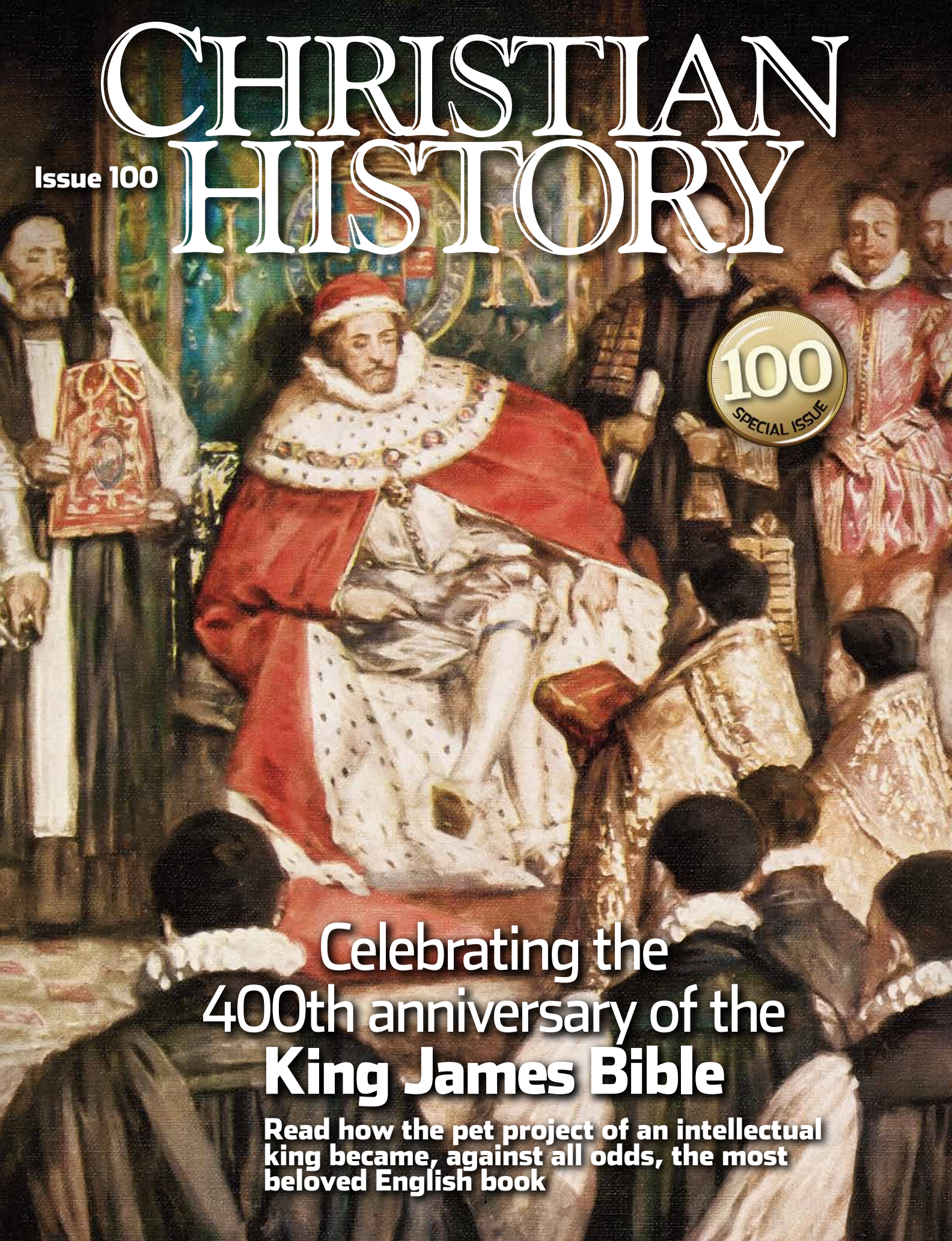
Christian History

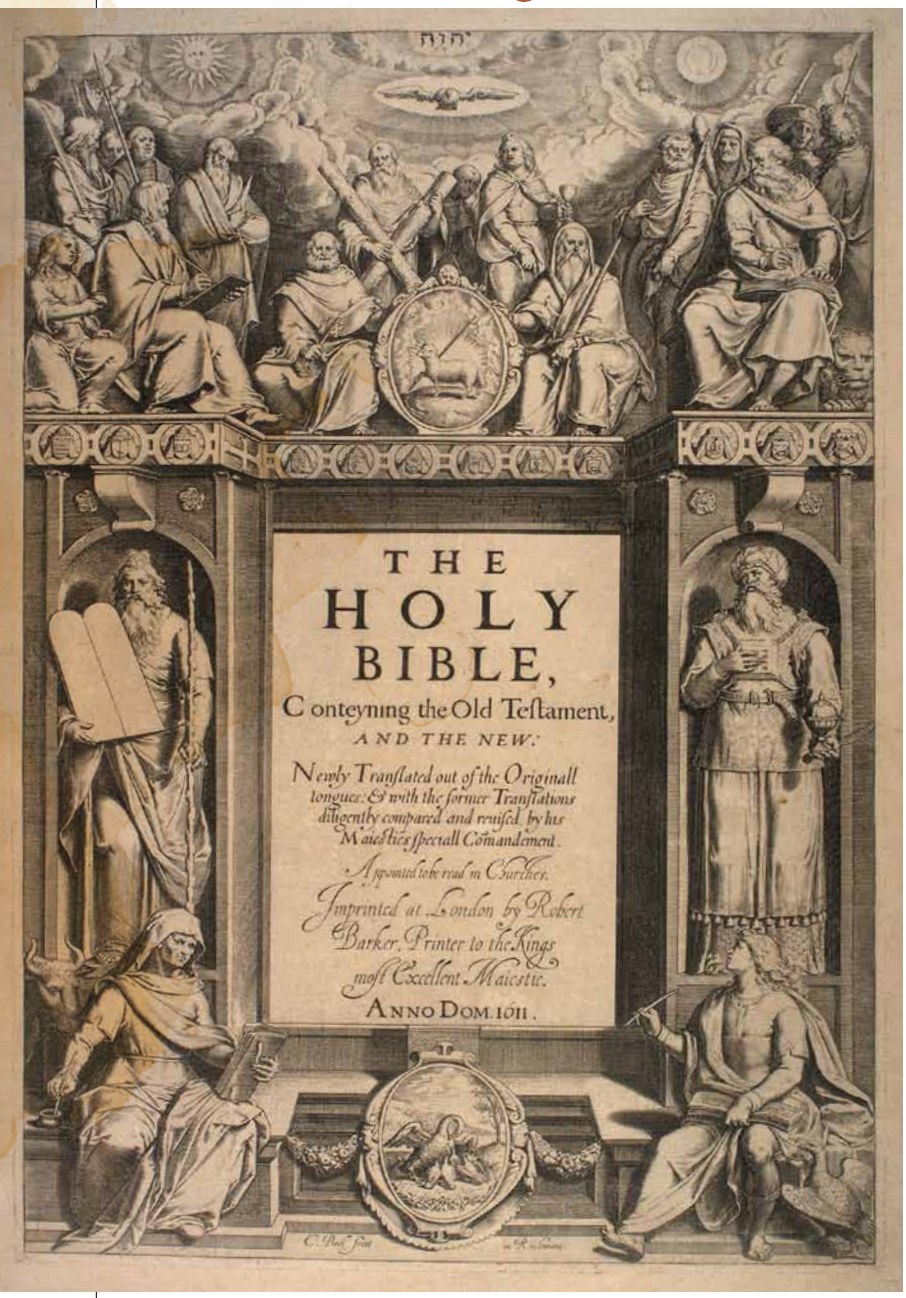
Issue 100



Celebrating the 400th anniversary of the **King James Bible**

Read how the pet project of an intellectual king became, against all odds, the most beloved English book

Did you know?



The bucket for our well

Above: Title page of 1611 KJV. The preface gives these powerful images for what a translation does: "Translation is what opens the window, to let the light in. It breaks the shell, so that we may eat the kernel. It pulls the curtain aside, so that we may look into the most holy place. It removes the cover from the well, so that we may get to the water. . . . In fact, without a translation in the common language, most people are like the children at Jacob's well (which was deep) without a bucket or something to draw the water with; or like the person mentioned by Isaiah who was given a sealed book and told 'Please read this,' and had to answer, 'I can not, because it is sealed' (Isaiah 29:11)."

Three KJV myths

First, the KJV was not translated personally by King James I, though he did pride himself on his biblical scholarship and "as a young man and a good Protestant Scot had made his own metrical versions of thirty of the Psalms, and of the Book of Revelation." And he doubtless appreciated the effusive two-page dedication that appeared in the front of every printed copy of the Bible.

Second, although the British have since the early 1800s called the KJV "the Authorized Version," the KJV was never authorized. The term "Authorized Version" is more aptly used of the Great Bible of 1539, prepared by Myles Coverdale, which Henry VIII in 1541 and 1547 (and Elizabeth I in 1559) commanded to be read in churches, under threat of penalty for those omitting to do so. No such proclamations from either king or bishops prescribed the use of the King James Version.

Third, and also contrary to popular belief, "this version was not universally loved from the moment it appeared. Far from it. As a publication in the seventeenth century it was undoubtedly successful: it was heavily used, and it rapidly saw off its chief rival, the three Geneva Bibles. But for its first 150 years, the KJV received a barrage of criticism." (See "No overnight success," p. 22.)

Source: David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (2003)

The "funny" version?

"The prose style of the King James Version lends itself well to parody. . . . Most often appearing in parody form are the twenty-third psalm ('***Roosevelt is my shepherd, I shall not want***'), the Lord's Prayer, the Sermon on the Mount ('***Blessed are the cheesemakers***'), and the Ten Commandments. The cadences of the seventeenth-century English prose of the King James Version lend themselves to improprieties intoned in solemn measure.

"Two examples will illustrate the comic use of the Lord's Prayer. In one, a small boy named Howard inquires of his mother if he were named for God because they had prayed in Sunday school, ***'Our Father who art in Heaven, Howard be thy name.'*** The second was used by the late Lord Mountbatten when in command of a battered, obsolete destroyer, the Wishart. He told his men to be very proud of the name of their ship for the entire fleet prayed every morning, ***'Our Father Wishart in Heaven. . . .'"***

Source: "The Bible in American Popular Humor," in *The Bible and American Arts and Letters*, edited by Allene Stuart Phy (1985).

"Good enough for Jesus"

Apparently the 1952 publication of the Revised Standard Version—an American revision of the KJV—elicited the comment, "If the King James Version was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for me." This has been traced authentically to two sources, an elderly Texas woman and a middle Tennessee evangelistic preacher.

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE: ENGLISH PHRASES AND SAYINGS THAT DERIVE FROM THE KJV

After Shakespeare, the KJV is the most common source of phrases in English. Most people who have grown up with the KJV or one of its modern revisions such as the RSV will recognize immediately the origin of such common English phrases as ***"a cross to bear"*** (Luke 14:27), ***"am I my brother's keeper?"*** (Gen. 4:9), ***"an eye for an eye"*** (Matt. 5:38), ***"feet of clay"*** (Dan. 2:31-33), ***"fight the good fight"*** (Tim. 6:12), and ***"the salt of the earth"*** (Matt. 5:13).

But how many of the phrases listed below would you have guessed come from the King James Version?

Test your Bible knowledge by identifying the book of the KJV *(and if you're really good, the chapter and verse)* from which these English phrases come:

1. ***A broken heart***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
2. ***A drop in the bucket***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
3. ***A labour of love***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
4. ***A law unto themselves***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
5. ***A leopard cannot change its spots***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
6. ***A two-edged sword***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
7. ***At their wit's end***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
8. ***Seeing eye to eye***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
9. ***Heart's desire***
   BK_____ CH_____ V_____
10. ***Holier than thou***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
11. ***The fat of the land***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
12. ***My cup runneth over***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
13. ***Put words in one's mouth***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
14. ***Put your house in order***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
15. ***The straight and narrow***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
16. ***Sign of the times***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
17. ***Sour grapes***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
18. ***To the ends of the earth***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
19. ***The root of the matter***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____
20. ***The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak***
    BK_____ CH_____ V_____

ANSWERS ON P. 38

STILL LIFE: LADY AND BIBLE Currier & Ives recognized Bible reading as a typical activity of the American upper-middle class in this 1848 print.

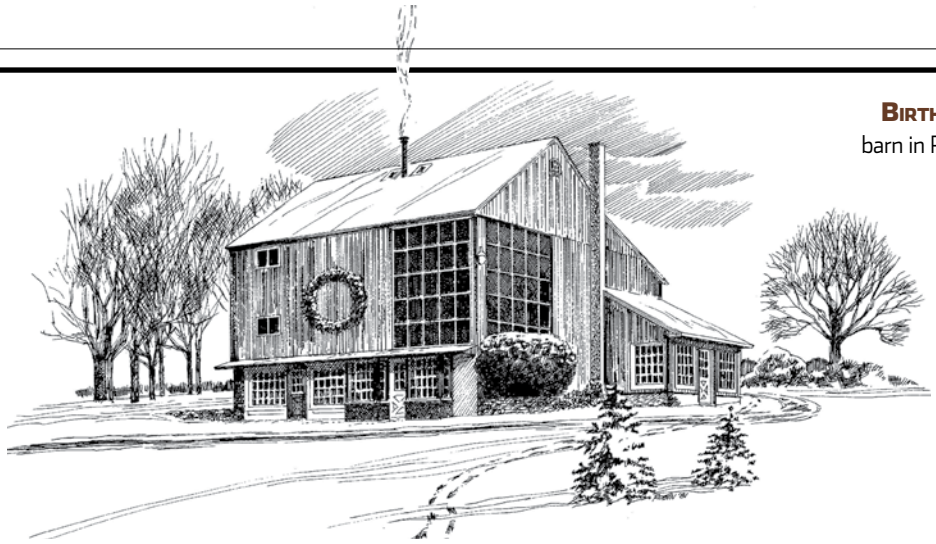
Eight KJV errors

Printers do interesting things to texts sometimes, and the KJV was no exception. In various printings over the years, certain errors were so egregious that those editions got their own sarcastic titles. Among these:

1. **The "Judas Bible"** 1611: This Bible has Judas, not Jesus, saying "Sit ye here while I go yonder and pray" (Matthew 26:36).
2. **The "Printers Bible"** 1612: In some copies Psalm 119:161 reads "Printers have persecuted me without a cause" rather than "Princes have persecuted me..."
3. **The "Wicked Bible"** 1631: Omits an important "not" from Exodus 20:14, making the seventh commandment read "Thou shalt commit adultery." The printers were fined £300 and most of the copies were recalled immediately. Only 11 copies are known to exist today.
4. **The "Sin On Bible"** 1716: John 8:11 reads "Go and sin on more" rather than "Go and sin no more."
5. **The "Vinegar Bible"** 1717: The chapter heading for Luke 20 reads "The Parable of the Vinegar" instead of "The Parable of the Vineyard."
6. **The "Fools Bible"** 1763: Psalm 14:1 reads "the fool hath said in his heart there is a God," rather than "... there is no God." The printers were fined £3,000 and all copies ordered destroyed.
7. **The "Lions Bible"** 1804: 1 Kings 8:19 reads "thy son that shall come forth out of thy lions," rather than "loins."
8. **The "Owl Bible"** 1944: "Owl" replaces "own," making 1 Peter 3:5 read "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their owl husbands." The error was caused by a printing plate with a damaged letter *n*.

OUR FATHER, . . . IN HEAVEN *Right:* To those who treasured this version, King James puns seem to have been irresistible. If you had captained the HMS Wishart, wouldn't you have been tempted to do what Lord Mountbatten did with that name (see left)?

CURRIER & IVES: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
SHIP: COURTESY OF WISHART SOCIETY (PHOTO DIGITALLY ALTERED)



Birth of a vision *Left:* The Vision Video barn in PA, where *Christian History* was born. *Below:* Dr. Kenneth Curtis, founder, *Christian History* magazine.

Editor's note

I first heard of Dr. A. Kenneth (Ken) Curtis back in the late 1980s, when I was a young convert. That was when I discovered the wonderful magazine *Christian History*, which Ken had started publishing in 1982. *Christian History* showed me the true depth of our spiritual heritage as Christians. By the late 80s I had *CH* in one hand and graduate school catalogues in the other, and by the mid-90s the love for church history that I first discovered in Ken's magazine took me into graduate study in that field.

Ken was not primarily a magazine publisher, but a pastor turned filmmaker and distributor. In the late 60s he helped put together the partnership that created the film *The Cross and the Switchblade*. This eventually led Ken to start Gateway Films to continue the film's distribution.

Some years later Ken made a fateful decision: he followed his pastor's heart and put out a film on the martyred proto-Reformer Jan Hus. Ken related being "surprised and appalled" to discover how little people in evangelical Protestant churches knew about the faith's historical heritage. Gateway had found its niche, and the company went on to co-produce *Shadowlands*, on C. S. Lewis's late-life marriage to Joy Davidman, as well as many other award-winning films. In 1981, Ken founded a distribution company called Vision Video to make spiritually themed videos widely available. The company now carries over 2,000 titles.

The following year, *Christian History* magazine was begun as an add-on to Ken's historical videos. Seven years later, in 1989, Ken decided to increase the magazine's reach by putting it in the hands of Christianity Today International (CTI). In 2002, with great gratitude, I joined CTI's team as managing editor of *Christian History*. So many places I've traveled, people have told me how much they love this magazine.

During my time as editor, I got to meet Ken and tour the red barn an hour north of Philadelphia where *Christian History* was born. Ken struck me as a committed Christian communicator and businessman with tremendous energy and vision. But he then shared with me the challenge that he was facing. In December 2002 he had been diagnosed with lung cancer and given six months to live.

In fact, buoyed by alternative treatments and a dedicated prayer team, Ken ended up with eight years, which he referred to as "bonus time." Then, in 2010, an unexpected gift came to Ken that absorbed him until the end of his life. Facing serious recessionary pressures, CTI ceased publication of *Christian History*, and the magazine reverted to Ken's publishing non-profit, the Christian History Institute. Although the timing was not perfect for him, he rose to the challenge. During the last months of his life, his enthusiasm for *Christian History* poured out as he gathered a team to bring the magazine to life again.

Early on the morning of January 3, 2011, Ken Curtis passed on to his reward. To the end, he was awed by God's many providences and honored and excited to be part of his kingdom work. I pray that those who have been touched by Ken's work will carry on his legacy in this important way: the church still needs to have its memory restored, and in Ken's memory, no more worthy project could be undertaken than the rebirth of this magazine. If there is enough interest and financial support, the Christian History Institute plans to relaunch the magazine.

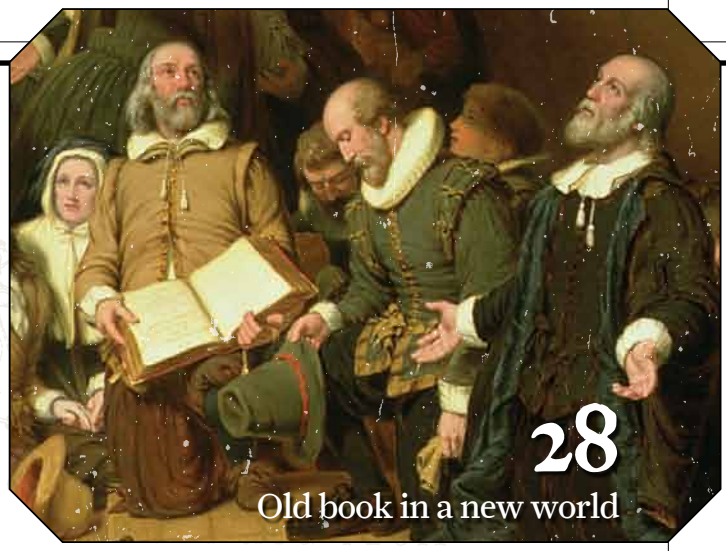
If you would like to help bring *Christian History* to life again, we need to hear from you. Please fill out the brief survey online at **www.ChristianHistoryMagazine.org/survey/** or use the bind-in survey and envelope included in this issue. I hope you will enjoy this issue of Christian History and many issues to come in the spirit of the Rev. Dr. A. Kenneth Curtis, a uniquely gifted servant and visionary in God's kingdom.

