to the simple reader; we have so set them forth with figures and notes for the full declaration thereof that they ... as it were by the eye may sufficiently know the true meaning of all such places. Whereunto we have added certain maps of cosmography which necessarily serve for the perfect understanding and memory of divers places and countries, partly described and partly by occasion touched, both in the Old and New Testament.

But not only did the Geneva Bible cultivate Bible knowledge but Reformation theology as well. For example, against the Roman Catholic teaching of the day, the notes on Galatians 2:17 clearly set forth the Protestant understanding of justification by faith alone. Also, Revelation 11:7, which says “the beast that made war with the saints” is interpreted as “the Pope, which hath his power out of hell, and commeth thence.” And again, Revelation 17:4 identifies the Antichrist as the Pope (also see Revelation 13:11).<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, it is no surprise that Calvin’s soteriology is evident as well in the marginalia.<sup>14</sup> Metzger observes that on the whole “the number of such pure Calvinistic annotations in the 1560 Bible is not so great as one might suppose would have been the case.”<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Calvinism is still present. Consider the following annotations,

[John 6:37] The gift of faith proceedeth from the free election of the Father in Christ, after which followeth necessarily everlasting life: Therefore faith in Christ Jesus is a sure witness of our election, and therefore of our glorification, which is to come.

[John 6:63] The flesh of Christ doth therefore quicken us, because he that is man, is God: which mystery is only comprehended by faith, which is the gift of God, proper only to the elect.

Moreover, the Calvinistic flavor was made evident by several changes after the 1560 edition. (1) Calvin's theology was encouraged for study as editions of the GB between 1568 and 1570 included Calvin's Catechisms. (2) It was Laurence Tomson (1539–1608) who added more notations to the Bible in 1576, giving the GB a more Calvinistic thrust.<sup>16</sup> (3) Between 1579 and 1615 many editions included "Certaine questions and answeres touching the doctrine of Predestination, the vse of God's word and Sacraments," a catechism of 23 questions and answers, which Metzger and others have recognized as "the most clear and naked exposition of Calvinistic doctrine that can be compressed into a small space."<sup>17</sup> Following Paul in Romans 9, the question is asked "Are all ordained vnto eternal life?" to which the answer is given, "Some are vessels of wrath ordained vnto destruction, as others are vessels of mercie prepared to glory."<sup>18</sup> It is no wonder why William Whitley argued that the Geneva Bible "set forth his [Calvin's] doctrines so well that all Britain was soon Calvinist."<sup>19</sup> After all, "the middle classes found in their family Bibles a positive and uncompromising statement of Calvinistic theology."<sup>20</sup>

The theological marginal notes, the introductory prefaces, and the accuracy in translation combined for what Leland Ryken has said is the "most successful English Bible before the King James Bible." Ryken gives no little praise when he says, "The superior accuracy of the Geneva translations over other sixteenth-century translations is a matter of scholarly consensus.... Whereas Tyndale's translation, while excellent, strikes a modern reader as archaic and rough in its flow, the Geneva Bible... is surprisingly easy to read."<sup>21</sup> Anti-Calvinist, H. W. Hoare even admits that the Geneva Bible was "terse and vigorous in style, literal and yet boldly idiomatic; [it] was at once a conspicuous advance on all the Biblical labours that had preceded it, and an edition which could fairly claim to be well abreast of the soundest contemporary scholarship."<sup>22</sup> Such accuracy and readability should perhaps come as little surprise since Whittingham not only applied his own linguistic brilliance to the project but had John Calvin and Theodore Beza examine his translation of the NT as well.