Dr. Chris R. Armstrong
Managing editor

VISION VIDEO LINE DRAWING BY ROBIN HELLER

CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Celebrating the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible



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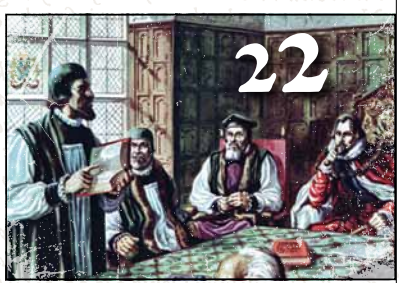

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EMBARKATION OF THE PILGRIMS, 1620, 1857 (OIL ON CANVAS) BY ROBERT WALTER WEIR (1803-89), BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, USA/THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY
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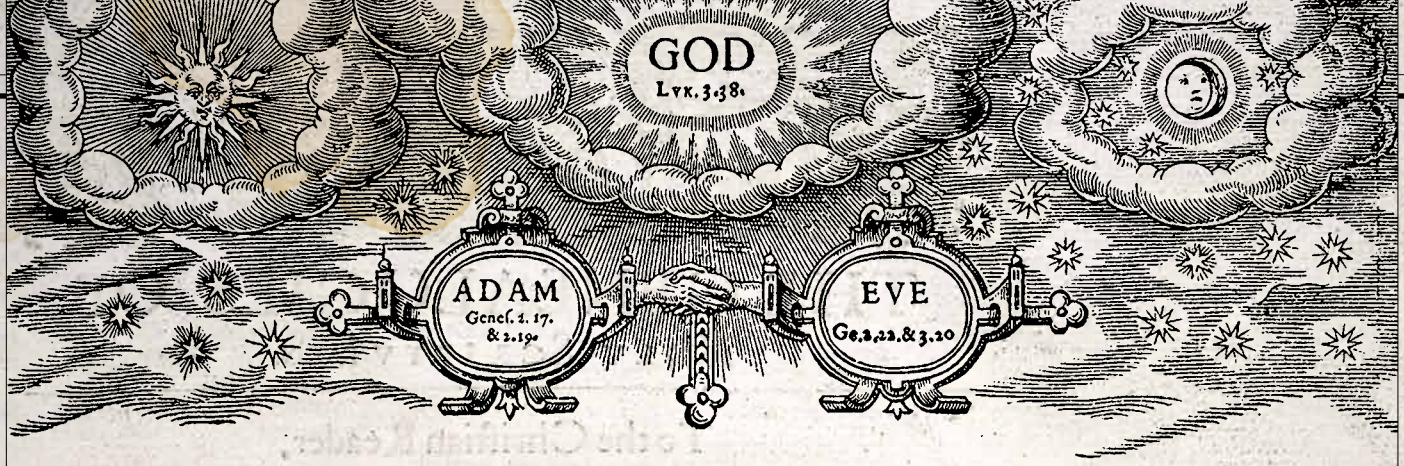


HOW THE King James Bible WAS BORN

THE PURITANS CAME BEFORE THEIR KING. HE GAVE THEM ALMOST NONE OF WHAT THEY WANTED, BUT ONE IDEA DID GRAB HIM: A NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION.

A. Kenneth Curtis

Picture yourself in 1604 England. It is a slow-moving world, where security and stability are prized. Someday England, along with the rest of the West, will pursue constant, rapid innovation. For you, however, what is old and hallowed by tradition is what is best. You rest in the knowledge that God rules all things by an unchangeable providence and orders all things by an equally unchangeable natural law.

But all is not well in your world. Beneath its peaceful and orderly reality, an uneasy undercurrent bubbles. True, for much of the past 45 years you and your family have dwelt in the secure, stable England of Elizabeth. Under her reign population and wealth have grown, and the enmities between small, zealous groups of Christians have, with the judicious use of force, been repressed for the greater good. But for some time now, the Elizabethan idyll has been fraying at the edges. By the 1590s starvation, disease, and unemployment are spreading like a miasma. The urban landscape has grown overcrowded, squalid, and chaotic. Poor Laws have emerged to punish the idle poor and set the able-bodied poor to work in the proliferating workhouses.

Then comes the queen's illness and her refusal to the very end to name her successor. Your anxiety and suspense could hardly be imagined by dwellers in modern democracies. A change of monarch reaches deep into the hearts of his subjects, evoking uncertainties and absorbing the attention of the nation. The monarchy, after all, is God's instrument of order and his hand of guidance. To paraphrase Proverbs, "Without a monarch, the people perish!"

Now, in the year of our Lord 1604, the news has been confirmed: The new king will be James VI, from England's generations-old enemy, Scotland! The remains of Hadrian's Wall dividing the countries stand as a lasting symbol and reminder of the

Birthplace of a Bible. Here, at Hampton Court Palace, the newly inaugurated King James I met with a squabbling group of Puritans and bishops to hammer out the future of England's church. Out of this ecclesiastical scrum was born an unlikely treasure: the KJV.

COURTESY OF JERRY GRIFFITH

enduring enmity between the two. Frantic speculation is erupting all around you. What can loyal subjects of England and worshipers in the English church expect of a man who was brought up under Geneva-influenced Presbyterian tutelage? What, of a man whose crowning as King of Scotland, when he was just a toddler, was accompanied by a fiery sermon from John Knox himself? How will this man act who since adolescence has made of himself an author and intellectual? Will he know how to take advice?

Your more pessimistic neighbors may also be asking a darker question: What latent pathologies may lurk in a 37-year-old man whose parents were killed for political reasons, who harbors no doubt that God is on his side, and who is an outspoken advocate of the divine right of kings? James's wide learning (in which he takes great pride) and his taste for theological debate are well-known—could these spell trouble in an England already seeded with religious dissension?

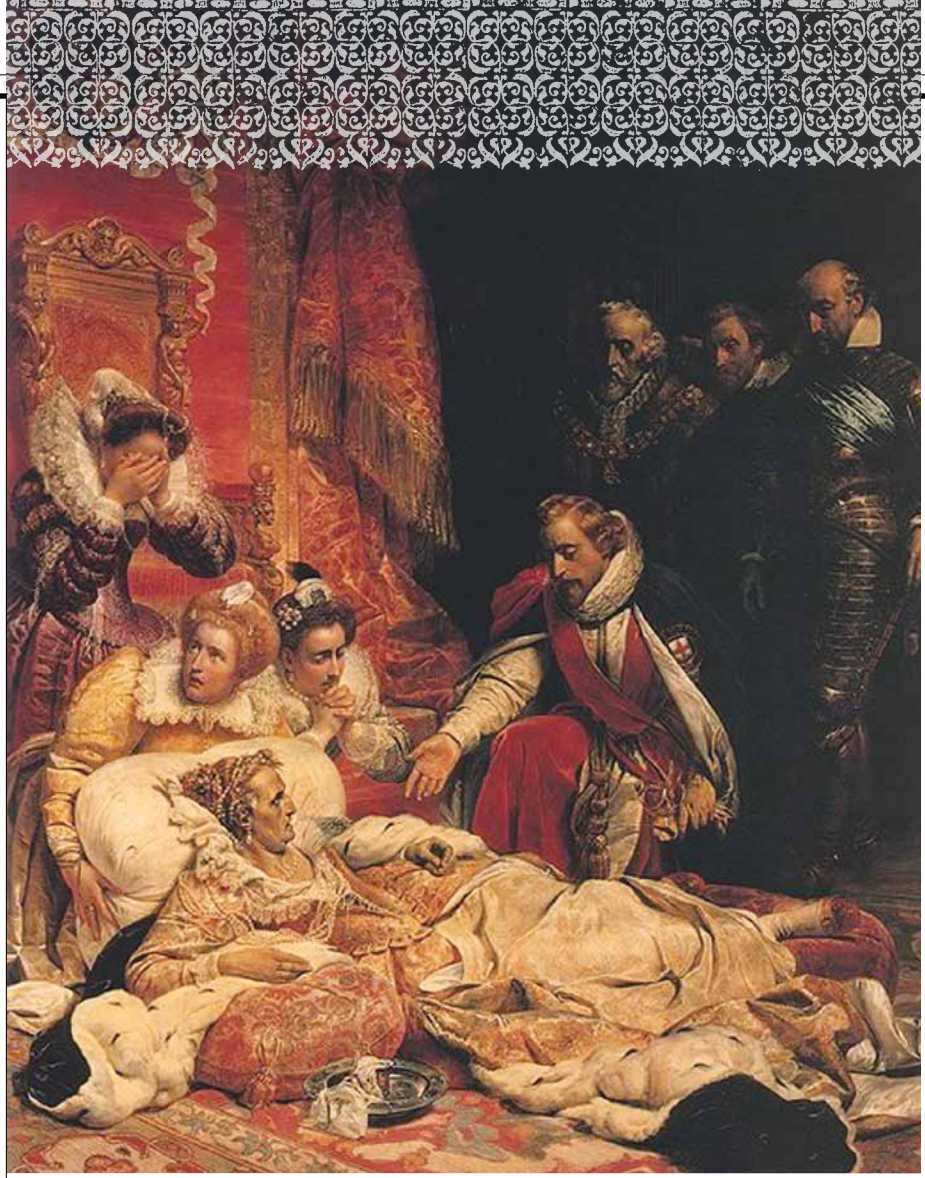
The Elizabethan Settlement

The King James Version of the Bible was born at the Hampton Court Conference in January of 1604. This, as we will see, was a meeting cannily called by the newly-crowned James I (still James VI of Scotland) to appease the Puritans, though he made few concessions there. Political uneasiness was in the air as religious factionalism continued unabated, despite Elizabeth's efforts. She had solidified and entrenched the English Reformation begun under Henry VIII. But many pious English subjects had never been pleased with "the Elizabethan Settlement"—the uneasy state of equilibrium she had engineered to stave off religiously motivated civil war.

† Heb. for the rule of the day, &c.

* Jer. 31.35

Roman Catholics, of course, had reason to be embittered about their disenfranchisement. And on the other end of the spectrum, Puritans within the Church of England insisted that the Reformation had not gone far enough in their native land—that it retained too many Catholic elements. They had no trouble agreeing with Presbyterian John Knox's description of Elizabeth as



Suspended animation. *Above:* Not willing to relinquish her firm control of England until the very end, the dying Elizabeth I left her courtiers hanging until the eleventh hour before at last whispering the identity of her nation's new monarch.

"neither good Protestant nor yet resolute papist." They perhaps remembered God's words in the Book of Revelation about the church in Laodicea: a lukewarm church he would "spew out of his mouth."

Eager to see the task of reformation completed, the Puritans felt that in James they might finally have found their royal champion. After all, hadn't he been brought up under the influence of Calvinist Presbyterians, who shared the Puritan commitment to a continuing reformation?

It was not to be. James had seen enough of the Puritans' ilk in Scotland, and he didn't like them or their theology at all. They were spared their king's outright enmity only by being a sizeable minority, well educated, and highly motivated. Since James wanted unity and stability in his church and state, he needed to consider how to satisfy this constituency as far as he could.

Walking the factional balance

James would need to walk a delicate balance in trying to keep the various factions in peaceful accord. The Roman Catholics, called Papists by Protestants, longed for the English church to return to the Roman fold. The main body of Puritans were loyal to the crown but wanted further distance from Rome. Orbiting beyond these two groups were a number of others, all with their needs and demands to be navigated by the new king.

The Presbyterians were Puritans who were ready to do away with the hierarchical structure of powerful bishops. They advanced what they identified as the New Testament model of local and collegial church administration under elders or presbyters, and they sought every opportunity to remake the Church of England in that image. It would never happen, but that didn't stop them from trying.

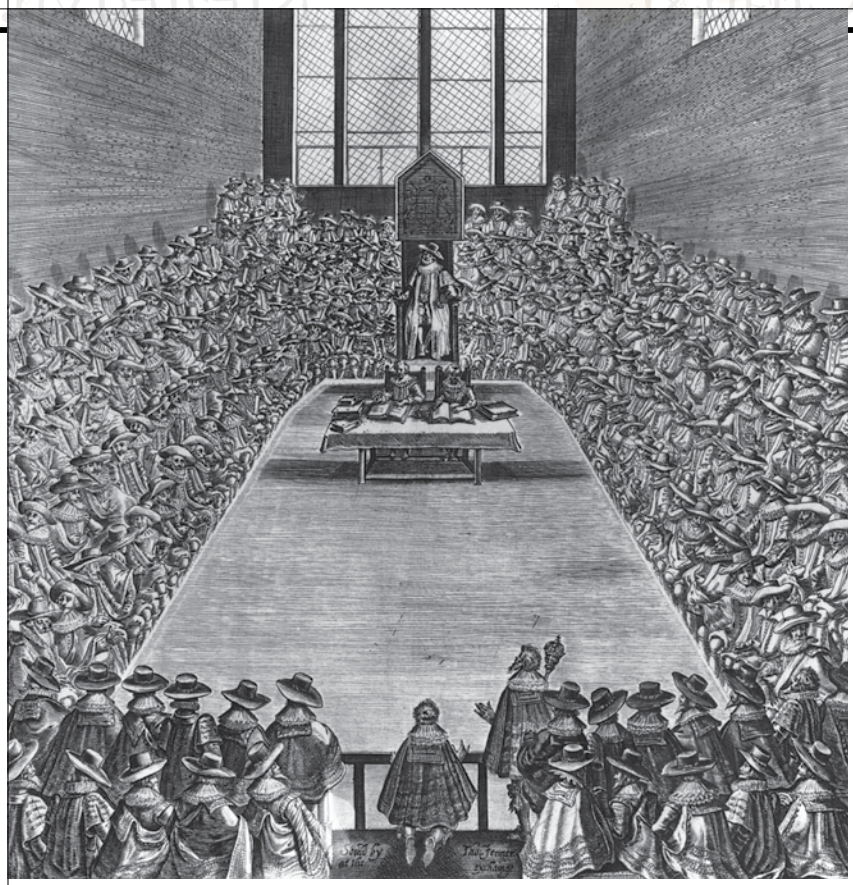
There was also Parliament, eager to expand its power base beyond the perfunctory role it had been allowed thus far. And, not incidentally, there was a significant Puritan influence and representation in Parliament.

Then there were the bishops of the Church of England. Their role was different from that of their successors today. They were a genuine elite, with exceptional power, privilege, and wealth to protect. To them, Puritan agitation was far more than an intellectual abstraction to be debated at Oxford and Cambridge. If the Puritans were to prevail, this hierarchy had much to lose.

The Great Leveler among all of these groups was no political or ecclesiastical party, but an implacable foe nonetheless. From the moment of his accession, James found himself face to face with this most pitiless of enemies. Its very name struck terror everywhere it went: Plague!

The outbreak of this disease that descended on England the year James became king was unusually severe, causing a reported 30,000 deaths in and around London. In those days, not far removed from the great, millennium-long medieval synthesis of the City of God with the City of Man, plague was far more than a public health issue. Many saw it as their ancestors would have: as a vehicle of God's judgment and wrath. Although different

DEATH OF QUEEN ELIZABETH I BY PAUL DELAROCHE/ PUBLIC DOMAIN



PARLIAMENT: (1566-1625) IN THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, 1624 (ENGRAVING) (B/W PHOTO) BY ENGLISH SCHOOL (17TH CENTURY) BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, UK/ THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY
KING JAMES I: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

parties disagreed about exactly who was being judged and why, most agreed that this horrifying scourge was the very hand of God on a sinful nation.

A time of upheaval

At the time of the Hampton Court Conference in January of 1604, the cultural and political climate roiled with turbulence from a number of other sources. This was the very time John Smyth from Gainsborough was teaching and organizing his group of dissident Lincolnshire farmers, laying the groundwork for what would soon emerge as the first expression of the English Baptist movement. At that point they were seen more as a nuisance than as the founders of what would become a large Protestant tradition.

Then, too, a more pernicious cabal was about to form, one whose near-successful act of horrendous terrorism would leave an unhealed wound on the nation's psyche for centuries to come. A mere four months after the Hampton Court Conference, on May 20, 1604, a group of Catholic radicals met in London's Strand. At the innocuously named "Duck and Drake," the conspirators worked out the details of a monstrous plan.

So shocking, so heinous was the act of terrorism these men proposed to commit that, as Adam Nicolson puts it, the plot "would come to define Jacobean England [that is, England during the reign of James I] as much as September 11, 2001, would shape the attitudes, fears and methods of revenge of the western world in the first decade of the twenty-first century." The aim of the so-called "Gunpowder Plotters": to blow up the Parliament building with all the royal family and Britain's political leaders inside. Had the plot not been discovered at the eleventh hour, the carnage would have been immense.

Nor did the religious and social upheaval stop there. The seeds had already been sown for the horrific Thirty Years' War, the last and most savage of the Post-Reformation religious wars, which would begin just 14 years after Hampton Court, in 1618.

Sixteen years after Hampton Court, in 1620, English religious dissidents gave up on both the Established Church and their own nation and fled to Plymouth, Massachusetts, to set up a new church and a new state. These were the "Pilgrims" of Thanksgiving fame. They shared many of the convictions of the more conservative Puritans and Presbyterians, but wanted the state to be removed from church affairs altogether—hence the public label "separatist." Though their exodus from James's England was little-noticed at the time, the king would come to call the colonies "a seminary for a fractious Parliament."

PARLIAMENT: WHY BOTHER? James, believing himself to be king by divine right, saw little use for Parliament and dissolved it on two occasions. He himself survived the rift, but it would get his son Charles killed.

||Or, gained. Some copies reade, which yee haue gained, but that yereceiue, &c.

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate." *Above:* Religious dissent, always bubbling below the surface of James's England, boiled over in 1620 as the Pilgrims gave up on the Established Church and headed for the New World.

*Ier. 51.15.

*Psal. 33.7. and 136.5. Iob. 38.8.

And on it would go: in 1642, the English Civil War began. The following year, James's son Charles I was made prisoner at this very same Hampton Court Palace—the place of his own honeymoon. Then Charles was executed by Parliament itself, under the Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell—a regicide that horrified the crowned heads of Europe.

The Puritans make their case

As James prepared to take the throne, these events were still in the future, but portents abounded. His was a nation whose apparently calm surface hid powerful stirrings of discontent. From the first, he worked with a kind of monomaniacal passion to preserve unity, law, and order within his kingdom.

James received word of his cousin Elizabeth's death and his appointment to the throne while he was in Edinburgh. It didn't take him long to head south. On April 5, 1603, he began his journey to London to be crowned. He was in no hurry, his trip taking a little over a month. (Sir Robert Carey's urgent—and selfishly motivated—trip to Scotland from London to bring James the news of Elizabeth's death had taken just over 3 days.) He arrived in London May 7.

James's journey south was a kind of extended triumphal procession as the populace came out to celebrate and welcome him in the towns and villages along the way. Although still wondering what this new king would bring to their land, the canny and the wise were determined to be on his good side when he brought it.

This happy tour was marked by an important interruption. Along the way, James was approached by a Puritan delegation, who presented the new king with the petition that would lead to the Hampton Court Conference and the eventual commissioning of the King James Version of the Bible.

The document must have come from well-coordinated organizations among the Puritans. It outlined their grievances to the king, stating the additional reforms they implored James to implement. Known as the Millenary Petition because, although no copy has survived, it is supposed to have borne over 1,000 clergy signatures (some 10 percent of the clergy in the land), the plea of this group to their king calls to mind various 20th-century movements of "10 percenters."

Ten percent can make a huge difference and have dramatic impact, especially when comprising those

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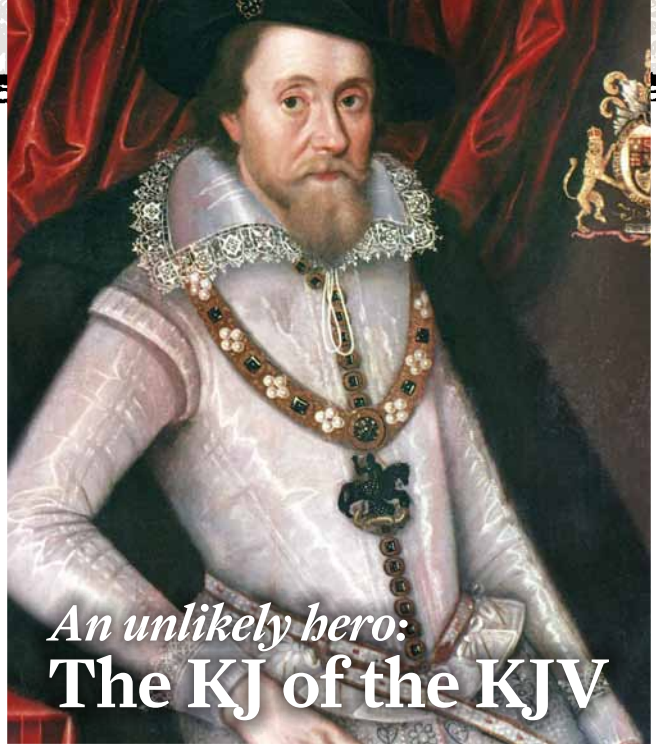


An unlikely hero: The KJ of the KJV

BEATEN REGULARLY AT HIS LESSONS, THE BOY KING OF SCOTLAND BECAME "IMMENSELY INTELLECTUAL" . . . AND THE INSTIGATOR OF ENGLAND'S GREATEST BIBLE TRANSLATION.

King James I of England (simultaneously James VI of Scotland) was certainly, as Adam Nicolson has said, an unlikely hero: "ugly, restless, red-haired, pale-skinned, his tongue . . . too big for his mouth, impatient, vulgar, clever, nervous." What made him the man he became: patron of the most widely used and influential English translation of the Bible in history?

James's childhood in the brutal Scottish court would have permanently scarred most men. When he was still in the womb of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, her secretary-lover David Rizzio was, as Nicolson tells it, "brutally murdered in an adjoining room as she listened to his screams." Nor did the carnage stop during his youth. "His father, the charming Henry Darnley, was murdered by his mother's next lover, the Earl of Bothwell, blown up when lying ill in his Edinburgh house." The last time James ever saw his mother was when he was one year old. From then on, he endured the care of "a string of terrifying Presbyterian governors."

The most influential of these in his life was George Buchanan, "a towering European intellectual," who shaped the young man's mind even as James found himself "a trophy in the hands of rival noble factions in Scotland, kidnapped, held, threatened and imprisoned." James surprisingly emerged from his training with Buchanan, who beat him regularly at his lessons, with an abiding love for learning. He became, says Nicolson, "immensely intellectual, speaking 'Greek before breakfast, Latin before Scots,' composing stiff Renaissance poetry . . . translating the Psalms, capable on sight of turning any passage of the Bible from Latin to French and then from French to English."

We get a glimpse of James's developing character in the report of an envoy from his exiled mother, Mary Queen of Scots. This man, a Mr. Fontenay, came to James's court when the young king was 18 to try to strike a deal making Mary co-ruler with him. Though James said he would support his mother, he already showed his wiliness by refusing to sign the agreement.

Fontenay had little to gain by inflating James's reputation, but his report on the boy-king was, at least in part, glowing:

> "Three qualities of the mind he possesses in perfection: he understands clearly, judges wisely, and has a retentive memory. His questions are keen and penetrating and his replies are sound. In any argument, whatever it is about, he maintains the view that appears to him most just, and I have heard him support Catholic against Protestant opinions. He is well instructed in languages, science, affairs of state, better, I dare say, than anyone else in the kingdom. In short, he has a remarkable intelligence, as well as lofty and virtuous ideals and a high opinion of himself."

Not all of Fontenay's observations were so flattering. He saw the rough manner and vulgar speech into which the king would frequently descend even in his years on England's throne: "In speaking and eating, in his dress and in his sports, in his conversation in the presence of women, his manners are crude and uncivil and display a lack of proper instruction." Fontenay saw, too, the physical oddness that would always hamper the king: "His body is feeble and yet he is not delicate. In a word, he is an old young man."

James also notoriously indulged in escapism, both as a youth and as an adult, spending money like water and half his waking hours hunting. But these were small scars to carry from "the brutal world of Scottish politics" that was his childhood nursery. When in his mid-30s he took the English throne, he was a remarkably resilient—even wise—man, with a deep and abiding desire for a peace in England that he had never experienced in Scotland.

James adopted as his motto Jesus' beatitude "blessed are the peacemakers," and his project of creating a new Bible translation was one of the chief ways he sought to achieve that peace.

—by Chris R. Armstrong

A Puritan in James's den. *Above:* John Rainolds (Reynolds), leader of the Puritans at the Hampton Court Conference, made the fateful suggestion of a new Bible translation and himself worked on the Prophets.

who have felt marginalized and are highly motivated, well organized, and clear in their goals. They can demand attention, and they often do gain it.

"... longing for the redress of diverse abuses of the Church ..."

At 1,100 words long and respectful in tone, the petition assured the king of the Puritans' loyalty to the crown and commitment to national unity. It began:

> [W]e, the ministers of the Gospel in this land, neither as factious men affecting a popular parity in the Church, nor as schismatics aiming at the dissolution of the state ecclesiastical, but as the faithful servants of Christ and loyal subjects to your Majesty, desiring and longing for the redress of divers abuses of the Church, could do no less . . . than acquaint your princely Majesty with our particular griefs. For as your princely pen writeth, "The King, as a good physician, must first know what peccant humours his patient naturally is most subject unto before he can begin his cure."

The petition asked for an overhaul of the church's worship, ministry, ecclesiastical finance, and discipline. It implored James to allow no "popish opinions" in worship, no bowing at the name of Jesus, and no use of "apocryphal" biblical books—books of the Christian Old Testament that were not part of the Hebrew Bible but were traditionally included in Bibles as deuterocanonical ("second canon").

The reforms were to be thoroughgoing, attending even to matters that may sound trivial today but were deadly serious to the Puritans, with their devotion to things spiritual and their suspicion of things material. No more wedding rings, no more use of the sign of the cross, and no more wearing of certain liturgical clothing were to be countenanced.

Ministers must be able to preach effectively—away with those who wouldn't, or couldn't. And away with the abuse known as "pluralism," in which ministers and bishops enjoyed jurisdiction over (and income from!) far more churches than they could reasonably serve. Finally, the church courts must cease arbitrary and inappropriate uses of canon law.

In closing, the Puritans appealed to the king with a rationale they trusted would move him to action: "Thus your majesty shall do that which we are persuaded shall be acceptable to God . . . profitable to his Church which shall be thereby increased; comfortable to your ministers which shall be no more suspended, silenced, disgraced, imprisoned for men's traditions; and prejudicial to none but to those that seek their own quiet, credit, and profit in the world."

With boldness, the authors reminded James that he too was under authority—God's: "Thus with all dutiful submission referring ourselves to your Majesty's pleasure for your gracious answer as God shall direct you, we most humbly recommend your Highness to the Divine Majesty, whom we beseech for Christ's sake to dispose your royal heart to do herein what shall be to his glory, the good of his Church, and your endless comfort." With their last words, they assured their king that they were his obedient servants, who desired "not a disorderly innovation but a due and godly reformation."

What did *not* appear in the Millenary Petition was any mention of a new Bible translation.

Conference called

James took these Puritan ministers seriously enough to call a conference. In a royal proclamation in October 1603, the king announced a meeting to take place before "himself and counsel, his bishops, and other learned men on the first day of the next month."

COURTESY OF JERRY GRIFFITH

"If it please your majesty..." *Above:* The Puritans were used to coming to King James I with their hats in their hands. Here in 1607, they were requesting church reform from the monarch, who began the Ulster Plantation of English and Scottish Protestant settlers in Ireland.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

However, the conference did not convene as planned on November 1, but had to be postponed "by reason of sickness reigning in many places of our kingdom." Both the later date and the choice of the Hampton Court venue may have arisen because of the plague ravaging London.

Built by Cardinal Wolsey in the era of Henry VIII, Hampton Court Palace is a magnificent estate 15 miles southwest of London on the Thames River. Wolsey, the son of a butcher, had risen to become Lord Chancellor of England, cardinal, and the pope's representative. He began to build the opulent Palace in 1515. 2,500 workers were hired to build the 1,000-room palace, and 500 staff were employed to keep it running smoothly.

James came to Hampton Court that first year for lavish Christmas and New Year's events. William Shakespeare's "King's Men" players (so named because they had procured James's personal sponsorship) performed before the king in the Great Hall on Boxing Day in 1603. Shakespeare himself performed there in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on New Year's Day.

A few of King James's approved rules for the new translation

Rule 1 instructed the Translators to leave texts from their model, the Bishops' Bible, "as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit."

Rules 8 – 14 concerned accuracy. **Rule 8** required "every particular Man of each Company, to take the same Chapter or Chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their Parts what shall stand."

Rule 9 added, "As any one Company hath dispatched any one Book in this Manner they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for His Majesty is very careful in this Point."

Rule 11 provided, "When any Place of special Obscurity is doubted of, Letters to be directed by Authority, to send to any Learned Man in the Land, for his Judgment of such a Place."

Rule 12 required "letters to be sent from every Bishop to the rest of his Clergy, admonishing them of this Translation in hand; and to move and charge as many skilful in the Tongues; and having taken pains in that kind, to send his particular Observations to the Company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford."

James wanted a popular translation that supported standard Church of England usages. So he insisted that the translation use old familiar terms and names. **Rules 2 – 5** focused on this. About 90 percent of the actual translation used solid Anglo-Saxon words. Further, the whole was made readable (if formal) in the idiom of the day.

Consistent with his conservative religious views against the radical ideas of the Puritans, James desired "the Old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz. the Word Church not to be translated Congregation &c."

The Translators were instructed, "When a Word hath divers Significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the Propriety of the Place, and the Analogy of the Faith." In addition, "the Division of the Chapters to be altered, either not at all, or as little as may be, if Necessity so require."

James wanted no biased notes included in the translation. **Rule 6** stated, "No Marginal Notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek Words, which cannot without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the Text."

James constantly pushed his committee to advance the translation with dispatch: "Your Majesty did never desist, to urge and to excite those to whom it was commended, that the work might be hastened, and that the business might be expedited in so decent a manner, as a matter of such importance might justly require."

Scourge of the Puritans. *Left:* Richard Bancroft, later Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of Oxford University, served as overseer (though not a Translator) of the KJV project. He was passionately anti-Puritan.

The players, the stage, and the action

As the participants in the conference gathered in the palace, there would have been a special feeling of substance, significance, and permanence.

They met in the king's sanctum—his "Privy Chamber" or private apartment. The participants were the king, his Privy Council of advisors, and nine bishops and deans. The bishops included John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Richard Bancroft, the bishop of London.

Also present were four representatives of the Puritan cause, known to be mature, experienced, and moderate men: Dr. John Reynolds (or Rainolds), head of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; Laurence Chaderton, a noted preacher and Master of Emmanuel College in the Puritan stronghold of Cambridge (says Nicolson: "Chaderton . . . once paused after two hours of a Cambridge sermon. The entire congregation stood up and shouted, 'For God's sake go on!' He gave them another hour"); John Knewstubs, Rector of Cockfield in Suffolk; and Thomas Sparks, a relatively unknown preacher. But, although the Puritans were given a voice, it was clear the deck was stacked against them.

The Conference met on Saturday, January 14, 1604, and then also on the 16th and 18th. No official transcripts of the conference proceedings were permitted, so results have to be pieced together from various reports. The two main sources are Thomas Barlow's official report *The Summe and Substance of the Conference at Hampton Court* and *An Anonymous Account*.

Like Constantine at the Council of Nicea, James delivered the opening address. His opening words set the tone. The doctrine and polity of the state church was not up for evaluation or reconsideration:

> It is no novel device, but according to the example of all Christian princes, for Kings to take the first course for the establishing of the Church both in doctrine and policy. . . . Particularly in this land, King Henry VIII towards to the end of his reign altered much, King Edward VI more, Queen Mary reversed all, and lastly Queen Elizabeth (of famous memory) settled religion as it now standeth. Herein I am happier than they, because they were fain to alter all things they found established, whereas I see yet no such cause to change as confirm what I find settled already.

James hinted that he found great security in the structure and hierarchy of the English church, in contrast to the Presbyterian model he had witnessed firsthand in Scotland. At this point he was surprisingly self-revealing. Though he obviously intended to please his delegates, he also made no effort to hide his previous frustration in Scotland:

> For blessed be God's gracious goodness, who hath brought me into the Promised Land where religion is purely professed, where I sit among grave, learned and revered men, not as before, elsewhere, a King without state, without honour, where beardless boys would brave us to the face.

James then made it clear that although basic structural changes in doctrine and practice were not needed, there might be room for some cosmetic enhancement. "I assure you we have not called this assembly for any innovation," he began. Yet he admitted that even the best of systems is subject to corruption over time. And he acknowledged that "we have received many complaints, since our first entrance into this kingdom, of many disorders, and much disobedience to the laws, with a great falling away to popery."

Therefore he would take the role of the "good physician," "to examine and try the complaints, and fully to remove the occasions thereof, if scandalous; cure them, if dangerous; and take knowledge of them, if but frivolous . . ."

Despite this apparent concession, James did not allow the Puritans to attend the first day of the conference. On that day, James discussed with his advisors,

bishops, and deans various church practices such as baptism, absolution, and excommunication.

On the second day the four Puritans were allowed to join in the meeting. John Reynolds took the lead on their behalf, and at one point in the deliberations raised the question of church government. But if Reynolds had any chance of being heard, he lost it by one inopportune, and no doubt unintended, reference.

Reynolds wanted to know whether a more collegial approach to church administration might be in order—a broadening of the decision-making base. Unfortunately, he posed his question this way: "Why shouldn't the bishops govern jointly with a *presbyterie* of their brethren the pastors and ministers of the Church?"

Using the word *presbyterie* in James's presence was like waving a red flag before a bull. The king exploded: "If you aim at a Scots Presbyterie, it agreeth as well with Monarchy as God and the Devil! Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick, shall meet and censure me and my council, and all our proceedings."

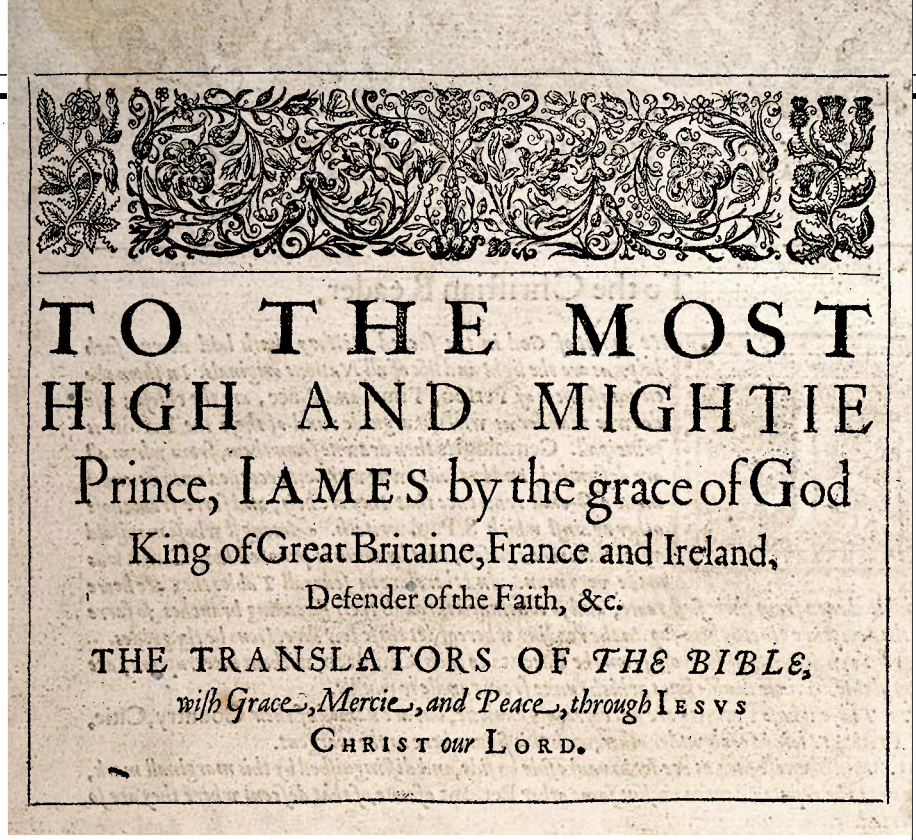
He then uttered what can be considered his motto: "No bishop, no King!" That is, without the episcopacy, there can be no properly functioning monarchy.

He followed this heartfelt cry with the other famous phrase, perhaps the most memorable and most quoted that has survived the conference, as he warned Reynolds: "If this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will harrie them out of the land, or else do worse!"

Some British scholars question this statement's authenticity, suggesting that it might have been not the direct words of James but high-church propaganda. But the sentiment cannot be far off, for in a letter almost contemporaneous to the conference, written to Henry Howard the Earl of Northampton, James described his own performance in response to the Puritans:

> We have kept such a revel with the puritans these last two days as was never heard the like. I have peppered them as soundly as you have done the papists. . . . They fled me so from argument to argument, without ever answering me directly, and I was forced at last to say unto them, that if any of them had been in a college disputing with their scholars, if any of their disciples had answered them in that sort, they would have fetched him up in place of a reply and should the rod have been plied upon the poor boys' buttocks.

James also revealed his true feelings toward the Puritans from his time in Scotland when he said that he had "lived among Puritans and was kept for the most part as a Ward under them, yet, since he was of the age of his Son, ten years old, he ever disliked their opinions; as the Savior of the world said, 'though he lived among them, he was not of them.'"


TO THE MOST
HIGH AND MIGHTIE
Prince, IAMES by the grace of God
King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland,
Defender of the Faith, &c.
THE TRANSLATORS OF *THE BIBLE*,
wish Grace, Mercie, and Peace, through IESVS
CHRIST *our* LORD.

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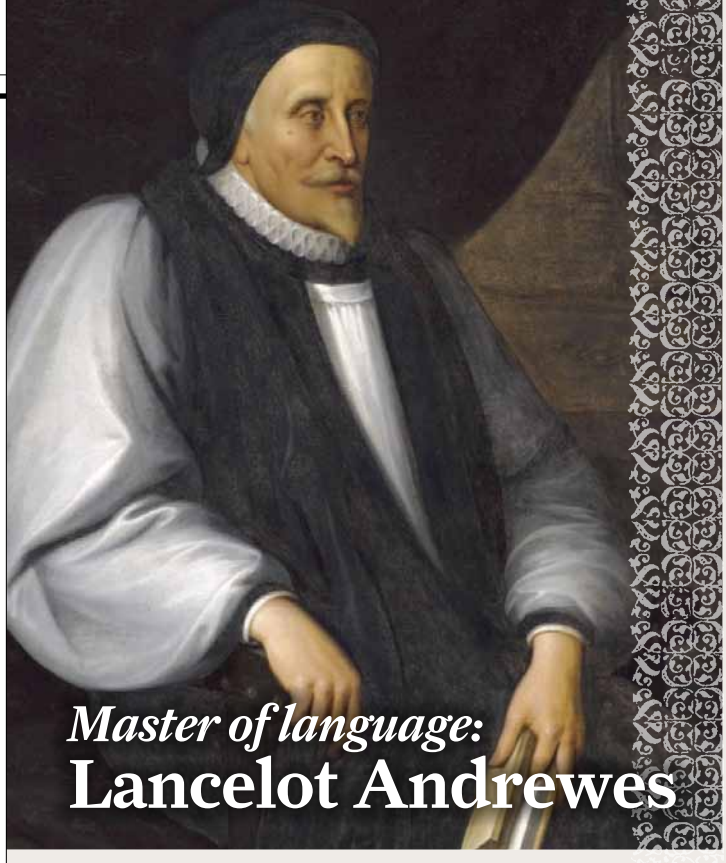
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH. *Above:* It is not every king who gets his name in the front of almost all the Bibles in the land. The two-page Dedication to James was even part of U.S. Bibles for many years.

While Reynolds's indiscreet use of the term "presbyterie" may have damaged the Puritan case, he did get credit for one move on this second day that turned out to be the most significant achievement of the conference and a historic landmark. Reynolds "moved his majesty that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the reign of King Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the original."

James warmed to the suggestion. Strong resistance came immediately from the bishop of London, Richard Bancroft, but once the king showed his support for the translation project, the bishop quickly and conveniently changed his mind—to be rewarded by James with the chairmanship of the project.

Why a new translation warmed the heart of the king

The king liked the idea of a new translation for a few reasons. First, he despised the popular Geneva Bible. He "could never yet see a Bible well translated in English; but the worst of all, his Majesty thought the Geneva to be." It wasn't so much the quality of the translation of the Geneva Bible that bothered James.



Knight of the KJV's round table. *Left:* Once sympathetic to the Puritans but later a lover of church ceremony, Lancelot Andrewes was James's choice for lead Translator.

Master of language: Lancelot Andrewes

The top Translator and overseer of the KJV translation, Lancelot Andrewes was perhaps the most brilliant man of his age, and one of the most pious. A man of high ecclesiastical office during both Elizabeth's and James's reigns, bishop in three different cities under James, Andrewes is still highly enough regarded in the Church of England to merit his own minor feast on the church calendar.

Though Andrewes never wrote "literature," modern writers as diverse as T. S. Eliot and Kurt Vonnegut Jr. have called him one of the great literary writers in English. His sermons feel too stiff and artificial and are clotted with too many Latin phrases to appeal to most today, but they are also filled with strikingly beautiful passages. Eliot, a great modern poet in his own right, took a section of an Andrewes sermon and started one of his own poems with it ("The Journey of the Magi"):

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.

Andrewes served not only as the leader of the First Westminster Company of Translators, which translated Genesis – II Kings, but also as general editor of the whole project. He very likely, as Benson Bobrick suggests, drafted the final form of "such celebrated passages as the Creation and Fall; Abraham and Isaac; the Exodus; David's laments for Saul, Jonathan, and Absalom; and Elijah's encounter with the 'still small voice.'"

Born in 1555, Andrewes studied at Cambridge with *Fairie Queene* author Edmund Spenser. Early in his life he sympathized with the Puritan cause, but over time he soured on Calvinist dogma and turned to a more liturgical piety. In fact, he was to become one of Elizabeth's "heavies," interrogating Puritan separatists imprisoned deep in some of London's foulest jails.

Ordained at 25, Andrewes worked his way up the ecclesiastical ladder to dean of Westminster and chaplain to Queen Elizabeth. Nicolson calls him "an ecclesiastical politician who in the Roman Church would have become a cardinal, perhaps even pope" as well as a minister who was "deeply engaged in pastoral care, generous, loving, in public bewitched by ceremony, in private troubled by persistent guilt and self-abasement." He would wait every day, no matter how busy he was, in the transepts of his church "for any Londoner in need of solace or advice."

It was for his linguistic mastery that Andrewes caught James's eye as the perfect lead Translator. After all, the man spoke 15 modern and 6 ancient languages! Andrewes also possessed a memory bordering on the photographic. So sought-after was he by scholars from around the world that Hugo Grotius, the great Dutch legal authority and historian, called meeting Andrewes "one of the special attractions of a visit to England."

If this were not enough, however, Andrewes had quite possibly also saved his king's life. His own consecration as Bishop of Chichester in the fateful November of 1603 delayed the start of Parliament by a day, thus helping to foil the Gunpowder Plot. Whether for this reason or others, James showered Andrewes with honors and positions, had him preach often at his court, slept (it was rumored) with Andrewes's sermons under his pillow, and even restrained his famously foul mouth in the great divine's presence.

The secret to Andrewes's character, however, was to be found not in his pulpit, nor in his study, nor in James's court. Rather, it was in his private chapel. Bobrick

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describes this sanctum as "richly furnished . . . with its silver candlesticks, cushion for the service book, and elaborate Communion plate ('a silver-gilt canister for the wafers, like a wicker basket lined with cambric lace, the flagon on a cradle, and the chalice covered with a napkin on a credence,' as scornfully described in a Puritan tract)."