### **The Geneva Bible During the Reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603)**

The GB was received with immediate success which would continue for the next seventy five years, as it became the Bible of the people's choice, used in the common Christian household. Despite the efforts of some, such as Archbishop

Matthew Parker (1504–75) who vied to have official status granted to the Bishop’s Bible of 1568,<sup>23</sup> seventy editions of the GB were published during the supremacy of Elizabeth I and 150 editions were printed between 1560 and 1644, though the GB never became the authorized version.<sup>24</sup> Even John Whitgift, who ordered that only the Bishop’s Bible be allowed for use in churches “found himself using the Geneva Bible in his heated controversy with the Puritan writer Thomas Cartwright.”<sup>25</sup> A simple comparison of editions published from 1560 to 1611 demonstrates its popularity:<sup>26</sup>

Tyndale’s New Testament	5
Great Bible	7
Bishops’ Bible	22
Geneva Bible	over 120

Even after 1611, when the KJV was released, over sixty editions of the GB were published. Under the persecution of Archbishop Laud (1633–45), eight editions were smuggled into England. And between 1642 and 1715 five or more editions of the KJV used the Geneva annotations! John Knox adopted the GB also and the Scottish divines followed (Thomas Bassandyne and Alexander Arbutnot), seeing to it that every able household had a copy.<sup>27</sup> To be sure, the 1579 Scottish edition of the GB was the first Bible to be printed in Scotland.<sup>28</sup> It is believed that as late as 1674 the GB was still being used in Scottish churches. The popularity of the Geneva Bible did not differ in England as exemplified in its use by William Shakespeare (d. 1616), Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658), and John Bunyan (1628–88).<sup>29</sup> Even those Puritans who came to America made the GB their chosen translation (no little protest against King James I).<sup>30</sup> Therefore, McGrath is not exaggerating when he writes, “England was a Protestant nation, and the Geneva Bible was its sacred book.”<sup>31</sup>

### The Rejection of the “Seditious” Geneva Bible by King James I

One would think, given the success of the GB, that with the arrival of James from Protestant Scotland in 1603 it would be accepted officially by the authorities. After all, its influence was overwhelming, as were its sales. However, Puritans with such hopes were seriously disappointed when King James I rejected the GB altogether. In his estimate, the GB was the worst on the market, as he made clear at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 (“I think that of all, that of Geneva is the worst.”). Of course, his comments were not directed towards the translation as they were towards the marginal annotations. According to King James I, he saw these notes as “very partial, untrue, seditious, and savoring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits.”<sup>32</sup>

James’ rejection of the GB’s annotations was rooted in his anti-Puritan, anti-Presbyterian ecclesiology. For King James, his authority should be dependent upon the bishops. No bishops, no king!<sup>33</sup> Scottish Presbyterianism had no bishops. For



King James, this was egalitarianism and republicanism at its worst, as exemplified in Calvin's Geneva. Therefore, King James "preferred an Episcopal system, not least because of its more positive associations with the monarchy." Consequently, episcopacy was the "safeguard to the monarchy."<sup>34</sup>

But it was not just that the GB came from the republican, Presbyterian city of Geneva. It was much more. For King James, such an ecclesiology was evident in the annotations of the GB itself. McGrath has led the way in this regard, giving several examples of annotations upon texts King James disapproved of.<sup>35</sup> The annotations challenged the "divine right of kings," a doctrine advocated by King James (cf. *True Law of Free Monarchies* of 1598; *Basilikon Doron* of 1598). As he says in *Basilikon Doron*, "God gives not Kings the style of Gods in vain, For on his throne his Sceptre do they sway; And as their subject ought them to obey, So Kings should fear and serve their God again." The divine right of kings was foundational to monarchy. However, certain texts and annotations in the GB, which we must consider, undermined such a doctrine.

- (1) Daniel 6:22 is an example of Daniel disobeying the King and being approved by God in so doing. The text states, "My just cause and uprightness in this thing in which I was charged, is approved by God." The GB comments, "For he disobeyed the king's wicked commandment in order to obey God, and so he did no injury to the king, who ought to command nothing by which God would be dishonoured."
- (2) Daniel 11:36 is a second text where the king is viewed as a tyrant. Notice the comment, "So long the tyrants will prevail as God has appointed to punish his people: but he shows that it is but for a time." Surely, the political application to the sixteenth and early seventeenth century is impossible to ignore. Like Israel, God's people, the Puritans were also being punished for their iniquities by wicked rulers. However, in due time, God would bring down the king. McGrath observes that the "Genevan notes regularly use the word 'tyrant' to refer to kings; the King James Bible *never* uses this word—a fact noted with approval as much as relief by many royalists at this point."<sup>36</sup>
- (3) Exodus 1:19 is yet a third example where Pharaoh wickedly commands the Hebrew midwives to kill all male Hebrew newborns. The midwives refused and even lied saying the "Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them." The GB says that their disobedience in this act was lawful (though it qualifies that their deception was evil). Tricking the tyrant is allowed by the law. McGrath draws the parallel to the seventeenth century, "As radical Protestant factions, such as the Puritans, began to view James as their oppressor, the suggestion that it was lawful to disobey him became increasingly welcome to Puritans and worrying to James."<sup>37</sup>
- (4) 2 Chronicles 15:15–17 was yet another text with annotations King James disliked. Here King Asa discovers his own mother, Maachah, committing