A man of intense piety who spent five hours every morning in prayer, Andrewes kept in that chapel a book of private devotions which, when published after his death, became a classic Anglican guide to prayer. According to some accounts, he died with that book in his hands, stained with the many tears he had cried over the years as he prayed for himself and others. (This perhaps accounts, as Nicolson has speculated, for the "large and absorbent handkerchief" with which Andrewes appears in his portraits.)

The devotion that so characterized him in private also suffused his preaching and writing. For though his preaching was always theological, dealing with every doctrine he felt would edify his congregations, he also understood theology as had the church fathers: it was no abstracted exercise or speculative indulgence for him, but an expression of intimacy between the believer and God.

Andrewes's experience of God was not just spiritual but visual, physical—and in that sense "Catholic" or "high church." For he took what Nicholas Lossky calls "an extremely 'realistic' approach to the Incarnation." The fact that God had taken on humanity in the person of Jesus Christ meant for Andrewes that not just our souls but our bodies must take active part in prayer. So he insisted on "worshipping, falling down, kneeling before the Lord" (Psalm 95:6).

"For me, O Lord," he wrote in one of his prayers, "sinning and not repenting, and so utterly unworthy, it were more becoming to lie prostrate before Thee and with weeping and groaning to ask pardon for my sins, than with polluted mouth to praise Thee."

This was the man who met, in the famous Jerusalem Chamber in the abbot's house at Westminster, with the First Westminster Company of Translators. There, in Nicolson's words, this "scholarly, political, passionate, agonized" man, "in love with the English language, endlessly investigating its possibilities, wordly, saintly, serene, sensuous, courageous," set upon the King James Bible the stamp of his own character, "as broad as the great Bible itself."

—by Chris R. Armstrong

What irked him most were the marginal notes, which contained commentary and interpretation that he found politically subversive. He urged, "Let errors, in matters of faith, be amended, and indifferent things be interpreted, and a gloss added unto them."

So, a project to create a new, reliable translation commended itself to this new king. It would displace the despised Geneva Bible, throw a bone to the Puritans, provide a single Scripture for public reading in the churches, represent a symbol of unity in his realm, and not least, edify the lives of his subjects, the church, and the nation.

James spoke of the "special pains" he wanted taken on this translation. The mandate issued by Archbishop Bancroft insisted that this translation was to be accurate, popular, non-sectarian, speedy, national, and authoritative.

He also mentioned getting the translation right according to the originals. He had 47 of the nation's finest scholars of the biblical languages and of English appointed to do the work. Then he approved rules, written by Bancroft, for carefully checking the results (see sidebar on p. 11).

Did King James get what he wanted?

James was looking for a single translation that the whole nation could rely on. "To be read in the whole Church, and none other," as he phrased it.

In his original statement calling for a translation, the king insisted that he wanted a translation with scholarly and royal authority, observing: "I wish some special pains were taken for an uniform translation, which should be done by the best learned men in both Universities, then reviewed by the Bishops, presented to the Privy Council, lastly ratified by the Royal authority."

How can we assess these men's work? Did they serve their king well in this matter of a Bible translation? The easiest answer to this is that the KJV achieved an unrivaled accuracy (even, at certain points, rendering impenetrable Hebrew expressions in equally impenetrable English. See "A fly in the ointment," p. 16). For Protestants only generations removed from the Reformation—James among them—this was certainly its highest value. By this measure, the KJV is a tremendous success.

Then there are the qualities of the language itself. It is surely these qualities that make the KJV still today, by most measures, the most beloved Bible translation in the English language. Adam Nicolson celebrates the KJV's "sense of clarity and directness" combined with "majestic substance . . . the great ceremonial atmosphere of its long, carefully organized, musical rhythms." This is surely just what James must have wanted: a Bible that breathed "an atmosphere both godly and kingly."

No wonder the KJV has shaped the English language more than any other book. James's Translators created a Bible version that is "an exact and almost literal translation of the original," infused at the same time with "a sense of beauty and ceremony." Truly this was a translation fit for a king.

*Ier. 51.15.

*Pſal. 33.7. and 136.5. Iob. 38.8.

*Pſal. 136. 5. Ier. 10.12 and 51.15. † Hebr. Expanſion.

The blind leading the blind. *Above:* "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matt. 15:14. (Painting by Peter Bruegel, 1568)

How the King James Bible brought a "fly in the ointment" to English

FROM THE "SKIN OF YOUR TEETH" TO "SOUR GRAPES," MANY ENGLISH IDIOMS ARE HEBREW SAYINGS THE KJV TRANSLATED LITERALLY.

By Alister McGrath

Have you ever fallen flat on your face? Can you read the writing on the wall? Do you ever think about escaping, perhaps by the skin of your teeth before it's too late? When things are going well, do you look for the fly in the ointment? If you answered "Yes" to these questions, you are in good company.

Shakespeare, however, never fell flat on his face. He couldn't read the writing on the wall, never once escaped by the skin of his teeth, and his ointment was always free of flies. The Bard, that great master of vocabulary and wordplay, could do none of these things, for these metaphors did not enter the English language until close to the time of his death in 1616. Like so much of the English language, these quaint and timeless expressions were borrowed from another tongue—in this case, Hebrew.

The introduction of classical Hebrew phrases into the language—one of the most interesting developments in the shaping of Modern English—dates from the early 17th century with the arrival of the King James Bible.

The authors of *The Story of English*, a companion to the PBS television series on the history of the English language, point out that "the King James Bible was published in the year Shakespeare began work on his last play, *The Tempest*. Both the play and the Bible are masterpieces of English, but there is one crucial difference between them. Whereas Shakespeare ransacked the lexicon, the King James Bible employs a bare 8,000 words—God's teaching in homely English for everyman."

True, the Bible used plain and common words, but as American Rabbi William Rosenau observes, it took those words and "molded new forms and phrases, which, while foreign to the English, became with it flesh and bone." Here's what happened: The translators believed the best way of ensuring accuracy was to translate each and every word of the original, one by one. This literal translation of the Old Testament's Hebrew introduced a large number of new, and somewhat unusual, phrases into the English language.

"The [King James Bible] is an almost literal translation

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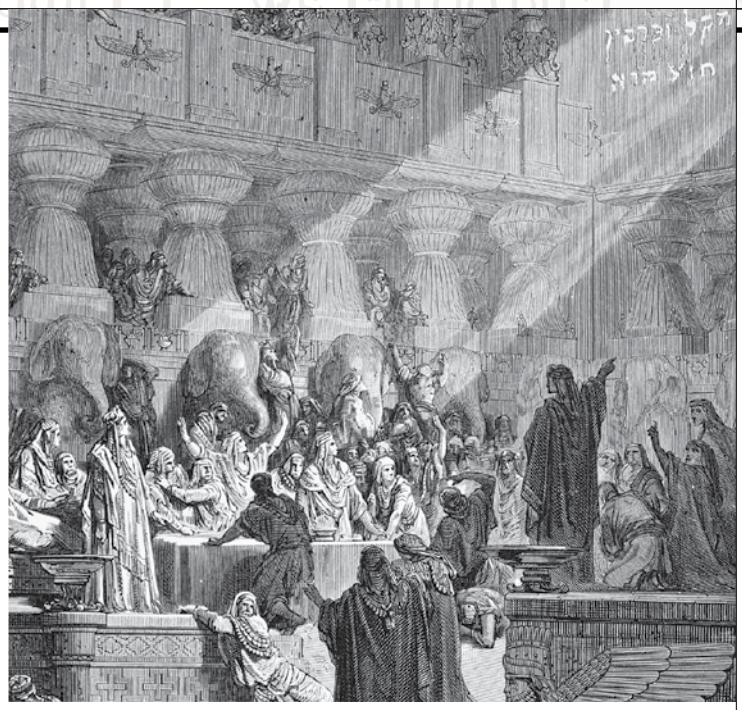
English? Not so much. *Below:* What do you get when you translate Hebrew idioms word-for-word into English? Fascinating phrases that have lodged themselves in the English language. (Test your knowledge of KJV phrases with our quiz on p. 1.)



Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. *Above:* If you've ever seen "the writing on the wall," then you, like master engraver Gustave Dore, have spoken the language of the King James Version.

of the Masoretic text, and is thus on every page replete with Hebrew idioms," writes Rosenau in *Hebraisms in the Authorized Version of the Bible*, a careful study of the way in which the King James Bible translated Hebrew expressions. "The fact that Bible English has to a marvellous extent shaped our speech, giving peculiar connotations to many words and sanctioning strange constructions, is not any less patent."

Because the Bible's publicly accessible style could be widely imitated, the new phrases were easily absorbed, often unconsciously, within everyday language. Soon, without anyone completely appreciating what was happening, they began to shape written and spoken English.

Initially, the language of the King James Bible might have seemed odd. We know that some people found it unnatural, artificial, and stilted. John Selden, a 17th-century Hebrew scholar of considerable distinction, doubted whether the widespread use of Hebrew idioms would make sense to the unlearned English public. He insisted that translation required conversion of Hebrew idioms into real English, not Hebraised English.

"Lord, what gear . . ."

"If I translate a French book into English, I turn it into English phrase and not into French English. `Il fait froid': I say `it is cold,' not `it makes cold,'" he explained. "But the Bible is translated into English words rather than English phrases. The Hebraisms are kept and the phrase of that language is kept. As for example, `he uncovered her shame,' which is well enough so long as scholars have to do with it, but when it comes among the common people, Lord what gear do they make of it." It is interesting to note that Selden's English makes perfect sense to modern readers until he uses the slang of his period. ("Gear" is here best translated as "nonsense"!)

Selden's fears proved unfounded. Continuity of usage, through private and public reading of the King James Bible, soon diminished the apparent strangeness of the translation. Hebraic phrases—initially regarded with some amusement—became standard parts of the English language.

English is remarkable in its willingness to invent new words and borrow existing words. Again and again, linguists find changes that reflect encounters with other cultures, so that studying the history of the language is a bit like looking into a verbal melting pot. Hebrew idioms, for example, were easily absorbed into Modern English, even while their origins lay at the dawn of civilization in the Ancient Near East.

So today, when we remind our colleagues that pride goes before a fall [Prov 16:18], or from time to time accuse them of sour grapes [Jer 31:30], or pour out our hearts to them about everything under the sun, let us remember that we are using the vocabulary of ancient Israel, given a new lease on life. Maybe there is nothing new under the sun after all [Eccles 1:9]. Now wouldn't that be a fly in our ointment [Eccles 10:1].

Half-baked Hebrew. *Right:* John Selden, a 17th-c. Hebrew scholar, doubted whether the widespread use of Hebrew idioms would make sense to the unlearned English public.

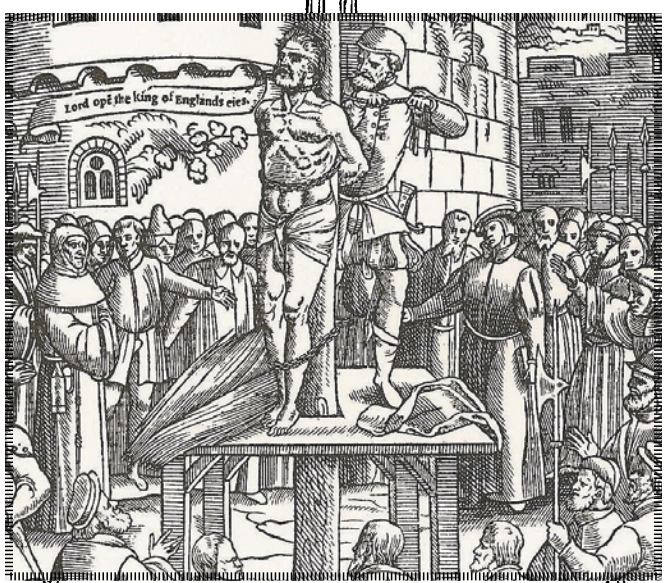
JOHN SELDEN (1584-1654) FROM 'THE GALLERY OF PORTRAITS', PUBLISHED 1833 (ENGRAVING) BY ENGLISH SCHOOL, (19TH CENTURY). PRIVATE COLLECTION/ KEN WELSH/ THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY
WRITING ON THE WALL: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM (ENGRAVING BY GUSTAVE DORE, PHOTO BY D WALKER)
HEBREW TEXT: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Pre-KJV ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

So far as anyone knows, the Bible first touched English soil near the end of the 6th century A.D. when a missionary, St. Augustine, carried one across the Channel. Of course, this was not an English version, but the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome. For centuries, it would be virtually the only written Bible in Britain.

How, then, did ordinary folk—mostly illiterate—obtain their biblical knowledge? Essentially, from a variety of oral and visual sources. Preachers delivering sermons would preface their homilies with paraphrases of relevant texts. Artwork on church windows and walls might depict the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden or Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Later, the mystery play helped communicate the stories of Abraham and Isaac, Noah, the Christmas shepherds, and, indeed, the entire cycle of biblical narrative from Genesis to Revelation.

Credit for the first complete English translation of the Bible goes to John Wyclif, who rendered the Vulgate into Middle English in the 14th century. Two versions of the Wyclif Bible appeared between 1380 and 1397, of which around 180 manuscripts survive.



To be sure, from the 7th century on, a series of Anglo-Saxon versions of *parts* of the Bible emerged. Credit for the first usually goes to Caedmon, whose "Hymn" (ca. 670) paraphrased the Genesis creation story in verse form. Around 700, Aldhelm translated the Psalms, and several years later Bede himself may have translated at least the Gospel of John (ca. 735), though his work has not survived. In the 9th century, King Alfred rendered portions of Exodus, Psalms, and Acts into Old English. From the 10th century on, there appeared a series of Anglo-Saxon gospels, including the famous Lindisfarne Gospels (actually an earlier Latin MS with an interlinear Anglo-Saxon translation added).

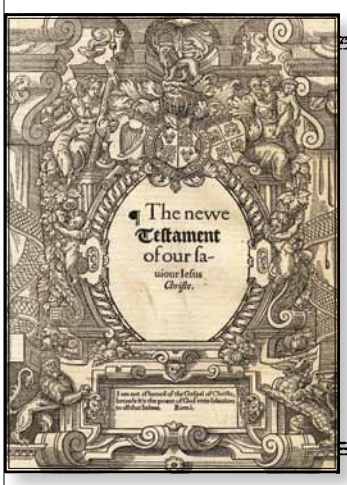
The development of the Gutenberg Press (1455), its introduction into England by Caxton (1475), and the onset of the Protestant Reformation paved the way for the flurry of new translations that appeared in the 16th century. The first was the work of William Tyndale, whose New Testament (ca. 1525) was the first part of the Bible *printed* in the English language. Tyndale was the first to go beyond the Vulgate to a Greek text for his New Testament, and a Hebrew text for the portion of the Old Testament he completed. Unfortunately, his work stirred up such English concern over possible "heresy" that it had to be published in Germany. Tyndale himself was burned at the stake in 1536.

CODEX AMIATINUS, LINDISFARNE GOSPELS: WIKIPEDIA
TYNDALE BURNED AT STAKE: FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS

The first complete Bible printed in English was the work of Miles Coverdale (1535). It was based on the Vulgate, Tyndale, and Luther's German translation. Two years later, it in turn became a source for Matthew's Bible (1537)—actually a combination of Tyndale and Coverdale by John Rogers (who used the pseudonym "Thomas Matthew"). The Great Bible appeared in 1539—requested by Henry VIII.


THE BIBLE
AND
HOLY SCRIPTVRES
CONTEYNED IN
THE OLDE AND NEWE
Testament.
TRANSLATED ACCORDing to the Ebrue and Greke, and conferred With the best translations in diuers languages.
WITH MOSTE PROFITABLE ANNOTAtions vpon all the hard places, and other things of great importance as may appeare in the Epistle to the Reader.
AT GENEVA
MD LX.

For the next product of this prolific century we turn to Geneva, Switzerland. There a group of English Puritans sought refuge from the persecutions of their Catholic monarch, Mary Tudor. And there they produced one of the most influential translations of all times: the Geneva Bible (1560) (for more on the Geneva Bible, as well as the pre-KJV Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible, see "No overnight success," p. 22).



This Puritan version represented such a threat to mainline English Protestantism that the Anglican Church soon authorized its own revision of the Great Bible. The resulting Bishops' Bible (1568) became the official version in England.

Adapted by permission from David Lyle Jeffrey, "The English Bible: A Brief History of Translation," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992).

The shorter Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2–4) in early English versions

West Saxon Gospels, ca. 1000

Faeder ure thu the eart on heofonum, si thin nama gehalgod; to-becume thin rice; gewurthe thin willa on eorthan swa saw on heofonum; urne gedaeghwamlican half syle us to daeg; and forgyf us ure gyltas swa saw we forgyfath urum gyltendum; and ne galaed thu us on costnunge, ac alys us of yfele, sothlice.

Tyndale New Testament, 1525

Oure Father which arte in heve, halowed be thy name. Lett thy kyngdo come. They will be fulfillet, even in erth as it is in heven. Oure dayly bred geve us this daye. And forgeve us oure synnes; For even we forgeve every man that traspaseth us; and ledde us not into temptacio, Butt deliver vs from evyll Amen.

Coverdale Bible, 1535

O oure father which art in heauen, halowed be thy name. Thy kyngdome come. Thy wil be fulfilled upon earth, as it is in heauen. Geue vs this daye oure daylie bred. And forgeue vs oure synnes: for we also forgeue all them that are detters unto vs. And lede vs not in to temptacion, but delyuer vs from euell.

Great Bible, 1539

O oure father which art I heauen, halowed be thy name. Thy kyngdome come. Thy will be fulfylied, eue in erth also as it is in heaue. Oure dayly breed geue vs thys daye. And forgeue vs our synnes: For eue we forgeue euery man that treaspaseth vs. And Leade vs not ito temptacyon. But delyuer vs from euyll.

Geneva Bible, 1560

Our Father, we art in heaue, halowed be thy Name: Thy kingdome come. Let thy will be done eue in earth, as it is in heauen;
Our daily bread giue vs for the day. And forgiue vs our sinnes: for euen we forgiue euerie man that is indetted to vs. And lead vs not into temptation, but deliuer vs from euil.

Bishops' Bible, 1568

O our father which art in heauen, halowed be thy name, thy kyngdome come, thy wyll be fulfylied, euen in earth also, as it is in heauen. Our dayly breade geue vs this day. And forgeue vs our synnes: For euen we forgeue euery man that trespasseth vs. And leade vs not into temptation, but deyuer vs from euyil.

King James Bible, 1611

Our Father which art in heauen, Halowed be thy name, Thy kingdome come, Thy will be done as in heauen, so in earth. Giue vs day by day our dayly bread. And forgiue vs our sinnes: for wee also forgiue euery one that is indebted to vs. And lead vs not into temptation, but deliuer vs from euill.

The King James Bible

1600
August 19: ***Charles Stuart***, future ***Charles I of England*** (and future victim of regicide), born

1603
March 24: ***Queen Elizabeth*** dies

James VI of Scotland proclaimed ***James I of England***; begins to promote union of England and Scotland

Outbreak of plague in England

Catholic Bye and Main plots to turn England Catholic effectively neutralised by ***Robert Cecil,*** 1st Earl of Salisbury and counselor to both ***Elizabeth*** and ***James***

1604
James's first parliament, which refuses union of England and Scotland

James writes *Counterblast against Tobacco*

Shakespeare writes *Othello, Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *Measure for Measure*

Spanish envoys sign peace with England in Somerset House. The peace is sworn on a copy of the Vulgate, St Jerome's Latin Bible

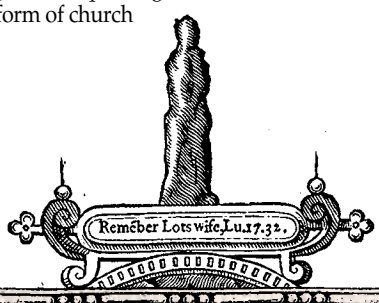
1605
Inigo Jones and ***Ben Jonson*** write the play *Masque of Blackness*

November: Gunpowder Plot

Shakespeare writes *Merchant of Venice, King Lear*

Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* published

1603
April: Millenary Petition presented to ***James*** requesting reform of church



1604
James convenes Hampton Court Conference as response to Millenary Petition

King James and ***Richard Bancroft*** (chief overseer of the KJV work) draw up Rules for Translators

Translators appointed

Richard Bancroft becomes Archbishop of Canterbury; work begins on the initial phases of translation

Henry Savile [6E] knighted (for £1,000 fee)

Scandal as ***John Overall's*** [1B] wife elopes

1605
Edward Lively [2B] dies

Lancelot Andrewes [1A] becomes Bishop of Chichester

Lancelot Andrewes [1A], ***William Barlow*** [4A], and ***Thomas Ravis*** [6A] preach against Gunpowder Plot

Translators

Despite King James I's aversion to Puritan radicalism, he wanted the best possible scholars as translators, and so he allowed many Puritans to work on his Bible translation. As David Daniell tells us, "The best accounts list forty-seven scholars. One or two of these men are now hardly known (the mysterious 'Dr Ravens' is 'apparently an error'): but the offices held are impressive. Most of the forty-seven are Fellows (teaching officers) of Oxford or Cambridge colleges, a dozen being Heads. The Regius Professors of Hebrew and Greek in both universities are present. A. W. Pollard noted, 'The choice of revisers seems to have

1. First Westminster Company
Translated the historical books, Genesis – II Kings

A. Lancelot Andrewes, Director
B. John Overall
C. Hadrian À Saravia
D. Richard Clarke
E. John Layfield
F. Robert Tighe
G. Geoffrey King
H. Richard Thompson
I. William Bedwell
J. Francis Burleigh

2. First Cambridge Company
Translated Chronicles – Song of Songs

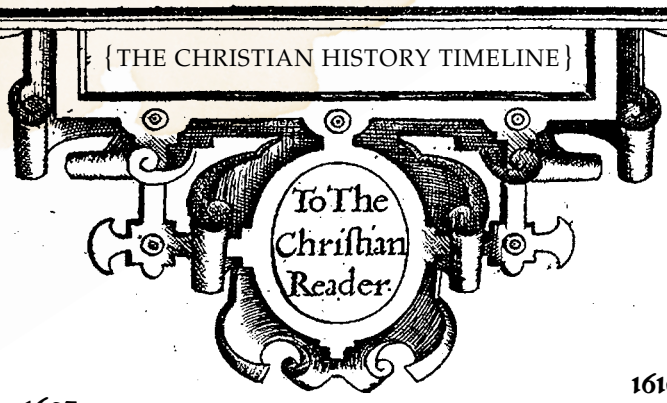
A. Edward Lively, Director
B. John Richardson
C. Lawrence Chaderton (Puritan)
D. Roger Andrewes (Lancelot's brother)
E. Thomas Harrison (Puritan)
F. Robert Spaulding
G. Andrew Bing
H. Francis Dillingham (Puritan)

3. First Oxford Company
Translated Isaiah – end of Old Testament

A. John Harding, Director
B. John Reynolds or Rainolds (Puritan)
C. Thomas Holland (Puritan)
D. Richard Kilby
E. Miles Smith (Puritan, author of Preface)
F. Richard Brett
G. Richard Fairclough (or Featley)

4. Second Westminster Company
Translated NT Epistles

A. William Barlow, Director (fanatically anti-Puritan)
B. John Spencer
C. Roger Fenton
D. Ralph Hutchinson (president of St. John's College, Oxford)
E. William Dakins
F. Michael Rabbet
G. Thomas Sanderson



1606
- Gunpowder Plotters mutilated and executed at St. Paul's
- Jesuit ***Henry Garnet*** hanged, drawn, and quartered for his connection to the plotters
- ***Shakespeare's*** *Macbeth* completed and performed for ***James*** at Whitehall; Parliament reassembles; anti-papist legislation

1607
- 120 colonists leave for Virginia, settle Jamestown (first official English settlement in America)
- Thames freezes over

1608
- ***William Brewster's*** Scrooby Separatists flee to Amsterdam

1609
- ***James*** brokers truce between Spain and the United Provinces as part of his program for universal peace

1610
- ***Henry IV*** of France stabbed to death; ***James*** turns white at the news
- ***Shakespeare's*** *Sonnets* published; *The Tempest* played at Whitehall

1611
- ***Walter Raleigh*** in the Tower writes *History of the World*
- ***William Bedwell*** [1I] gives communion to ***Henry Hudson*** before he embarks on exploratory voyage to Cathay via Northwest passage

1613
- Globe Theater burns down during a performance of *Henry VIII*

1617
- Native American princess ***Pocahontas*** visits ***James*** at Whitehall

1618
- ***Walter Raleigh*** sent on expedition to find El Dorado

1620
- Mayflower sails for America

1625
- March 27: ***James I*** dies

1606
- ***Ralph Hutchinson*** [4D] dies

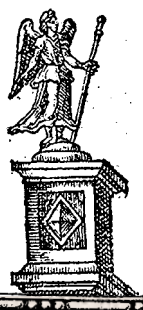
1607
- ***William Dakins*** [4E] dies
- ***John Reynolds*** [3B] dies (of consumption)
- ***Thomas Ravis*** [6A] becomes Bishop of London

1608
- ***Lancelot Andrewes*** [1A] involved in controversy with ***Cardinal Bellarmine*** (a Jesuit theologian involved in the Galileo affair)
- ***James*** demands that the KJV be completed "as soone as may be"

1609
- ***Andrewes*** [1A] becomes Privy Councillor to the king
- ***Thomas Ravis*** [6A] dies

1610
- Revision Committee meets in Stationers' Hall in London
- ***Henry Savile*** [6E] begins publication of Chrysostom edition

1611
- King James Bible published



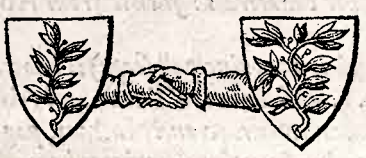
been determined solely by their fitness, and both parties in the Church [that is, the Puritans and the Established Churchmen] were represented by some of their best men.'"(436)

5. Second Cambridge Company
Translated the Apocrypha

A. John Duport, Director
B. John Boys or Bois
C. William Branthwaite
D. Andrew Downes
E. Jeremiah Radcliffe
F. Robert Ward
G. Samuel Ward (Puritan)

6. Second Oxford Company
Translated the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation

A. Thomas Ravis, Director
B. George Abbot
C. Richard Eedes (died before contributing)
D. Giles Tomson
E. Sir Henry Savile (the only non-clergyman Translator)
F. John Peryn or Perne
G. Ralph Ravens
H. John Harmar (Puritan)
I. Leonard Hutten
J. John Aglionby
K. James Mountague or Mountagu (Puritan)



"Mountagu embodies all the unclassifiability of Jacobean attitudes to state and religion, to holiness and power. He would in time become . . . a bishop. He edited . . . the king's own collected works. He was a beautifully mannered aristocrat, with one brother an earl, the other a baron. . . . Surely a figure such as Mountagu should have been repulsed by Calvinist severity and strictness, by the whole notion of Puritanism? He wasn't. He was deeply sympathetic to the reformist camp, having been Master of the Puritan Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge. At this period, at the head of each of his letters, he used to put the word 'Emmanuel,' meaning 'God be with us', a signal among the stricter sort of the supremacy of scripture over the worldly structures of the church. He did his best to promote the hotter Protestants within the church and would not accept any kind of lush ceremonial, nor any hint of a drift back to Rome." —Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries*

HAMPTON COURT CONFERENCE BY ENGLISH SCHOOL (20TH CENTURY), PRIVATE COLLECTION/ LOOK AND LEARN/ THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

No overnight success

FANS OF THE KJV LIKE TO THINK THEIR FAVORITE BIBLE BURST ONTO THE SCENE IN 1611 WITH ALL THE FANFARE SUCH A MASTERPIECE DESERVED. HERE'S THE REAL STORY. **By Dr. A. Kenneth Curtis**

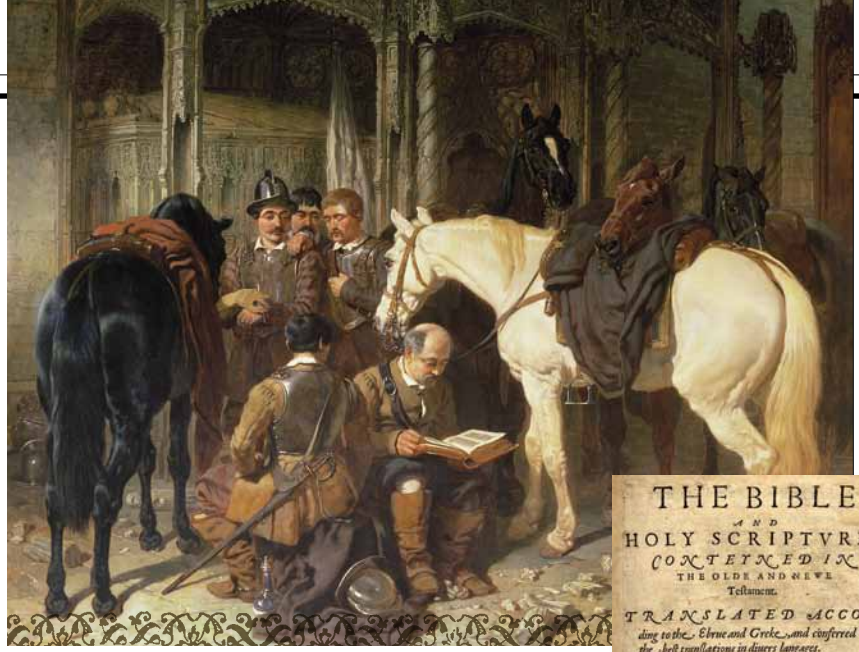
It was not a promising start. King James I of England had inherited a kingdom still reeling from centuries of religious strife. Anglicans, Puritans, and Catholics each sought dominance in church and government, and each had their own version of the Bible (respectively, the Bishops', Geneva, and Douay-Rheims versions, as we shall see). Unity, always James's ruling motive, seemed remote. He tried to foster it in the realm of religion by having 47 scholars work together to create one Bible version, to be read in all English churches. And miraculously, out of this committee of bickering intellectuals came one of the most popular and enduring works in the history of the English language. But no one at the time, or even decades later, would have guessed at this iconic status. From the beginning, the King James Version had plenty of enemies.

"I require it to be burnt."

The Translators of the KJV (the collective noun was always capitalized) prepared a long preface to the 1611 edition, as if they felt the need to explain what they had done:

"Truly, good Christian Reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation. Nor yet to make a bad one a good one . . . but to make a good one better . . ."

The Translators clearly expected resistance to the



PURITANS: ROUNDHEADS AT AN ARUNDEL CHURCH, 1847-51 (OIL ON CANVAS) BY JOHN FREDERICK HERRING SNR (1795-1865), TOWNELEY HALL ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM, BURNLEY, LANCASHIRE/ THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

Ominous origin. *Left:* The tension in the room at the 1604 Hampton Court Conference foreshadowed the storm the KJV would face upon its debut in 1611.

new translation, and they got it. Dr. Hugh Broughton, the distinguished but widely disliked Hebrew scholar, fired the first salvo. His disgruntled missive to the king showed the famous irascibility that had kept him off the translators' list in the first place. Said Broughton: "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. Tell His Majesty that I had rather be rent to 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 to be burnt." We may suspect Broughton of more than sour grapes: for the past 30 years, he had been doing his own translation, based on the beloved Geneva Bible.

In the politically charged environment of the day, much of the resistance to the new version was passive. The Bishops' Bible continued to be read in churches; the Geneva Bible continued to be a favorite for personal devotions. For years, lead translator Bishop Lancelot Andrewes himself continued to quote from an older version. Adam Nicolson, author of *God's Secretaries*, summarized the KJV's early reception: "It didn't work at all. It was a catastrophe . . . universally loathed." All the Puritans, including the Massachusetts émigrés, continued to use the Geneva Bible. Even in the KJV's own preface, it quotes not from itself but from the Geneva Bible. It was "deeply unloved."

The KJV's Puritan competitor

The biggest competitor to the King James Version in the people's affections was the Geneva Bible. In fact, soon after his own version was produced, James had to ban the printing of any new Geneva Bibles, so that people would take up the King James Bible. This did not check the flow. Printers got around the production ban by printing new Geneva Bibles with the earlier date on the title page, so it looked as though they were older copies. What made the Geneva Bible such a formidable competitor to the king's new version?

It all becomes clear when we know the Geneva Bible's origins. Under the Roman Catholic Queen Mary, whose reign began in 1553, militant Protestants protected their ability to practice their religion unhindered—and potentially their lives—by fleeing to Geneva, Switzerland. There they set to work producing a new translation, named after the city that Calvin had helped to turn into a Protestant mecca. The translating team, scholars all, bore impeccable Puritan credentials. The four chief translators were William Whittingham, a former student at Christ Church, Oxford; Christopher Goodman, a Nonconformist; Thomas Sampson, a Calvinist later ordained by Bishop Ridley in the Anglican Orders; and Richard Cox, a Lutheran and headmaster of Eton. These men used the best scholarly resources available and made corrections of the English text from the original languages—resulting in a translation that improved considerably on earlier versions.

GENEVA BIBLE TITLE PAGE: GRUBER RARE BOOK COLLECTION, LUTHERAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CHICAGO

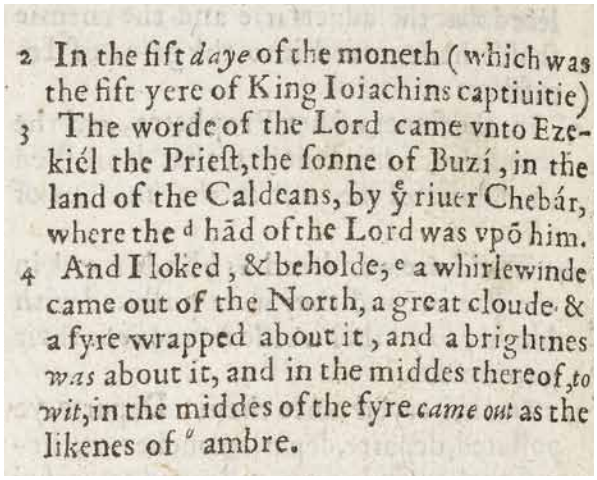
Puritan favorite. *Above*: The Geneva was the favorite Bible of 17th-c. Puritans such as the "Roundheads" pictured here.

First printed abroad in 1560, by 1576 Geneva Bibles were pouring from the presses of England. In Scotland, the fiery Reformer John Knox loved its Calvinist pedigree. In 1579, the year the Geneva Bible was first printed in that country, Scottish law required that every household with sufficient means buy a copy. By 1604, when the Puritans at Hampton Court successfully petitioned King James to create the KJV, the Geneva Bible had become the runaway favorite of English Protestants everywhere, far outstripping such more official but less loved versions as the 1538 Great Bible and its revised successor, the Bishops' Bible of 1568.

After 1611 the nation's official Bible printers, Barker, Norton, and Bill, still printed the Geneva Bible in at least ten editions, along with four separate editions of the New Testament. After the king's 1616 proscription of Geneva Bible printing in England, copies continued to flow in from Amsterdam and Dort well into the 1630s. Indeed, Barker went on to print both versions to the year 1617 and probably later. Finally in 1640 the anti-Puritan Archbishop Laud, seeking to limit distribution of this version with its divisive marginal notes, made importing it illegal. Laud used the excuse that bringing in Geneva Bibles from abroad created unfair competition for the English printing trade.

Whence the popularity that required actual legislation to uproot the Geneva Bible? For one thing, its language was clearer and more vigorous than the often dull Bishops' Bible, the translation authorized by the Church of England under Elizabeth I. The Geneva was also

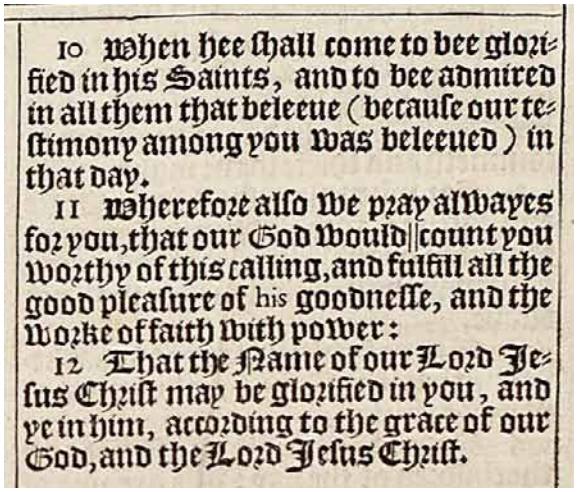
Geneva Bible


2 In the fift *daye* of the moneth (which was
the fift yere of King Ioiachins captiuitie)
3 The worde of the Lord came vnto Eze-
kiél the Prieſt, the ſonne of Buzí, in the
land of the Caldeans, by ẏ riuer Chebár,
where the [d] hād of the Lord was vpō him.
4 And I loked, & beholde, [e] a whirlewinde
came out of the North, a great cloude &
a fyre wrapped about it, and a brightnes
was about it, and in the middes thereof, *to*
wit, in the middes of the fyre *came out* as the
likenes of [f] ambre.

The open Roman typeface of the Geneva Bible helped to ensure its continued popularity for decades after the KJV came on the scene.

The "Mac" and "PC" of 17th-c. Bibles?

King James Bible


10 When hee ſhall come to bee glori-
fied in his Saints, and to bee admired
in all them that beleeue (becauſe our te-
ſtimony among you was beleeued) in
that day.
11 Wherefore alſo we pray alwayes
for you, that our God would || count you
worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the
good pleaſure of his goodneſſe, and the
worke of faith with power:
12 That the Name of our Lord Je-
ſus Chriſt may be glorified in you, and
ye in him, according to the grace of our
God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The KJV's dense Gothic blackletter typeface, while lending a certain weightiness to the text, could be tiring to read over long blocks.

smaller than earlier Bibles, and even available in pocket editions. More important for wide distribution, it was less expensive than the Bishops' or Great Bibles. In the late 16th century it is likely that the Geneva New Testament cost less than a week's wages even for the lowest-paid laborers.

Perhaps even more important was the substance of the Geneva's prefaces, annotations, and marginal notes—all of them speaking loudly with the voice of Puritanism. Though not nearly as "hot" as those in the Tyndale Bible, which had gotten its translator strangled and burned in 1536, the Geneva Bible's notes were still firmly Protestant. Later versions turned up the anti-Catholic flames. A 1595 edition interpreted the beast from Revelation 11:7's bottomless pit as "the Pope which hath his power out of hell and cometh thence."

The *form* of the notes was also important. They were created to serve a clarifying, teaching function. The Geneva translators had absorbed Calvin's understanding that Bible reading and theology teaching must be "accommodated to the ability of the individual." To err is human—or at least too typical of the *simple* human reading his or her Bible—and so to explain and illustrate was divine. The Geneva Bible aimed to remove as many difficulties as possible for the sake of the reader's clear understanding.

Simply put, in its readability as well as (for many) its theological slant, the Geneva Bible was "user friendly." This was enough to ensure that under both Elizabeth and James it would remain the most widely read Bible in England. The King James did not finally begin to supplant the Geneva in its native land until the period of Restoration (1660s), and in Scotland the Geneva lasted even longer—as late as 1674 at least one Scottish parish was still using it in worship. In the realm of Bible translation (as the modern "King James Only" movement in America also attests) beloved old versions die hard.

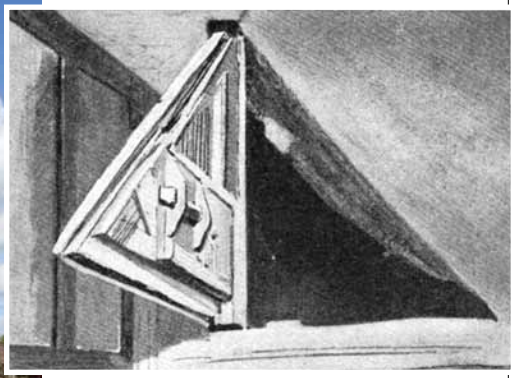
Bible of the Catholic exiles

The Geneva Bible was not the King James Version's only competitor. English Roman Catholics had their own favorite: the Douay-Rheims. During Elizabeth's reign, the English Roman Catholics no longer enjoyed the patronage of the Catholic Queen Mary and found themselves persecuted—even martyred—and forbidden to worship publicly. Some pursued the same route as the Puritans—working from exile to establish themselves with the hope of returning to an England more in line with their beliefs.

In 1568, a group of these exiles founded a Roman Catholic English College called Douay (or Douai) in Flanders. Here, as the Roman Church sent missionaries back to England to restore the Catholic religion, a man named Gregory Martin began the first English translation for Roman Catholics. Starting with the Old Testament, Martin, a former Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, worked at a feverish pace. Each day he translated two full chapters and then passed them on to two other scholars for revision.

In 1582, the first part of the project was printed at Rheims—the New Testament. The translation of the Old Testament, however, was slowed by a lack of funds, hindering its publication until nearly 30 years later. Both were welcomed with relief by English Catholics. No more would they be forced to read Protestant versions.

Although it made use of much modern scholarship, the Douay-Rheims translation was made from the Latin Vulgate which, in the view of the editors, was "truer than the vulgar Greek text." Also, the translation was literal, in opposition to the Protestants' "presumptuous bold-



Douay-Rheims: Bible for a persecuted people. *Above:* Mapledurham, a Recusant House ("recusant" meant a Catholic who refused to attend Anglican services), complete with hiding places for priests on the run. *Right Top:* A "priest's hole" in the attic of Mapledurham. *Right:* Recusant priest's trunk with vestments; its owner was hanged in 1628.

ness and liberty in translating." In places, then, it was unintelligible to those unfamiliar with Latin. Both text and notes were designed to show the Catholic tradition's opposition to the interpretations of the Reformation. No less argumentative than the Geneva, the Douay-Rheims took plenty of potshots at Protestants.

Later, however, the Douay-Rheims succumbed to the rising popularity of the King James Version. During the first half of the 18th century, the Authorized Version so flooded England that in 1752 the Roman Catholic Church in England issued a revision of the 1610 Douay-Rheims Bible by Richard Challoner that was very much closer to the Authorized Version than it was to the original. This became the standard text for Roman Catholics until the 20th century.

In its early decades, the King James Version had to contend not only with people's preference for rival versions, but also with more direct, even violent criticism from both the Protestant and the Catholic camp. From the beginning, the wide and unified support James had envisioned for his Bible seemed unlikely. In fact, the stakes here were much larger than decisions over versions. The divisions expressed in this "Bible war" led to physical conflict: the Puritan-led Civil War of the 1640s and 50s.