idolatry and so he removes her and cuts down her idol, burning it. Yet, he did not remove the high places nor kill her. The GB comments, however, that King Asa did not go far enough. He “showed that he lacked zeal, for she should have died both by the covenant... and by the law of God, but he gave place to foolish pity and would also seem after a sort to satisfy the law.” King Asa’s lack of zeal contributed to his “negligence of his officers” and “his people’s superstition.” McGrath again observes that the parallel to King James is hard to avoid. James’ mother, Mary, Queen of Scots, had been executed by Elizabeth I. Without a doubt, James would have cringed at such commentary. Moreover, the commentary is clear that even the king is subservient to the law. His own pity cannot get in the way of his religious commitments.<sup>38</sup>

- (5) Psalm 105:15 is the last text we will consider, “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” While the GB saw the anointed here as referring to God’s people corporately, the KJV identified the anointed as the king himself. McGrath observes, “The text was thus interpreted [by the GB] in a way that made no reference whatsoever to the ‘divine right of kings.’ According to the Geneva Bible the text was actually, if anything, a *criticism* of kings, in that their right to harm the people of God was being absolutely denied.”<sup>39</sup>

To conclude, the implication of these texts and annotations is very lucid: the king must be disobeyed if he violates the will of God and commands us to do likewise. McGrath summarizes the issue insightfully, “James I held that kings had been ordained by God to rule the nations of the world, to promote justice, and to dispense wisdom. It was, therefore, imperative that kings should be respected and obeyed unconditionally and in all circumstances. The ample notes provided by the Geneva Bible taught otherwise. Tyrannical kings should not be obeyed; indeed, there were excellent reasons for suggesting that they should be overthrown.”<sup>40</sup>

### **The Influence the Geneva Bible had on the King James Bible**

Despite King James I’s ridicule of the GB, not even the KJV could escape the influence of the GB. As Dan Danner states, it is generally recognized that the GB “contributed more to the composition of the King James version of 1611, perhaps with the exception of the work of William Tyndale, than any other English version of the Bible.”<sup>41</sup> Metzger elaborates, giving specific textual examples,

More than once the Geneva Bible contributed to the excellence of the King James version. In fact, according to Charles C. Butterworth, “in the lineage of the King James Bible this volume [the 1560 Bible] is by all means the most important single volume.” Time and again the 1611 translators reproduced a felicitous expression which Whittingham and

his fellow exiles had struck off first. Examples include: “He smote them hippe and thigh” (Judg. 15:8; Coverdale had “both upon the sholders and loynes”); “remember now they Creator in the daies of thy youth. . . . Vanitie of vanities, saith the Preacher” (Eccl. 12:1 and 8); “This is my beloued Sonne, in whome I am wel pleased” (Matt. 3:17); “Except a man be borne againe” (Jn. 3:3); “a cloude of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1).<sup>42</sup>

Metzger observes the inevitable reliance the KJV had on the GB. Some estimate that twenty percent of the KJV came directly from the GB.<sup>43</sup> Lloyd Berry, building off of Butterworth, gives the following comparison:<sup>44</sup>

Wycliffe versions, including English Sermons	4%
Tyndale’s work, including the Matthew Bible	18%
Coverdale’s work, including Great Bibles	13%
Geneva Bible and Geneva New Testament	19%
Bishops’ Bible and its revision	4%
All other versions before 1611	3%
Total	<hr/> 61%
King James Bible, new material	39%
Total	<hr/> 100%