American Jews and the KJV

Rabbi Isaac Leeser, a respected clergyman, author, translator, and founder of the Jewish Press of America, objected to headings and marginal comments in English language Bibles, such as "The Prediction for Christ" for Psalm 110, "A Description of Christ" for the Song of Solomon, and "Christ's birth and Kingdom" for Isaiah 9. His solution was to single-handedly translate into English the entire Hebrew Bible (1853) and the Sephardic and Ashkenazic prayer books (1837 and 1848). Mark A. Noll has written about the checkered history of the King James Version in the American Jewish world:

> For American Jews, the dominance of the KJV posed a special problem because of the way that Protestant marginal notes and Protestant traditions of interpretation Christianized the Hebrew Scriptures. One of the impulses stimulating Isaac Leeser to his pioneering English translation of 1853 was the Christianizing propensity he found in the KJV: "Whenever it was possible for the translators to introduce Christianity into the Scriptures, they have uniformly done so in order 'to assail Israel's hope and faith.'"

Noll adds,

> Throughout the nineteenth century, almost all of America's publicly funded primary schools provided for readings from the Bible. Invariably these Bible readings were from the King James Version which was the nearly universal Bible of choice for America's Protestants . . . For Jews, mandated readings from the KJV in the public schools were almost always felt as a civil and religious imposition. Readings from the King James Version in public schools . . . and more general efforts of mainstream Protestants to define the United States as a Christian nation . . . sharpened Jewish understanding of what they themselves desired from the Scriptures.

—by Ann T. Snyder

MAPLEDURHAM HOUSE: BR LAWRENCE LEW, O.P.
PRIEST'S HOLE: OREALD.COM
PRIEST'S TRUNK: BY PERMISSION OF THE GOVERNORS OF STONYHURST COLLEGE
LEESER PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA.COM

CROMWELL AT THE STORMING OF BASING HOUSE, 1900 (OIL ON CANVAS) BY ERNEST CROFTS (1847-1911). LEEDS MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES (CITY ART GALLERY) U.K./ THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

Theology & muskets. *Above:* The Puritan-Establishment tensions that dogged the KJV exploded into the Civil War of the 1640s and 50s.

Ridiculous and bogus

Religious and political minefields were not the only hazards on the landscape of the KJV's early history. The text itself was also pockmarked with potholes—sometimes quite deep—left by poor editing. Misprints included *hoopes* for *hookes*, *she* for *he*, the repetition of three whole lines in Exodus, and even, in one of the Gospels, *Judas* for *Jesus*! The 1631 edition unwittingly revised the Ten Commandments themselves, insisting, "Thou shalt commit adultery"—for which the printers were fined £300 (over £33,000 in today's money) and deprived of their license.

Printers' errors only added fuel to the flames of textual criticism. Christopher and Robert Barker secured an extensive patent from Queen Elizabeth to print the Scriptures, embracing "all Bibles and Testaments whatsoever, in the English language, of whatever translation, with notes, or without notes, printed before then, or afterwards to be printed by our command." The Barkers printed at least two separate issues of the KJV bearing the 1611 date. The first one was completed and rushed out the door in a single effort. The second and subsequent editions, however, were printed piecemeal, during "down-time" from other work. This more haphazard process led the printer to sometimes mix pages of corrected and uncorrected editions when binding them. Such was the muddle in Barker's print shop that in the end, no two copies of the Bible contained exactly the same set of sheets.

Another problem with early editions was readability. The first printing of the Authorized Version was as a folio, available loose-leaf for 10 shillings, or bound for 12. These versions were large, designed for use on lecterns. In later printings smaller sizes were available. The pages had, in Nicolson's words, "a heavy antique feel," with a dense, Gothic-style blackletter typeface creating "a certain airlessness on the page." In contrast, Geneva Bibles and other popular English Bibles from French and Swiss presses had been printed for decades using open, more legible Roman typefaces.

On top of that, the new Bible was punctuated heavily in an effort to help those who read the Bible aloud in church to do so with the proper pronunciation and emphasis. Paragraph marks (¶) appeared up to Acts 20:36, but not after that. This added to the complexity of each page. Later editions were available in smaller sizes and with a Roman face. Surely its inaccuracies and readability issues help account for the fact that, early on, very few copies were bound and sent to churches.

Critics also raised their voices against the Translators' choice of source texts: "The Translators appear to have . . . made no first-hand study of ancient manuscript sources, even those which—like the Codex Bezae—would have been readily available to them," wrote historian Benson Bobrick. The Authorized Version of the New Testament did owe something to the Vulgate.

In its defense, however, a large amount of Tyndale's work from the Greek and Hebrew was carried over into the new translation, with a full 80 percent of Tyndale's words appearing unaltered in the King James Version. And more than other translations before it, "the Authorized Version profited by all the controversy regarding previous translations. Practically every word

Publish and perish.
Left & Below: From the first, critics scorned the KJV for its printing errors. Not just the famous misprint in the "Wicked Bible" but also many other inconsistencies provided fuel for opponents' ire.

THE Book.
Above: No one in the 17th c. would have believed the KJV's eventual popularity. In one modern film, it is the world's last, best hope.

that could be challenged had been challenged."

The language, perceived to be archaic even in the 1600s, also drew complaints. "Some critics," says Nicolson, "thought its dependence on a kind of English which seemed sixty or seventy years out of date (although its English was in fact a form no one had ever spoken) made it ridiculous and bogus."

This complaint was echoed two centuries after the fact by historian Henry Hallam (1777–1859), who remarked that the English of "the King James Version abounds in uncouth phrases and in words whose meaning is not familiar, and that whatever is to be said it is, at any rate, not in the English of the time of King James."

In fact many of those unfamiliar phrases were Hebraisms—direct renderings of Hebrew phrases with no parallel in idiomatic English. (See "How the King James Bible Brought a 'Fly in the Ointment' to English," p. 16.)

Symbol of unity and optimism

"The best revenge," said Frank Sinatra, "is massive success." In the end, this was what the King James Bible achieved. It weathered all storms and outstripped all competitors, to find an unparalleled place in our language and culture.

In the short term, after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, when the English people wanted to mend the huge rupture in their country, they began to take up the King James Bible as what Nicolson calls "a template of wholeness—a sort of, by then, rather antique dream of what England might be." The version that was a disaster at its first printing became the symbol of optimistic hope in the later 17th century.

In the longer term, the KJV became so much a part of the English language that, in the words of Alister McGrath, "for nearly two centuries, most of its readers were unaware that they were reading a *translation*." McGrath quotes Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, in which Henry Pickering chides Eliza Doolittle to remember "that you are a human being with a soul and the divine gift of articulate speech: your native language is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and The Bible."

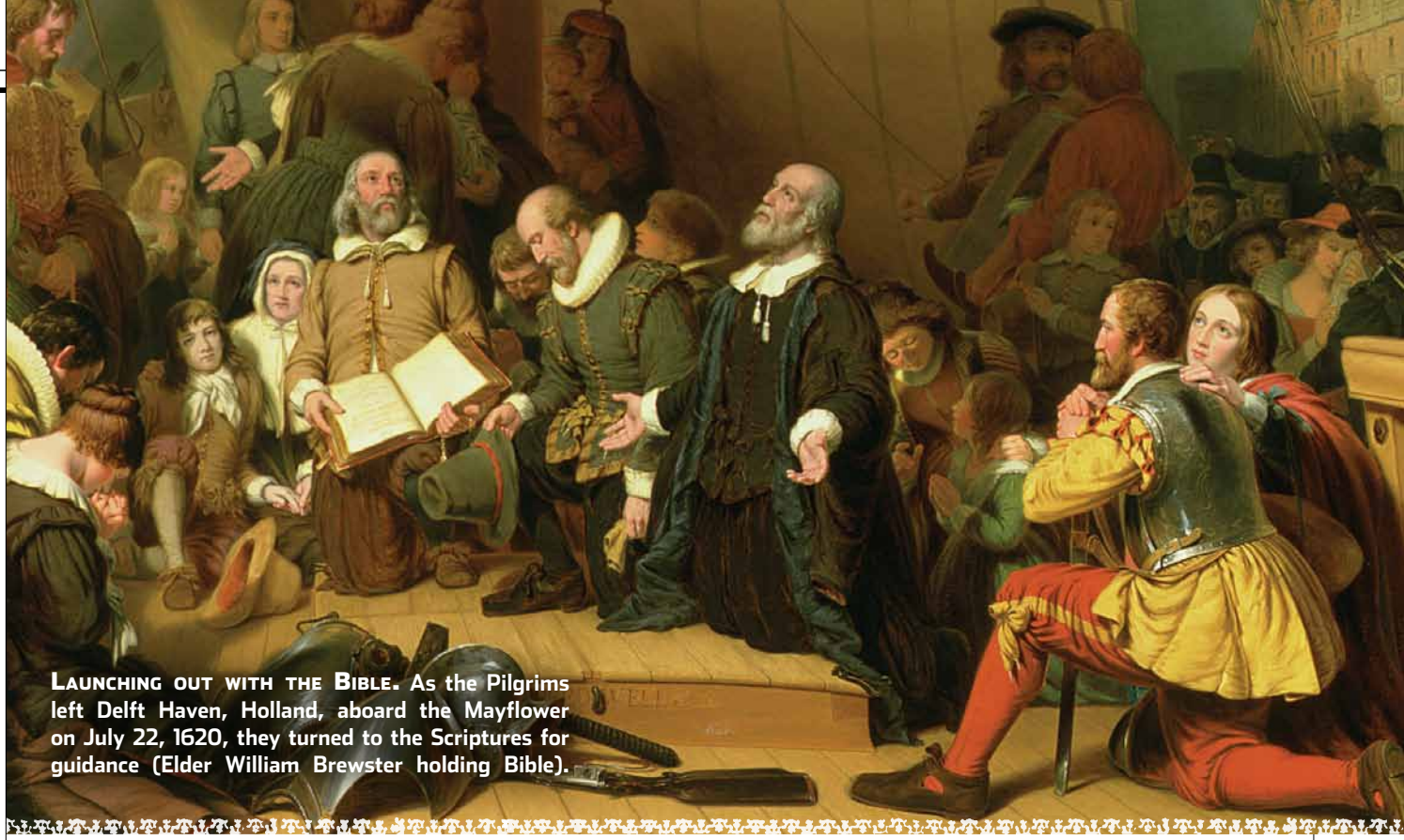
In a breakdown of queries regarding Bible translations, Google reported in the early 21st century that the KJV was the translation most consulted, with the NIV coming next. And one of the most intriguing examples of the resilience of and resistance to the KJV in its long history happened in 2010 in the form of an 80-million-dollar action thriller movie released by Warner Brothers.

The Book of Eli is set in a post-apocalyptic world, 30 years after a nuclear holocaust has devastated the planet. Small pockets of survivors struggle in a lawless and squalid wasteland; the future of humanity lies in the recovery of a book that has been lost. The hero, played by Denzel Washington, launches out on a mission to get that book to a small surviving community on Alcatraz Island, where artifacts of cultural heritage are being recovered and restored.

The single treasure that must be saved for the future hope of civilization turns out to be the King James Bible. But the evil tyrant Carnegie opposes the recovery of the KJV and will go to any length to confiscate it, as he sees it as an instrument of social control.

The movie played in first-run theaters for over 17 weeks and exceeded $150,000,000 in gross receipts worldwide. The success of a modern action thriller built on the premise that the King James Bible will be the key to restoring human culture after a future holocaust prompts us to ask: What is the unique place and power of the KJV in our cultural memory, such that it could overcome all the resistance and competitors it has encountered over the past 400 years and emerge as the imagined solution for all our ills in an age to come?

PRINTING SHOP: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM (PHOTO BY HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES)
WICKED BIBLE: PHOTO BY JERRY GRIFFITH, COURTESY OF DUNHAM BIBLE MUSEUM
BOOK OF ELI: WARNER BROS.



Launching out with the Bible. As the Pilgrims left Delft Haven, Holland, aboard the Mayflower on July 22, 1620, they turned to the Scriptures for guidance (Elder William Brewster holding Bible).

Old book in A NEW WORLD

THE COLONIES STARTED FRESH IN A LOT OF AREAS, BUT BIBLE TRANSLATION WASN'T ONE OF THEM. OVERWHELMINGLY, THE KJV HAS BEEN THE U.S. BIBLE OF CHOICE.

By Chris R. Armstrong

In 1630, Massachusetts founding governor John Winthrop—of "city on a hill" sermon fame—brought his own personal copy of the KJV ashore: the first known KJV on American soil. But this was something of an aberration; a solid majority of the earliest colonists preferred their Puritan-friendly Geneva Bible. In fact, given the popularity of that version at the time, Winthrop's KJV seemed destined to remain a mere curiosity.

Within two decades, however, the KJV was well on its way to becoming The Bible of the New World. As the Geneva ceased publication in 1644, British-printed KJVs began flowing into American churches, homes, and libraries. And when, in the late 1700s, KJVs began issuing from American presses, the floodgates opened. By the 1800s, American editions numbered in the millions, and the KJV was singing its cadences through the greatest American novels, shaping the solemn phrases of presidential speeches, and changing the American language itself with hundreds of new idiomatic phrases.

Beloved above all in the churches, the KJV became so dominant by the 1900s that in 1936, a scholar

EMBARKATION OF THE PILGRIMS, 1620, 1857 (OIL ON CANVAS) BY ROBERT WALTER WEIR (1803-89), BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK, USA/ THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

complained that many Americans "seemed to think that the King James Version is the original Bible which God handed down out of heaven, all done up in English by the Lord himself."

1777 saw the first publication of the KJV on American soil. The printer was Robert Aitken of Philadelphia, and that year he released his New Testament. Four years later he released his full Bible after petitioning Congress for support in his enterprise.

Said Aitken, "In every well regulated Government in Christendom The Sacred Books of the Old and New Testament, commonly called the Holy Bible, are printed and published under the Authority of the Sovereign Powers, in order to prevent the fatal confusion that would arise, and the alarming injuries the Christian Faith might suffer from the Spurious and erroneous Editions of Divine Revelation . . ."

Congress responded with a resolution, printed in the front of Aitken's 1782 KJV: "*Resolved*, That the United States in Congress assembled highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr Aitken, as subservient to the interest of religion as well as an instance of the progress of the arts in this country . . . they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States . . ."

A nice sentiment, and Aitken printed a full ten thousand copies of the edition—just stunning for a printing project of that size and complexity with the technology of that time. But the Aitken Bible struggled against better-printed, cheaper editions shipped from England—in fact, he took a significant financial hit on the project, losing over £3,000.

Revival sells Bibles

But soon after Aitken's edition, American Bible publishing broke wide open, and for an unexpected reason. With the dawning of the 1790s came the first stirrings of renewed revivalism since the Great Awakening of the 1740s. These would quickly build into a veritable evangelistic tidal wave.

First came the emotional frontier camp meetings in places like Cane Ridge, Kentucky. Then the aggressive revivalism of Charles Finney in the "burned-over district" of upstate New York, the sudden eruption in the late 1850s of noon-time prayer-and-testimony meetings in major East Coast cities, and the genteel but power-packed mid-century parlor meetings and camp meetings of Phoebe Palmer and her Wesleyan holiness colleagues.

Eventually the movement culminated in the late-century mass evangelism and Bible conferences of D. L. Moody. Countless conversions and a boom in church growth created a nationwide thirst for more Bibles.

By 1800, 70 different printings could be had from the presses in 11 different towns. By 1840, that number ballooned to over a thousand. And by the 1850s, says David Daniell in his panoramic *The Bible in English*, America was being inundated by "an avalanche of giant, heavily bound Family Bibles, all of them KJVs, full of pictures and massive extra matter, sold in colossal numbers right across the States as an essential piece of furniture in the American home."

"I TAKE AS MY TEXT . . ." *Above:* A revivalist preaches a Sunday service on the levee at St. Louis, Missouri. (Wood engraving, American, 1882.)

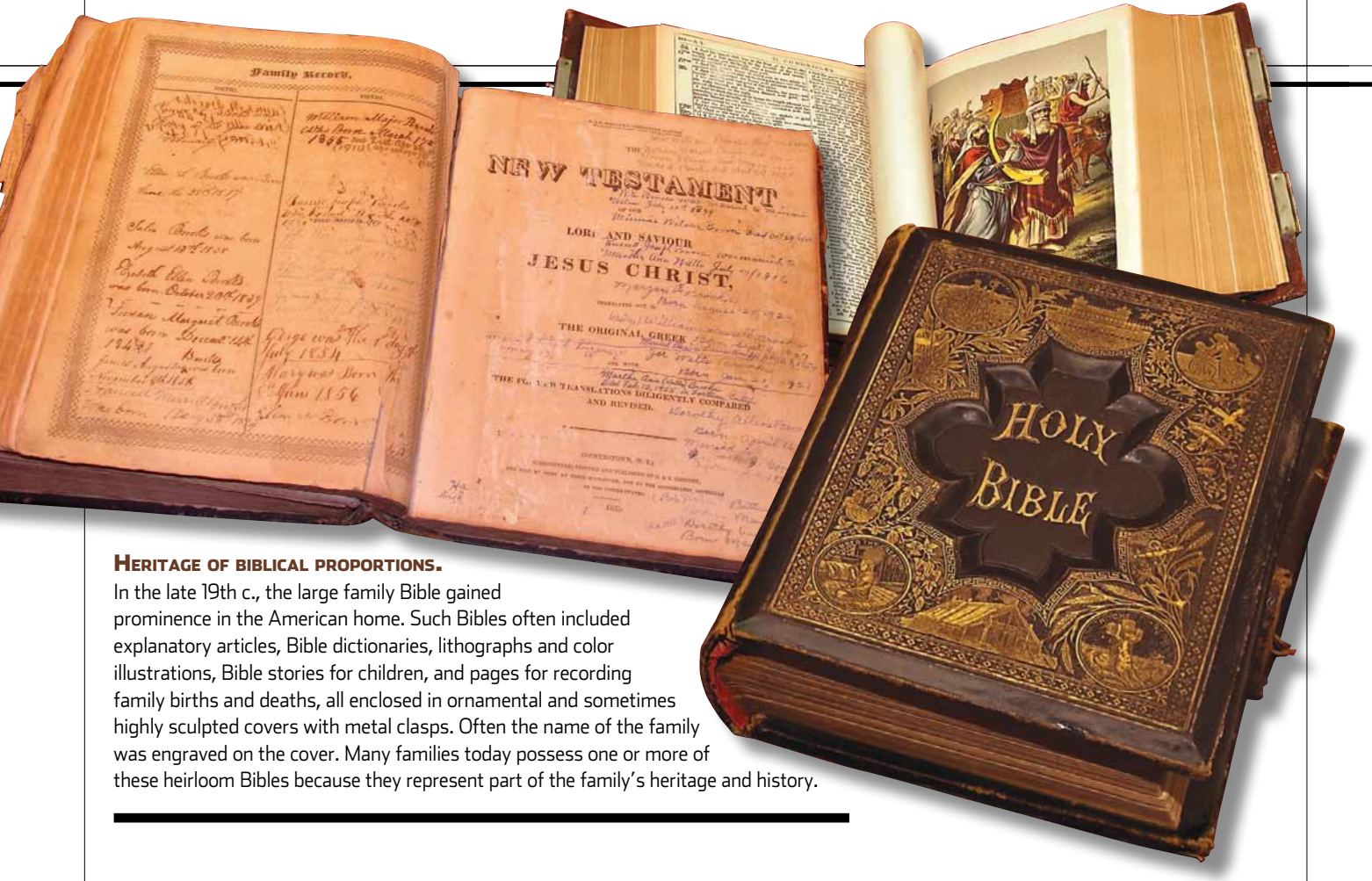
One of those who capitalized early on the Bible-publishing boom was the craftsman-scholar Isaiah Thomas. This self-educated printer, one of Paul Revere's group of 1775 riders before the fighting began at Lexington and Concord, made himself the leading publisher and bookseller in the postwar years. He printed magazines, an almanac, the first dictionary in America, and what he hoped would be the first "completely correct" KJV. This he pursued by working from almost 30 KJV editions, imported from various printers. He also drafted pastors and scholars into the work of correction.

Thomas printed KJVs for many markets, both with and without the Apocrypha, according to folks' tastes. His most remarkable innovation was his unique payment arrangement. Seven dollars, the price of his Bible, was a lot of money in those days. So Thomas agreed to take up to half of that payment in "Wheat, Rye, Indian Corn, Butter, or Pork."

First American study Bible

Despite Thomas's valiant attempts at precision, it was Delaware Quaker Isaac Collins's 1791 Bible that became the standard for accuracy. That Bible was something new on the American horizon: "the American Bible embellished for home study," including a longer concordance, plus frequent marginal notes and, between the two testaments, a detailed account of the basic argument of each book in the Bible.

It also goes all the way in "Americanness," deleting the standard dedication to King James and putting in its place an address to the reader by John Witherspoon, president of the College of New Jersey (Princeton



Heritage of biblical proportions.
In the late 19th c., the large family Bible gained prominence in the American home. Such Bibles often included explanatory articles, Bible dictionaries, lithographs and color illustrations, Bible stories for children, and pages for recording family births and deaths, all enclosed in ornamental and sometimes highly sculpted covers with metal clasps. Often the name of the family was engraved on the cover. Many families today possess one or more of these heirloom Bibles because they represent part of the family's heritage and history.

University) who served for 12 years as a congressman.

Nearly a dozen other Bibles or New Testaments were produced in America during the years 1791 and 1792. Says David Daniell, "In the rush of printers in these years to make money, Bibles came in many shapes, some of them ugly. Those that are over-packed strained to get everything between small covers, usually the result of including the Apocrypha."

It is a myth that Protestant Bibles did not include the apocryphal books. Having examined KJVs printed throughout the 19th century, Daniell discovered that in at least the first half of that century, more of them than not included the Apocrypha.

19th century: proliferation

By the early 1800s, multiple versions of the KJV were inundating the market. Historian Mark Noll notes that Mason Weems, who is famous for making up the story about George Washington and the cherry tree, sometimes earned his living as a traveling Bible salesman. Shortly after 1800 Weems wrote from Virginia to his publisher in Philadelphia about the various KJV editions he was retailing: "I tell you this is the very season and age of the Bible. Bible Dictionaries, Bible tales, Bible stories—Bibles plain or paraphrased, Carey's Bibles, Collin's Bibles, Clarke's Bibles, Kimptor's Bibles, no matter what or whose, all, all, will go down—so wide is the crater of public appetite at this time."

Crucial to this mushrooming growth of Bible sales were the new Bible Societies founded in America in the 1800s, along with the associated Sunday school and tract societies. Many such societies were local groups of citizens who bought Bibles at cost for resale to their neighbors. Their goal: to put a Bible in the hands of every American.

When in 1816, 34 of these societies joined to form the American Bible Societies, they launched into achieving this goal with a will. Avowedly non-sectarian, the ABS had printed the King James Version in almost 60 different forms by 1850. Their output in 1829 alone was an astounding 360,000 Bibles—this, at a time when first editions of books usually topped out at around 2,000! In 1845, that number increased to over 417,000; in each year of the 1860s, the ABS printed over a million Bibles.

Such powerhouses were the Bible publishers in America during the 1800s that they drove technical innovations in their industry: paper quality improved, stereotypes replaced costly standing type, power presses multiplied output, and in-house binding reduced costs.

The ABS itself pioneered so effectively in such quality-improving and cost-cutting measures that they were attacked as a monopoly. And indeed, through the economies of scale, they were able to sell New Testaments for an unbeatable six cents apiece, and whole Bibles at 45 cents—prices almost impossible for smaller publishers to beat. Soon they stopped trying

HOLY BIBLE & ILLUSTRATED BIBLE: CENTENNIAL LIBRARY, CEDARVILLE UNIVERSITY
FAMILY BIBLE RECORD PAGE: BROOKS GENEALOGY HISTORICAL ARCHIVE AND REFERENCE LIBRARY

R-Rated Bible

RESTRICTED

Although the KJV succeeded hugely in America, becoming the overwhelming favorite of Americans through nearly three centuries (mid 1600s – mid 1900s), not every American was pleased. Benjamin Franklin (1706 –1790) was so dissatisfied with the KJV's rendering of Job (he called the language "obsolete" and "disagreeable") that he retranslated a section of it himself. Prominent Philadelphia physician Benjamin Rush (1746 – 1813) once warned parents away from the KJV by calling it, in effect, R-rated: "There are, I grant, several chapters, and many verses in the Old Testament, which in their present unfortunate translation, should be passed over by children." And America's second president, John Adams (1735 – 1826), denounced "the translation by King James the first" as being carried out by someone who was "more than half a Catholick"—not a compliment in his America! [Source: Mark Noll]

and began to capitalize on that other trend, toward huge KJV editions with thousands of annotations and lavish illustrations.

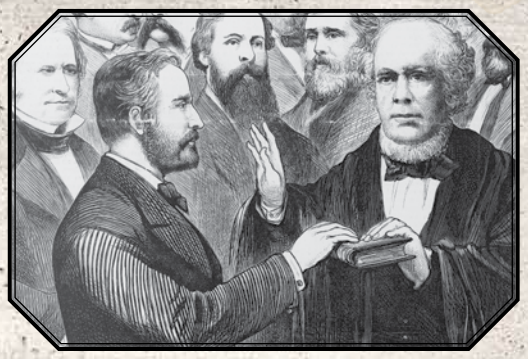
Of course, someone had to sell all these Bibles, and the 1840s saw the innovation of the "colporteur"—the door-to-door Bible salesman. The ABS soon employed a national network of these hardy folks, and other publishers followed suit. And what version was it that poured from America's presses during those heady days? Almost exclusively the KJV.

Daniell notes that by 1850, 73 years after the first Bible was printed on American soil, "nearly fifteen hundred separate editions of the KJV had been published in America." Of the more than 1,000 different editions of the English Bible (or New Testament) published from 1840 to 1900, only a handful were not KJVs—and most of those were Catholic Douay-Rheims editions or editions direct from the Vulgate.

Music to American ears

This saturation of America's soil with KJVs changed our very language. KJV stories, proverbial sayings, metaphors, and idiomatic phrases and words all entered the everyday language of the American public (see quiz of KJV phrases on p. 1). The themes and stately cadences of the King James worked their way especially into the "canon" of American literature.

From *Moby Dick's* "Call me Ishmael" to William



"I DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR." President Grant taking the oath of office. (March 4, 1873)

Hail to the chief's Bible

In 1911, on the 300th anniversary of the KJV's first printing, former president Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed, "No other book of any kind ever written in English—perhaps no other book ever written in any other tongue—has ever so affected the whole life of a people as this authorized version of the Scriptures has affected the life of the English-speaking peoples." Roosevelt also quoted "the great scientist Huxley," who had called the KJV "the Magna Charta of the poor and the oppressed . . . the most democratic book in the world."

Presidential appreciation for the KJV has continued into the 20th and, to a lesser extent, the 21st century. On January 20, 1961, John F. Kennedy quoted the KJV twice in his presidential inaugural address: first from Isaiah 58:6 with reference to the Communist world ("Let both sides unite to heed in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah—to 'undo the heavy burdens . . . [and] let the oppressed go free'") and then from Romans 12:12 in urging his hearers to respond to "the trumpet" that summons citizens "to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle year in and year out, 'rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation.' "

Four years later Lyndon Baines Johnson ended his inaugural address by quoting the KJV from II Chronicles 1:10 ("For myself, I ask only in the words of an ancient leader: 'Give me now wisdom and knowledge that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this, thy people, that is so great?'")

In his inaugural, Richard Nixon quoted Malachi 4:2 from the Revised Standard modernization of the KJV ("The peace we seek . . . is not victory over any other people, but the peace that comes 'with healing in its wings'"). Both Nixon and Johnson took the presidential oath of office with their hands placed on a KJV Bible opened to Isaiah 2:4 ("And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more").

Then-governor Bill Clinton, in his acceptance speech as the Democratic candidate for president on July 16, 1992, twice quoted passages from the Bible, including one directly from the KJV (Prov. 29:18—"Where there is no vision, the people perish"). He also used at least three other phrases from the KJV at strategic moments in his address ("eyes of the Lord," from Gen. 6:8; "keep the faith" from Rev. 14:12; and "new covenant" from Jer. 31:31). George W. Bush, in his first inaugural address, quoted a letter to President Jefferson saying, "We know the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Do you not think an angel rides in the whirlwind and directs this storm?"—a combination of KJV texts from Ecclesiastes 9 and 12.

[Source: Mark Noll]

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* (II Sam. 19:4) and *Go Down Moses* (Exod. 19:21), to the modern-day Pulitzer-winning author Marilynne Robinson and her *Gilead*, notes Noll, "the ability to evoke vast worlds of meaning with a simple phrase depended on wide-spread reading, not just in the Bible per se, but the Bible as known from the KJV."

Robert Alter, in his *Pen of Iron*, a study of the impact of the KJV on American literature, has said that in America, the KJV determined "the foundational language and symbolic imagery of a whole culture." Because it was present in every home, quoted in every church, and echoed in every public meeting, the KJV "created a stylistic precedent for the American ear in which a language that was elaborately old-fashioned, that stood at a distance from contemporary usage, was assumed to be the vehicle for expressing matters of high import and grand spiritual scope."

Not surprisingly, then, American writers loved the KJV's "powerful eloquence, paradoxically coupled with a homespun simplicity"—and they plundered its resources freely. But ironically, says Alter, novelists who were at odds with Christianity—and that was many, if not most, of the American "greats"—also absorbed not just the language and style but indeed the *worldview and values* of the KJV.

After all, since they wove KJV language into the fabric of their stories, they could hardly ignore what the Bible was saying about the world. And so they were always in dialogue with the Bible, wrestling with it, arguing with it, even (almost against their will) affirming it as they wrote.

The sword of public speech

At every defining moment of American history, the KJV was there. Noll describes how countless preachers during the Revolutionary period used the KJV's words and phrases to express their vision of American liberty. "Touch not; taste not; handle not," said a 1774 Presbyterian *Sermon on Tea* in the words of KJV's Col. 2:21. During the Civil War, it was the same story. One Southerner even adapted the KJV wording of II Chron. 6:34–35 to describe the sectional crisis: "Eleven tribes sought to go forth in peace from the house of political bondage, but the heart of our modern Pharaoh is hardened, that he will not let Israel go."

Nowhere is the effect of KJV language on American rhetoric more evident than in Abraham Lincoln's famous speeches. Lincoln, although he did attend New York Avenue Presbyterian Church while in the White House, never joined a church or made a clear profession of faith. In fact, he always harbored suspicions of organized religion because of the excessive emotion and bitter quarrels he had seen in the camp meetings of his youth.

But Lincoln did absorb some of the tenets of his parents' "hard-shell Baptist" affiliation. This was a group that spoke out against missions on the basis of a particular interpretation of Calvinism: God had predestined and would save those he wanted to—no human intervention was required. Throughout his life and presidency, Lincoln retained both a strong sense of God's superintending providence and a kind of determinism that sometimes descended into fatalism. Whenever he spoke of the Civil War, it was through that lens.

Brought up as he no doubt was with the phrasings of the King James ringing in his ears, Lincoln wove that language into his own powerful oratory. For example,

continued on page 34

Did you hear the one about the traveling Bible salesman? *Left:* An African-American Bible salesman. *Above:* A Massachusetts Bible Society colporteur.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN BIBLE SALESMAN: AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY ARCHIVES
BIBLE COLPORTEUR WITH CART: WIKIPEDIA

The Bible Riots

On a spring night in 1844, the men and boys of St. Patrick's parish in Philadelphia manned the roof of their church, rifles in hand, waiting for an anticipated attack that never came. St. Patrick's was spared, but other churches were not: St. Michael's at Second and Jefferson and St. Augustine's on Fourth below Vine were engulfed in the flames of hatred during May and July of 1844.

This was not the first act of terror against American Catholics. In 1834 an angry Boston mob had burned down a convent because of Catholic protests against required readings from the Protestant KJV in public schools. And earlier in 1844, Roman Catholics in New York had also objected to the reading of the King James Bible in their schools. This helped to inflame the anti-immigrant "Know Nothing" party in a crusade against Irish Catholics in Philadelphia.

The "Know Nothing" term reflected the secret style of organization. If someone was asked about the party's activities, he responded: "I know nothing." The party insisted that all foreigners should be required to wait 21 years before being permitted to vote, that the Bible should be used in public schools to teach reading, that church and state should remain separate, and that only native-born Americans should be appointed to office.

The fears of the Know Nothings seemed validated when a rumor spread that the Catholics in Philadelphia wanted the King James Version of the Bible removed from the public schools. In denial of the charge, Francis Patrick Kenrick, Catholic bishop of Philadelphia, made a public statement on March 12, 1842: "Catholics have not asked that the Bible be excluded from public schools. They have merely desired for their children the liberty of using the Catholic version in case the reading of the Bible be prescribed by the controller or directors of the schools."

The troubles began May 3, 1844, when the Know Nothings held a meeting in the predominately Irish Catholic district of Kensington in Philadelphia. Some residents attempted to attack the people on the platform. Three days later the group reassembled; a quarrel arose with onlookers and a pistol was fired. There was an answering shot from one of the windows of the hose-house of the Hibernia fire company, and before long there was a full-scale battle.

On May 6, more nativists arrived in the area and a fight broke out in the market, resulting in the death of two party members. As a result, a few Catholic homes and the School of the Sisters of Charity were attacked. The next day the nativists were back in full force, destroying the market, more homes and the Hibernia fire station. The mayor called the militia and things quieted down a bit. But the following day the convent and St. Augustine's Church were burned: "Pew led the fire to pew, the galleries caught and at length the flames broke forth from the roof and the windows in front, and finally the steeple was on fire, and when the cross which crowned the height yielded to the flames and fell in, plaudits arose with savage exultation from many in the streets." Firemen, under orders from the Know Nothings, let the buildings burn.

BURNING OF ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, MAY 8, 1844/ PUBLIC DOMAIN

Above: St. Augustine's Church, set ablaze during the "Bible Riots" of Philadelphia

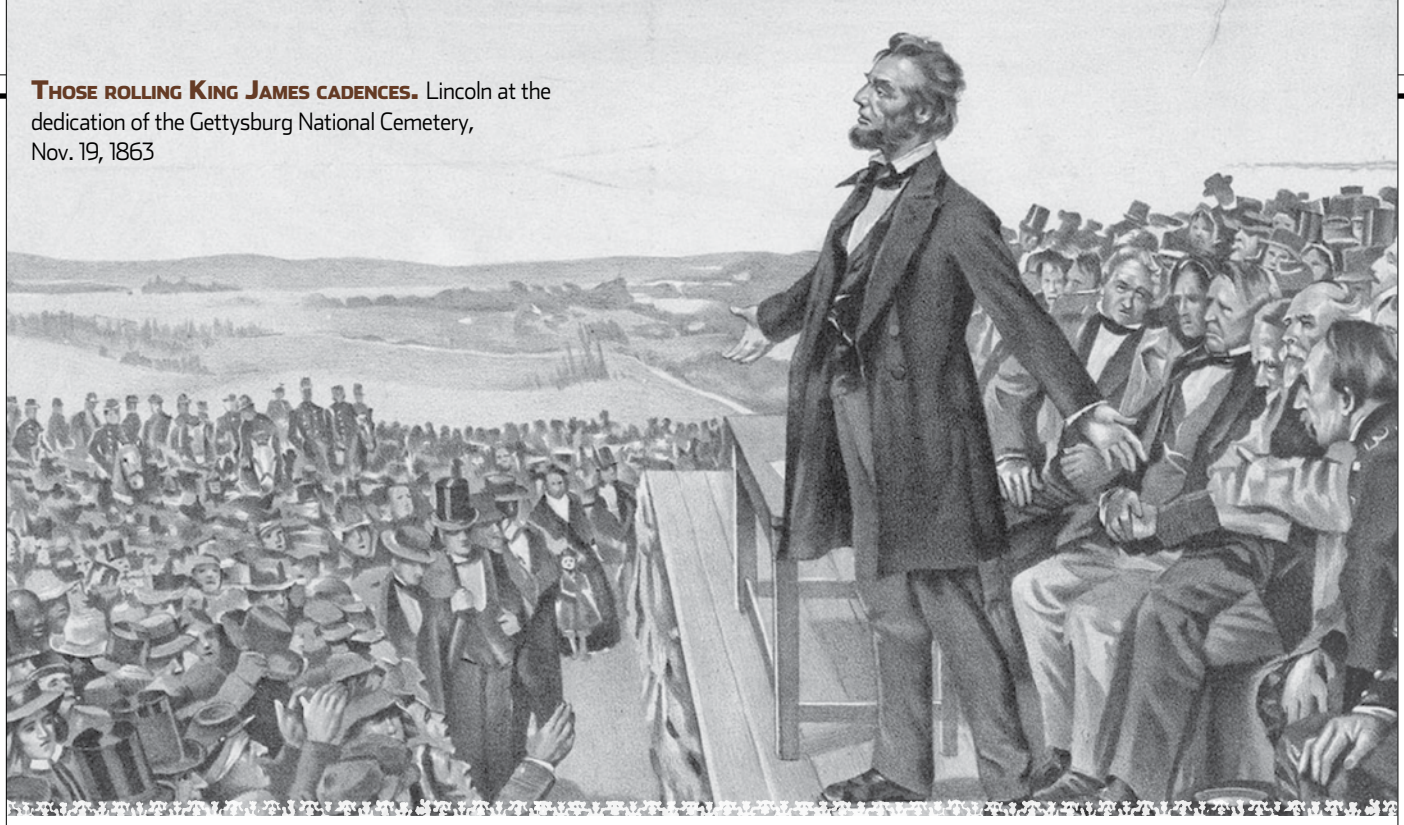
If anything good can be said to come from such brutality, at least the riots fed rising opposition to nativist groups such as the Know Nothings, resulting in a loss of popular support. The Know Nothings, despite having a strong coalition in place, were astounded when the Democratic party swept the election on October 9, 1854. The following year the Know Nothing Party renamed itself the American Party.

MORE TROUBLE OVER BIBLE READING IN SCHOOLS

In a sense, the "Bible Wars" did not end after those violent days of 1844. In 1886, Catholic parents in Edgerton, Wisconsin, petitioned their local school board to stop daily readings from the KJV. The school board countered that "to read the Bible without comment was non-sectarian; to stop reading it because it offended Roman Catholics was sectarian." After failing to convince the school board to end the practice, the parents took their case to court.

In November 1888 the circuit court decided that the readings were not sectarian because both the KJV and Catholic translations were of the same work. The parents took their case to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. In the famous action known as the Edgerton Bible Case, the judges overruled the circuit court's decision, concluding that it illegally united the functions of church and state. In the end, the Wisconsin Supreme Court reversed a ruling in favor of the parents and forbade local boards to mandate readings from the KJV.

The Edgerton Bible case was not the only, or even the first, challenge to sectarian religious practices in public schools, but it was especially well researched and well argued by the parties involved. Seventy-five years later, when the U.S. Supreme Court banned prayer from the public schools in 1963, the Edgerton Bible case was one of the precedents that Justice William Brennan cited. *—by Ann T. Snyder*



Those rolling King James cadences. Lincoln at the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery, Nov. 19, 1863

says Alter, think of the famous opening of his Gettysburg address: The "four score and seven years ago" is an intentional echoing of the "three score and ten"—KJV's way of rendering the sacred number 70—that appears 111 times in that translation. Doesn't that sound more weighty and solemn than "eighty-seven"?

Consider, too, the address's very last phrase: "Shall not perish from the earth." This is a direct quotation from the King James. It appears there three times, each time without the "not"—in Job 18:17, Jer. 10:11, and Mic. 7:2. What Lincoln is doing here is not making direct reference to those Scriptures, which have nothing to do with the point he is making about the longevity of the republic. Rather, says Alter, this language gives Lincoln's point "cosmic perspective," a "sense of magnitude," the sense of the nation "realizing a new and hopeful destiny 'under God.'" All of that with a simple turn of phrase.

Similar King James rhetoric can be found in all of Lincoln's speeches. Listen, for example, to the grand final phrases of the Second Inaugural Address, delivered near the conclusion of the Civil War. "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." Echoes of the KJV are unmistakable in Lincoln's words.

Bible of the oppressed

During the time of slavery, while it was illegal to teach slaves to read and write, most still heard the Bible read (and many stole away to teach themselves to read from its pages). Slave spirituals have been described as "native African rhythms and the King James Version of the Bible."

Of course, African-Americans before and after Emancipation realized that the same KJV in which they found the liberating message of the gospel was also being used by white masters to defend the institution that oppressed them. In 1899, Noll tells us, African Methodist Episcopal bishop Henry McNeal Turner complained that "the white man" had "colored the Bible in his translation to suit the white man, and made it, in many respects, objectionable to the Negro." His solution: a new translation of the Bible, done by "a company of learned black men."

Nonetheless, says modern black historian and pastor Cheryl Sanders, "The best-known abolitionists among the slave population, most notably Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, David Walker, and Maria Stewart, each advocated for freedom using word and thought steeped in the language and imagery of the King James Bible."

Sanders reflects on when and why she chooses to use the KJV in her own worship services: "When celebrating the Lord's Supper or baptizing believers by immersion, we always tend to use the KJV language, even in paraphrase. We say, 'This is my body, which is broken for you,' 'This cup is the new testament in my blood,' and when we baptize, 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Somehow, it seems that special dignity and grace are added to these symbolic rituals of the church when we use this language." Publishers have taken note of this African-American preference for the KJV. Bibles published especially for African-American use, such as the *Original African*

continued on page 36

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KJV: The view from today

An interview with Mark A. Noll

Dr. Noll, the Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame and author of many books and articles on American religious history, reflects on the changing role of the King James Bible within American culture.

Link to the past. Barack Obama is sworn into office in 2009, with his hand on the 1853 "Lincoln Bible" (KJV), used in Lincoln's first inauguration.

REUTERS/JASON REED

CH: How does the KJV stand today in the public imagination compared to 100 years ago, during the translation's 300th anniversary?

Noll: The contrast from a hundred years ago is really stark. In 1911 America had the King James Version, the Revised Version that came out in 1881 and 1885, and also the American Revised Version that came out in 1901. The Catholics, of course, used the Douay-Rheims version. But none of the other translations had caught on. That meant that when you said "Bible" in the United States in 1911, if you were Protestant certainly, it meant the King James Version.

CH: And today?