It is not surprising then, as already mentioned, that between 1642 and 1715 five or more editions of the KJV used the Geneva annotations! Danner explains,

Ironically, even after 1611, English churchmen of both ranks, including James’ most trusted scholars, continued to use the Geneva Bible in their publications and sermons. The difficulty the A.V. [Authorized Version] had in dislodging the popularity of the Geneva Bible is perhaps best typified in the “The Translators to the Reader” which prefaced the original edition in 1611; the *quotations are from the Geneva Bible!* Clearly, along with Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*, the Geneva Bible was one of the two most popular books in Tudor-Stuart England.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, as Ira Martin observes, “the Geneva Bible as a whole has shown itself to be easily the most accurate and scholarly English translation up to the time of the King James Bible.”<sup>46</sup> Martin’s point is made evident when one considers how between the years 1611 and 1630 twenty-seven out of fifty sermons were identified as using the GB as their chosen translation for preaching. The sermons of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, the chief KJV reviser, and Bishop William Laud

are included among these! Amazingly, only five sermons used the Bishops' Bible and of what remained half used the KJV and the other half their own translation.<sup>47</sup> From these statistics Daniell concludes, "The influence of the Geneva Bible is incalculable."<sup>48</sup>

Despite its influence, still there remained a vast difference between the GB and the KJV, especially in method. As mentioned, the GB saw its purpose in not only providing a translation but accompanying that translation with explanatory notes. This is especially seen in the OT poetic and prophetic literature, which is difficult to understand. Not only were interpretive notes provided but cross-references. While this may appear a minor detail, it showed that "Scripture speaks within itself: the Word of God is one."<sup>49</sup> Take Genesis 6–7 for example. As Daniell explains, "The cross-reference to the well-known eleventh chapter of Hebrews lifts Noah from a primitive tale to a model 'of righteousness by faith' (Hebrews 11:7), as he was 'warned of God of the things which were as yet not seen, moved with reverence' (KJV has 'fear')."<sup>50</sup> Daniell, relying on Gerald Hammond, continues,

It is more important to note that, like the misguided Bishops' Bible translators, the KJV translators' denial of marginal notes removed at a stroke that essential element of understanding Hebrew, the openness to engagement, the in-and-out movement between literal sense and meaning, the many kinds of explanations, which the Geneva annotators so constantly used. Often the best that King James' workers could do was to lift 'the literal Hebrew phrase from Geneva's margin into its own text'.<sup>51</sup>

Daniell goes on to lament how depressing it is that the KJV "so dogmatically dropped all the Geneva notes."<sup>52</sup> Such a move is regrettable when one thinks of Hebrew poetry which "deals in ellipses and ambiguities and downright obscurities." While the GB produced "a continual and fruitful dialogue between text and margins," the KJV only presented the literal sense of the Hebrew metaphor. With Hebrew poetry and prophetic literature, what resulted in the reader of the KJV was "a nearly total lack of understanding."<sup>53</sup> While the KJV merely presented the text, the GB sought to help the reader understand the Hebrew. Or as the title-pages demonstrate, while the KJV is to be "read in churches" the GB is to be used to understand the "hard places." One is to be read, the other studied.<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

To conclude, Bruce Metzger fittingly revels in the enormous impact the GB had on Protestantism. "In short, it was chiefly owing to the dissemination of copies of the Geneva version of 1560 that a sturdy and articulate Protestantism was created in Britain, a Protestantism which made a permanent impact upon Anglo-American culture."<sup>55</sup> As we have seen, not only was its impact cultural, but its impact continued to be felt on other translations including the KJV. Though the translation of the GB may not be used extensively today, its method and its theol-

ogy as found in its study notes continue to have an impact. Today we enjoy The Reformation Study Bible and the ESV Study Bible, both of which carry on the legacy of the GB both in its form and in its Reformed theology. As he did with the GB, may the Lord continue to give his church capable translators and commentators so that his people will understand those “hard places” in Scripture. 🙏

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> 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: Anchor, 2001), 107.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>4</sup> Lloyd E. Berry, “Introduction to the Facsimile Edition,” in *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 7. For other extensive studies on the GB see John D. Alexander, “The Geneva Version of the English Bible,” (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford University, 1956); Hardin Craig Jr., “The Geneva Bible as a Political Document,” *Pacific Historical Review* 7 (1938): 40–49; Charles Eason, *The Genevan Bible* (Dublin, 1937); Basil Hall, *The Geneva Version of the English Bible* (London, 1957); Stanley Morison, *The Geneva Bible* (London, 1966); Lewis Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible* (London: The Fauconberg Press, 1966).

<sup>5</sup> McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 113.

<sup>6</sup> On the involvement and assistance of these other men see Bruce M. Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” *Theology Today* 17 (1960): 340.

<sup>7</sup> On the influence of Beza see Bruce M. Metzger, “The Influence of Codex Bezae upon the Geneva Bible of 1560,” *New Testament Studies* 8, no. 1 (1961): 72–77; Irena D. Backus, *Reformed Roots of the English New Testament: The Influence of Theodore Beza on the English New Testament*, Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series 28 (Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 343. Also see Ira Jay Martin III, “The Geneva Bible,” *Andover Newton Quarterly* 1, no. 4 (1961): 46–51; Leland Ryken, *The Legacy of the King James Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 40; Lupton, *A History of the Geneva Bible*, 3:131ff.

<sup>9</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The English Bible: A History of Translation from the earliest English Version to the New English Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 86.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce, *The English Bible*, 89. Also see David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 314ff.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce, *The English Bible*, 86. The translators acknowledge this in their address to the reader. Also see S. L. Greenslade, “English Versions of the Bible, 1525–1611,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 2:157; Hugh Pope, *English Versions of the Bible*, ed. Sebastian Bullough (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1952), 220–23.

<sup>12</sup> McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 119–20.

<sup>13</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 350.

<sup>14</sup> Contra Basil Hall, “The Genevan Version of the English Bible: Its Aims and Achievements,” in *The Bible, the Reformation and the Church*, ed. W. P. Stephens (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1995), 124–49; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 305–309. For more extensive studies on Calvinism in the notes of the Geneva Bible see Dan G. Danner, “The Contribution of the Geneva Bible of 1560 to the English Protestant Tradition,” *Sixteenth*

*Century Journal* 12, no. 3 (1981): 5–18; John Eadie, *The English Bible* (London: Macmillan, 1876), 2:8; Brooke Foss Westcott, *A General View of the History of the English Bible*, 3rd ed., ed. W. A. Wright (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 93; Charles C. Ryrie, “Calvinistic Emphasis in the Geneva and Bishops’ Bibles,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 122, no. 485 (1965): 23–30. Ryrie argues that the Bishops’ Bible actually toned down the Reformed emphasis in the Geneva Bible as it was viewed as “too strongly Calvinistic. Ryrie, “Calvinistic Emphasis,” 30.

<sup>15</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 348. Hall argues that the GB was theologically influenced by Calvin’s (and Beza’s) 1556 revision of the 1535 French Bible of Pierre Robert Olivetan (Calvin’s cousin). Basil Hall, *The Genevan Version of the English Bible* (The Presbyterian Historical Society of England, 1957); idem, “The Genevan Version of the English Bible,” 124–49. Also see Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 292. Backus however thinks it is instead influenced by Beza’s biblical treatises. Irena Backus, *The Reformed Roots of the English New Testament* (Pittsburg, PA: Pickwick, 1980, 1957). Bauckham believes it is Bullinger’s commentaries instead. Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton-Courtney, 1978), 40. Danner argues that its influence is to be found in the larger Reformed tradition as a whole, though specifically by Calvin and Beza. Dan G. Danner, “The Later English Calvinists and the Geneva Bible,” in *Later Calvinism: International Perspectives*, ed. W. Fred Graham (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Publishers, 1994), 504.

<sup>16</sup> On Tomson see Danner, “The Later English Calvinists and the Geneva Bible,” 496ff; Hugh Pope, *English Versions*, ed. Sebastian Bullough (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1952), 230; W. F. Moulton, *The History of the English Bible* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1911), 17–27. Other additions would continue these additions. For example, in 1598 Huguenot Franciscus Junius replaced Tomson’s annotations to the Book of Revelation. See idem, “Book Notes,” *Theology Today* 46, no. 4 (1990): 463; Donald L. Brake, *A Visual History of the English Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 155, 160; Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 348–75.

<sup>17</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 349. This catechism seems to disappear around the time when Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, came upon the scene with his anti-Calvinism. Danner, “The Later English Calvinists and the Geneva Bible,” 498; Nicholas Pocock, “The Breeches Bible,” *Saturday Review* (September 25, 1990), 395.

<sup>18</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 349.

<sup>19</sup> William T. Whitley, *The English Bible under the Tudor Sovereigns* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, n.d.), 105. Also see Danner, “The Later English Calvinists and the Geneva Bible,” 490.

<sup>20</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 352.

<sup>21</sup> Ryken, *The Legacy of the King James Bible*, 39.

<sup>22</sup> H. W. Hoare, *The Evolution of the English Bible* (London, 1901), 197, as quoted by Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 345.

<sup>23</sup> “The Bible, initially printed at Geneva, May 10, 1560, was not printed in England until Archbishop Parker died in 1575. Parker did not like the Geneva Bible and gave no support, to the queen or to Puritans who were clamoring for it, in getting it printed during his archbishopric. Yet neither he, the queen, nor [John] Whitgift could prevent the reading of the Geneva Bible in the churches or its circulation among the clergy and laity.” For a more extensive history on such resistance by the authorities see McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 124–29. Also see Edwin Robertson, *Makers of the English Bible* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth, 1990), 88–96.

<sup>24</sup> “But the Bishop’s Bible had simply been replaced in the hearts of the people by the Geneva Bible, and although it was a superior translation, it was obvious to Elizabeth that the notes and annotations were tainted with teachings akin to Calvin and Knox, both of whom she detested.” Danner, “The Later English Calvinists and the Geneva Bible,” 499.

<sup>25</sup> McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 129.

<sup>26</sup> Berry, “Introduction,” 14.

<sup>27</sup> For more details on its reception in Scotland see Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 350. Also see Danner, “The Later English Calvinists and the Geneva Bible,” 503; Herbert G. May, *Our English Bible in the Making* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1952), 44–45; Geddes MacGregor, *The Bible in the Making* (New York: Lippincott, 1959), 134; Bruce, *English Bibles*, 92.

<sup>28</sup> Bruce, *English Bible*, 91.

<sup>29</sup> For example, *The Souldier’s Pocket Bible*, a pocket-sized text, which used the Geneva Bible was compiled for Cromwell’s troops in 1643. A century and half later, as Martin III observes, it reappeared in 1861. It would be used in England and in America during the Civil War by the Union soldiers. Martin III. “The Geneva Bible,” 50. Also see George Milligan, *The English Bible* (London: A & C Black, 1907), 127.

<sup>30</sup> Metzger also notes that even in the twentieth century its influence continues. “In several respects the Geneva scholars were ahead of their times; occasionally they adopted readings which the King James translators declined to follow but which the Revised Standard Version of 1946–52 re-adopted.” Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 346.

<sup>31</sup> McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 129. Jensen says the same, “Yet it was the Geneva Bible that succeeded in becoming by far the most popular Bible of its time.” Michael Jensen, “Simply Reading the Geneva Bible,” *Literature & Theology* 9, no. 1 (1995): 31. Also see T. H. Darlow and H. F. Moule, eds., *Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of the English Bible*, rev. A. S. Herbert (London, 1968), 191; Maurice S. Betteridge, “The Bitter Notes: The Geneva Bible and its Annotations,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 14, no. 1 (1983): 44–47.

<sup>32</sup> As quoted by McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 113.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>35</sup> I will be following the lead of McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 141–48. Also see Richard L. Greaves, “The Nature and Intellectual Milieu of the Political Principles in the Geneva Bible Marginalia,” *Journal of Church and State* 22 (1980): 233–50.

<sup>36</sup> McGrath, *In the Beginning*, 143.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>41</sup> Danner, “The Later English Calvinists and the Geneva Bible,” 491. Likewise see David Ewert, *From Ancient Tablets to Modern Translations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983), 195; Daniel G. Kratz, “The Geneva Bible,” *Church History* 3 (1960): 23–31.

<sup>42</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 346. See Charles C. Butterworth, *The Literary Lineage of the King James Bible* (Philadelphia, PA 1941), 163. Also see Carl S. Meyer, “The Geneva Bible,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 32, no. 3 (1961): 139–45.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas M’Crie, *The Life of John Knox* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1818), 1:216; Dale W. Johnson, “Marginal at Best: John Knox’s Contribution to the Geneva

Bible, 1560,” in *Adaptations of Calvinism in Reformation Europe*, ed. Mack P. Holt (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 243.

<sup>44</sup> Berry, “Introduction to the Facsimile Edition,” 18.

<sup>45</sup> Danner, “Geneva Bible of 1560,” 6. Also see Randall T. Davidson, “The Authorisation of the English Bible,” *Macmillan’s Magazine* (1881): 441ff; Westcott, *History of the English Bible*, 107.

<sup>46</sup> Martin III, “The Geneva Bible,” 47.

<sup>47</sup> Davidson, “The Authorisation of the English Bible,” 441.

<sup>48</sup> Daniell, *The English Bible*, 295.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 297. Gerald Hammond, *The Making of the English Bible* (n.p.: Philosophical Library, 1983), 101–106.

<sup>52</sup> Daniell, *The English Bible*, 299.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>55</sup> Metzger, “The Geneva Bible of 1560,” 352.

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## Excerpts from the Translator’s Preface to the KJV 1611

Take note of the spirit of the translators as they expressed their desire for all Christians to be able to read and understand the Scriptures using a translation that reflects the common language of the day.

### The Translators [of the KJV 1611] to the Readers

1. They acknowledged those who were questioning the need for a revision of the Bible in English when there were already several in use:

Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which has been labored by others, deserves certainly much respect and esteem, but yet finding but cold entertainment in the world. ... For he that meddles with men’s Religion in any part, meddles with their customs, nay, with their freehold, and though they find no content in that which they have, yet they cannot abide to hear of altering [it]. ... Many men’s mouths have been open a good while (and yet are not stopped) with speeches about the Translation so long in hand, or rather perusals of Translations made before: and ask what may be the reason, what the necessity of the employment: Has the Church been deceived, say



they, all this while? ... Was their Translation good before? Why do they now mend it? Was it not good? Why then was it obtruded to the people?

2. They commended and built upon earlier English Translations:

But it is high time to leave them, and to show in brief what we proposed to ourselves, and what course we held in this our perusal and survey of the Bible. Truly (good Christian Reader) 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 has been our endeavor, that our mark.

3. They humbly acknowledged their limitations as translators and their use of variant readings:

Some peradventure would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority of the Scriptures for deciding controversies by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be shaken. But we hold their judgment not to be so sound in this point. ... it has pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it has been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better beseem us than confidence, and if we will resolve upon modesty with St. Augustine, (though not in this same case altogether, yet upon the same ground) *Melius est dubitare de occultis, quàm litigare de incertis*, it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, then to strive about those things that are uncertain. There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once, (having neither brother nor neighbor, as the Hebrews speak) so that we cannot be helped by conference of places. Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. ... Now in such a case, does not a margin do well to admonish the Reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that peremptorily? For as it is a fault of incredulity, to doubt of those things that are evident: so to determine of such things as the Spirit of God has left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable, can be no less then presumption. Therefore as St. Augustine said, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must need do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded.

4. They acknowledged the usefulness of a variety of sources and the need for revisions:

Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered; but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see.

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Yet before we end, we must answer a third cavil [complaint] and objection of theirs against us, for altering and amending our Translations so often, wherein truly they deal harshly and strangely with us [misjudge us]. For to whomever was it imputed for a fault (by such as were wise) to go over that which he had done, and to amend it where he saw cause?

5. They emphasized the need for Scripture to be translated into the common, everyday language of the people:

But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue? as it is written, Except I know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaks, a Barbarian, and he that speaks, shall be a Barbarian to me. The Apostle excepts no tongue, not Hebrew the [most]ancient, not Greek the most copious, not Latin the finest. Nature taught a natural man to confess, that all of us in those tongues which we do not understand, are plainly deaf; we may turn the deaf ear unto them. ... Translation it is that opens the window, to let in the light; that breaks the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that puts aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removes the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of Laban were watered. Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacobs well (which was deep) without a bucket or some thing to draw with ...

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But we desire that the Scripture may speak like itself, as in the language of Canaan, that it may be understood even by the very vulgar.

6. They affirmed that translations should be current and that even the poorest translation is still God's Word:

Now to the later we answer; that we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) contains the word of God, nay, is the word of God. As the King's

Speech which he uttered in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian and Latin, is still the King's Speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere. ... No cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be current, notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it.

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And to the same effect say we, that we are so far off from condemning any of their labors that traveled before us in this kind, either in this land or beyond sea, either in King Henry's time, or King Edward's (if there were any translation, or correction of a translation in his time) or Queen Elizabeth's of ever-renowned memory, that we acknowledge them to have been raised up by God, for the building and furnishing of his Church, and that they deserve to be had of us and of posterity, in everlasting remembrance. ... Yet for all that, as nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, and the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser; so, if we building upon their foundation that went before us, and being helped by their labors, do endeavor to make that better which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; they, we persuade ourselves, if they were alive, would thank us. ☺

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## Review

*Ken Puls*

*The Pilgrim's Progress: A Docudrama*, 14 DVD Set  
Narrated by David Jeremiah  
With Commentary from Mark Kielar  
Shot on location in Plymouth, Massachusetts  
Produced by Cross TV [[www.crosstv.com](http://www.crosstv.com)]  
Retail: \$149.95

One of the books I value most in my library is John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Its story is rich with the gospel and filled with biblical truth. I have read it with much spiritual benefit in personal study, in family worship, and in Bible

training classes at church. C.H. Spurgeon explains why the book is so helpful and instructive: “Next to the Bible, the book that I value most is John Bunyan’s ‘Pilgrim’s Progress.’ I believe I have read it through at least a hundred times. It is a volume of which I never seem to tire; and the secret of its freshness is that it is so largely compiled from the Scriptures. It is really Biblical teaching put into the form of a simple yet very striking allegory.”

I have seen several attempts to adapt Bunyan’s work to audio or video. Often these attempts fall short, leaving out important parts of the story—or even changing story, distorting and losing Bunyan’s point and message. One such effort that has exceeded my expectations, however, is *The Pilgrim’s Progress: A Docudrama*. Cross TV has produced one of the best and most useful adaptations of the book I have seen.

Part 1 of Bunyan’s book, the journey of Christian from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, is presented in 51 sections on 14 DVDs—over 14 hours of content and commentary. As the story is read in its entirety, sometimes you see the narrator reading from his book, and sometimes you see the scenes acted out. Even the Scripture references (from the margin of the book) are included at the bottom of the screen as the story is read. The allegory is carefully explained and the commentary offers key points and thought-provoking questions.

This past summer at Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida, we used the series to study through Part 1 of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in our family Sunday School. For sake of time we covered only selected scenes, but the series was easily adapted to our meeting time and well received by our church.

The docudrama format did have a few drawbacks. In some places comments were inserted into the reading of the story that I would have preferred to save until the commentary at the end of the scene. Some of the slides accompanying the commentary had typos and some of the fonts used were hard to read on the screen. While many of the commentary slides were read aloud by the narrator, not all were. We solved the issue by assigning someone with a microphone to read the slides aloud when the narration was not provided on the DVD.

Despite these minor issues, the docudrama proved to be worthwhile and enjoyable. Cross TV is to be commended for producing a thorough study and for staying true to Bunyan’s text. I recommend this series both to those who know Bunyan’s story well and to those discovering it for the first time. It is a valuable resource for any desiring to mine the treasures in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. 🐦

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