Noll: The contrast today could not be more extreme. I don't know how many translations of the Bible are being published today, but it must be at least 40 or 50 different translations, some of them with very broad support. Which means that when the Bible is read today, it is understood a lot better than the King James was, because the newer translations are usually based on better Greek manuscripts, but there is a pluralization in the use of the Bible in English today that is just not anything like the case 100 years ago.

CH: Does that mean that figures of speech from the KJV when used in public rhetoric often don't register with a contemporary audience?

Noll: I do think it is a loss when the message of Scripture is crowded out or overwhelmed by other messages. It is a loss when communication among Christians is complicated by having multiple texts of the Scripture. It is a loss for the Christian culture in general when authors, speakers, and writers can't use biblical phrases with the expectation that people know where they're coming from.

I do think there are significant gains as well. Certainly, for the Christian community, the use of modern language translations opened up the Scriptures and the message of the Bible much more clearly than was the case with the King James Bible. To have people read the Bible today in an English equivalent to Koine Greek is a great gain.

CH: A recent *New York Times* editorial on the 400th anniversary of the KJV notes that both T. S. Eliot and C. S. Lewis felt the KJV had little influence on the rhythms of the English language. Do you agree with their assessment?

Noll: I am more alert to and aware of how words and phrases from the ordinary vocabulary are indebted to the King James Bible. We know phrases like "pearls before swine" and "take up your cross" still have a faint biblical resonance for many people. But I am amazed at the number of words that are in common English usage that either appeared first in the King James Bible or were given a strong place in the language by the King James Bible.

CH: So is there a loss in not having the KJV as common parlance?

Noll: One loss is in terms of Bible memorization, which was a major part of all Protestant youth groups and even some Catholic groups. That emphasis was reinforced by the presence of a single text. Bible memorization remains at least a possibility for many Christian groups, but before you can even start you have to pick which translation you *(continued)*

are going to memorize. We already have a serious impediment to the memorization.

CH: Do you see a renaissance of interest in the KJV? Will the pendulum ever swing in that direction?

Noll: I really would be surprised if the King James Version comes back into widespread popular use of the kind that undergirded so much of the Bible understanding of the previous generation. Folks that take the Bible seriously are going to take the translation seriously, but when people get exercised about translations, it's usually in disputes over competing modern translations and not so much over using the King James Version.

CH: Has the impulse to look at Christianity from the bottom-side up—whether from the perspective of women, people of color, or the poor—diminished interest in the KJV?

Noll: Modern translations open up the meaning of the Scriptures better for everybody in all social locations. But when there was one common translation, the disadvantaged or marginalized could use that translation to speak to the entire listening world.

Scripture in general, however translated, favors those whom no one else will attend to. Certainly in the 19th and early 20th century the widespread King James Bible served as an important resource for neglected and marginalized people.

CH: How has the KJV affected the canon of American hymns?

Noll: In classical Protestant hymns from the 18th and 19th century, you get an awful lot of King James Bible without realizing it. It is the rare hymn that Charles Wesley wrote that does not have at least one biblical illusion or paraphrase or quotation per line. Some 16- or 24-line hymns have 30 or 35 identifiable Bible allusions. The really skillful hymn writers—like Isaac Watts, Charles Wesley, William Cowper, John Newton, Horatius Bonar—were so steeped in the Bible that their hymns reflected that biblical training. One of the positive things to be said about the new wave of Christian music is that some of it at least has gone back to just the direct use of Scripture. When that happens, at least some of the time, songwriters use the King James translation.

CH: What do you see as the impact of new media on the KJV in particular and Bible reading in general? Do you see a time coming when the Bible in print will be a thing of the past?

Noll: My hunch is that the really effective Bible communication in the broad culture now and in the future is going to include innovation with the newer media. I hope myself that as we gain innovation, we don't lose the tremendous heritage of Bible reading and Bible memorization, including all of these things we've gained from the King James Bible. But we do live in a different media world today than 1611—or even 1911.

—Interview conducted and revised by Dr. Phyllis Alsdurf, Bethel University


Dr. Noll

The history of the Bible in America has been a frequent theme for **Dr. Noll**, as in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, co-edited with Nathan O. Hatch

Heritage Study Bible, the *African-American Devotional Bible*, and the *African American Jubilee Edition*, always offer a KJV version.

In a 1994 collection of African-American prayers by James Melvin Washington, *Conversations with God*, two centuries of prayers show the clear stamp of the KJV, right down to the "Thee," "Thou," and "Thy" language used of God. Concludes Sanders, "The King James Bible has been cherished by generations of African-American Christians as a source of comfort, inspiration, empowerment, and prophetic insight. Its language and imagery continue to undergird fervent prayers, inform sermons and lessons, and stimulate creative expression in art, music, drama, and other modes of cultural performance."

While Sanders predicts that modern Bible translations will increasingly attract black readers, she feels the KJV "will hold its own as a significant spiritual landmark for people seriously seeking justice, redemption, and liberation in the twenty-first century."

Legacy of a version

From the vantage point of the 21st century, it seems that the age of the KJV is finally passing in America. Of course, many of the reasons the KJV was a blessing to the church also apply to the cornucopia of new translations: It is always good to have Bibles that speak to the people in a language they can both understand and relate to. But along with this benefit comes the confusion of such a multitude of tongues claiming to best speak the language of Scripture. Debates abound over which versions are "most accurate"—that is, true to the original languages. In the "King James Only" movement, these disputes have turned rancorous, condemning all other versions as heretical.

More troubling, the day is quickly passing when any Bible translation will be woven into the fabric of public life, the speeches of presidents, and the novels of the literati. Reality TV shows and YouTube clips are supplanting books and magazines as our nation's media content of choice. To many of the Information Generation, the language of the King James Version sounds quaint, backwards, or even incomprehensible.

Although many phrases from the KJV still live in our language, Mark Noll is right when he says that "now often-repeated phrases are more likely to come from a consumer culture dominated by the media—as in 'make my day,' 'where's the beef?' or 'beam me up, Scottie,' or when we speak of 'the DNA' or the 'hard wiring' of an organization, describe a political 'full court press' or 'media blitz,' refer to 'x-rated testimony' or 'soft-ball questions,' and 'Google' for an obscure fact." In other words, the rhetorical world of an America dominated by biblical locutions has passed away, and a new world has taken its place.

Will any Bible translation again have the cultural and moral influence in America that the KJV once had? Perhaps since "for every thing there is a season" (Eccl. 3, KJV), a new translation will arise for this new season.

Was Paul against sex?

THE PLAIN SENSE OF A KJV TEXT FROM ONE OF HIS LETTERS CERTAINLY SEEMS TO PROVE IT. BUT WAIT . . .

By Roger L. Omanson

I grew up on a farm in Illinois in the 1950s. One of the still-vivid images I have of those years is of my father opening his black leather-bound King James Bible on Saturday night after the television western *Gunsmoke* and preparing the Sunday school lesson. It was his Bible, and it was mine.

In 1964 I became involved with the Navigators. I attended a Navigator conference one weekend, and I still remember the main speaker quoting I Cor. 7:1 in the King James: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman." The speaker then proceeded to tell us young hormone-crazed college men that we didn't need to "touch" a young lady when we helped her take off her coat nor when we opened the door to help her get into the car.

This personal story illustrates how the KJV affected the biblical view of marriage for thousands, indeed millions, of Christian readers over the last four centuries. William Smalley has correctly stated, "So close is the identification of 'Bible' with 'translation' that for many people in the world their translated Bible is the Bible." Let me explain.

Most American Christians have assumed that Paul had very negative attitudes toward sex and marriage. But when we recognize that the KJV translation of I Cor. 7:1 misleads us, our perspective may change.

What Paul is doing in I Cor. 7–14 is taking up, one by one, questions that the Corinthians have written to him, and giving his answers. But in each case, he agrees only in part with what they say. At the beginning of chapter 7 we see the same approach. Some Christians had written, "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." Paul agrees in part, but he immediately qualifies his agreement by writing, "But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife . . ." As one reads all of 7:1–7 it is clear that some Christians had suggested that a man may be more spiritual by giving up sexual relations with his wife. Paul agrees in part that a person may be able to devote himself or herself more fully to prayer if they abstain from sexual relations for a short time. But Paul advises that abstinence be practiced only by agreement between the husband and the wife, and that it be for a limited time only.

THE MEETING OF JACOB AND RACHEL, 1835 (OIL ON CANVAS) BY SCHUBERT, FRANZ AUGUST (1806-1893), PRIVATE COLLECTION/ PHOTO, PETER NAHUM AT THE LEICESTER GALLERIES, LONDON/ THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

Since the Middle Ages, interpreters have attributed the words of I Cor. 7:1b to Paul himself. That is, interpreters thought that Paul himself was encouraging men not to have sexual relations with women. But once we recognize that Paul is quoting in 7:1 from a letter written to him, then the sense of verses 1–7 is quite different.

An increasing number of interpreters and translators are now accepting that these verses make more sense if verse 7:1b is read as a quotation. These translators are making the following points clear:

(a) Paul is quoting from a letter from Corinth.

(b) The end of the verse has to do with sexual relations; translations such as "not to marry" (NIV, TLA) are incorrect.

(c) Paul does not agree completely with what some Corinthians have written to him.

While the KJV has, in general, been helpful to many lay readers over the years, biblical texts such as I Cor. 7:1 can end up misleading readers. For many readers in today's world, Paul has seemed like an ascetic unsympathetic toward marriage. The general consensus of scholars today is that the translation of I Cor. 7:1–7 in the KJV is no longer the best way to translate these verses.

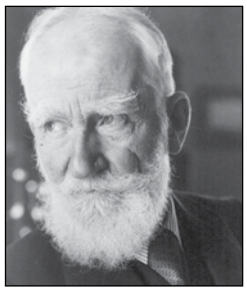
Adapted from a paper by Roger L. Omanson, "The King James New Testament: How a Translation Determined Christian Thought on Marriage and Celibacy for Nearly Four Hundred Years," given at the 2010 Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting in Atlanta, GA.

ROMANCE, SCHMOMANCE. *Above:* Did Paul forget the Hebrew Bible's many celebrations of romance and sexuality? Jacob falling so hard for Rachel (as in this 19th-c. painting) that he labored seven years for her hand in marriage? Or Adam and Eve, Boaz and Ruth, David and Abigail, the lovers of Song of Songs, and many more?

Over the past several centuries it's been the single book in most households, an enormous force in shaping the development of the English language. Carried around the world by missionaries, it provided the base by which English is about to become the lingua franca of the world in the next century. Exploring it during this shoot {*Ten Commandments*} was one of the most rewarding creative experiences of my life. —**Charlton Heston** (1923–2008)

They said it best

The translation was extraordinarily well done because to the translators what they were translating was not merely a curious collection of ancient books written by different authors in different stages of culture, but the word of God divinely revealed through His chosen and expressly inspired scribes. In this conviction they carried out their work with boundless reverence and care and achieved a beautifully artistic result . . . they made a translation so magnificent that to this day the common human Britisher or citizen of the United States of North America accepts and worships it as a single book by a single author, the book being the Book of Books and the author being God.



—George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)
Quoted in G. S. Paine, The Men Behind the King James Version *(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1959, 1977), pp. 182-183*

The scholars who produced this masterpiece are mostly unknown and unremembered. But they forged an enduring link, literary and religious, between the English-speaking people of the world.

—Winston Churchill (1874–1965)
Olga S. Opfell, The King James Bible Translators *(Jefferson and London: McFarland, 1982)*

It is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible; indeed, it is probably the most beautiful piece of writing in all the literature of the world. Many attempts have been made to purge it of its errors and obscurities. An English Revised Version was published in 1885 and an American Revised Version in 1901, and since then many learned but misguided men have sought to produce translations that should be mathematically accurate, and in the plain speech of everyday. But the Authorized Version has never yielded to any of them, for it is palpably and overwhelmingly better than they are, just as it is better than the Greek New Testament, or the Vulgate, or the Septuagint. Its English is extraordinarily simple, pure, eloquent, lovely. It is a mine of lordly and incomparable poetry, at once the most stirring and the most touching ever heard of.

—H. L. Mencken (1880-1956)
Mencken was the agnostic reporter for the Scopes trial and a literary critic.

England has two books: the Bible and Shakespeare. England made Shakespeare, but the Bible made England.

—Victor Hugo (1802–1885)

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE QUIZ ANSWERS – From p. 1

1. *Psalms 34:18:* "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a ***broken heart,*** and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."
2. *Isaiah 40:15:* "Behold, the nations are as a ***drop of a bucket,*** and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."
3. *Hebrews 6:10:* "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and ***labour of love,*** which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
4. *Romans 2:14:* "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are ***a law unto themselves:***"
5. *Jeremiah 13:23:* "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, ***or the leopard his spots?*** Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."
6. *Proverbs 5:4:* "But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as ***a two-edged sword.***"
7. *Psalm 107:27:* "They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are ***at their wit's end.***"
8. *Isaiah 52:8:* "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall ***see eye to eye,*** when the LORD shall bring again Zion."
9. *Psalm 21:2:* "Thou hast given him his ***heart's desire,*** and hast not withholden the request of his lips."
10. *Isaiah 65:5:* "Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am ***holier than thou.*** These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day."
11. *Genesis 45:18:* "And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat ***the fat of the land.***"
12. *Psalm 23:5:* "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; ***my cup runneth over.***"
13. *II Samuel 14:3:* "And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab ***put the words in her mouth.***"
14. *II Kings 20:1:* "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, ***Set thine house in order,*** for thou shalt die, and not live."
15. *Matthew 7:14:* "Because ***strait is the gate, and narrow is the way,*** which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
16. *Matthew 16:3:* "And in the morning, it will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern ***the signs of the times?***"
17. *Jeremiah 31:30:* "But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth ***the sour grape,*** his teeth shall be set on edge."
18. *Zechariah 9:10:* "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to ***the ends of the earth.***"
19. *Job 19:28:* "But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing ***the root of the matter*** is found in me?"
20. *Matthew 26:41:* "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the ***spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.***"

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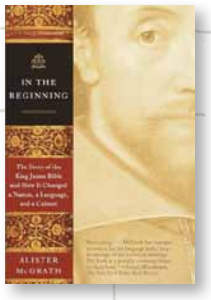
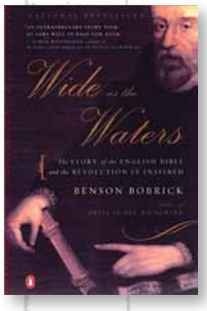
Resources for further reading

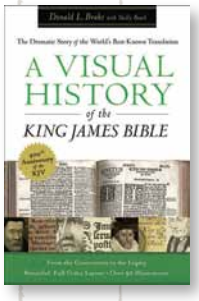


IF THIS ISSUE OF *CHRISTIAN HISTORY* HAS PIQUED YOUR INTEREST IN THE KJV, HERE ARE SOME FURTHER WINDOWS INTO THE HISTORY, LANGUAGE, AND LEGACY OF THIS TRANSLATION:



- Alter, Robert. (2010). ***Pen of Iron: American Prose and the King James Bible***. Princeton: Princeton University Press. This is a detailed analysis of the KJV's influence on the style of such American writers as Abraham Lincoln (the Gettysburg Address), Herman Melville (*Moby Dick*), William Faulkner (*Absalom, Absalom*), and Marilynne Robinson (*Gilead*).

- Bobrick, Benson. (2001). ***Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution it Inspired.*** New York: Simon Shuster.

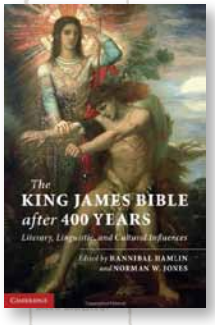


- Brake, Donald L., and Shelly Beach. (2011). ***A Visual History of the King James Bible: The Dramatic Story of the World's Best-Known Translation***. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books. This survey follows up on a previous volume by the same authors on the history of the English Bible.

- Burke, David G., ed. (2009). ***Translation That Openeth the Window: Reflections on the History and Legacy of the King James Bible***. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature. This edited volume contains fascinating essays on the King James Bible and its influence.

- Campbell, Gordon. (2010). ***Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011***. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

- Crystal, David. (2010). ***Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language.*** Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Crystal's insightful books chronicle facts and foibles of the English language; this one will appeal to "word nerds" with a Bible interest.

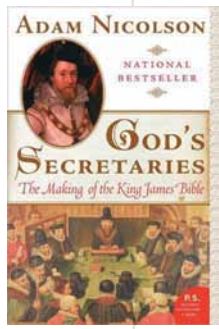


- Hamlin, Hannibal, and Norman W. Jones. (2010). ***The King James Bible after Four Hundred Years: Literary, Linguistic, and Cultural Influences***. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Long, Lynne. (2001). ***Translating the Bible: From the Seventh to the Seventeenth Century***. London Ashgate Publishing. This book presents scholarly but readable essays not only on the KJV but also on many other versions.

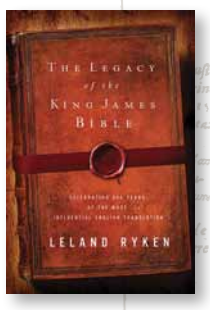
- McGrath, Alister. (2001). ***In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and Culture***. New York: Random House. This book is especially good on the theological ins and outs of the translation and the translation's influence on the English language. McGrath is always a top-notch "translator" of scholarly knowledge into dramatic and readable form.

- Nicolson, Adam. (2003). ***God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible***. New York: Harper Collins. Hands down the most "novelistic" of the accounts we've read, but nothing here is fictionalized. Nicolson explains the KJV's compelling combination of clarity and richness by showing us the England of King James I in all of its intricacy. His character sketches are wonderful: we see the brilliance of the translators and the power-plays of the church politicians (often the same people!) with equal clarity. The darker side is here as well. A compelling read.



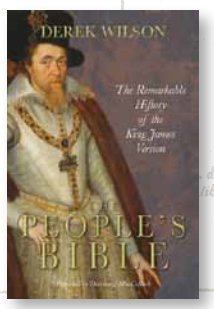
- Norton, David. (2005). ***A Textual History of the King James Bible.*** Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Detailed, scholarly, from the dean of KJV studies.

- Rhodes, Errol F. and Liana Lupas, eds. (1997). ***The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version of 1611 Revisited.*** New York: American Bible Society. The long preface of the 1611 KJV, often reprinted in later editions, is worth studying. This wonderful little volume provides the preface in three versions: first, in its original typography; second, in a modern type with modernized punctuation; and third, in modernized English—because let's face it, 17th-century English isn't always the easiest for modern readers to understand!



- Ryken, Leland. (2011). ***The Legacy of the King James Bible: Celebrating 400 Years of the World's Most Influential English Translation.*** Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books. This Wheaton College professor has written fascinating books on the Bible and literary topics—and here is another, which deals with the literary impact of the KJV.

- Teems, David. (2010). ***Majestie: The King Behind the King James Bible***. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.



- Wilson, Derek. (2010). ***The People's Bible: The Remarkable History of the King James Version.*** Oxford: Lion Hudson.

— Compiled by the editors

TWO TAKES on the KJV

Review by David Neff, editor of *Christianity Today*

Historical documentaries inhabit two worlds as they blend entertainment and information. In the world of the written word—strong in its ability to convey information—the artist always faces a challenge to appeal to readers' senses and arrest their attention. In the world of dramatic film—with its ability to portray action, convey tone of voice, and deliver visual and audio stimulation—the artist faces a challenge to slow down enough to engage the brain along with the eye and the ear.

Two new films on the King James Version tilt in opposite directions as they try to exploit film's possibilities while teaching viewers about a monumental 17th-century event.

KJB: The Book that Changed the World (Lionsgate), produced and directed by Norman Stone (*Florence Nightingale, C. S. Lewis: Beyond Narnia*), tilts toward arresting dramatic reconstructions. Robert Cecil cajoles the aging Elizabeth and orchestrates the transition to the newly crowned James I. Young James spars with his strict Calvinist tutor about the observance of Epiphany. The newly crowned James I colorfully abuses both bishops and Puritans at the 1604 Hampton Court conference. (Luther-like, James calls the Puritan requests "a litany of dullness blown out your buttocks.")

The film capitalizes on dramatic developments (which keeps it from exploring historians' challenges to the story that the Gunpowder Plot conspirators tried to tunnel under Parliament). Colorful host/narrator John Rhys-Davies (*The Lord of the Rings*'s Gimli the Dwarf) intensifies the drama with his grand manner.

For all its theatrics, however, the film doesn't show the drama of translation itself. For that, we have *KJV: The Making of the King James Bible* (Vision Video).

If it's drama you want: *Below:* Norman Stone's *KJB: The Book that Changed the World* features a suitably brilliant, bawdy, and argumentative King James (Andrew Rothney).

With a minimum of historical context and at only half the length of Stone's 90-minute treatment, *KJV: The Making of the King James Bible* provides text samples from the Bishops' Bible (a lazy translation from Elizabeth's reign), the Geneva Bible (a rigorous but agenda-laden translation built on the foundations of William Tyndale), and the Latin Vulgate (the 1,200-year-old official Catholic Bible). In Psalm 23, does the Lord lead me as a shepherd? Or does he rule me? In I Cor. 13, does Paul praise the virtues of love or of charity? Theology and political philosophy will color the expectations of the translator. Are society's leaders to exercise care or dominion? Is the Christian life about affection or good works? The choices favored by the Puritans, says Adam Nicolson, author of the 2003 book *God's Secretaries*, are deeply subversive.

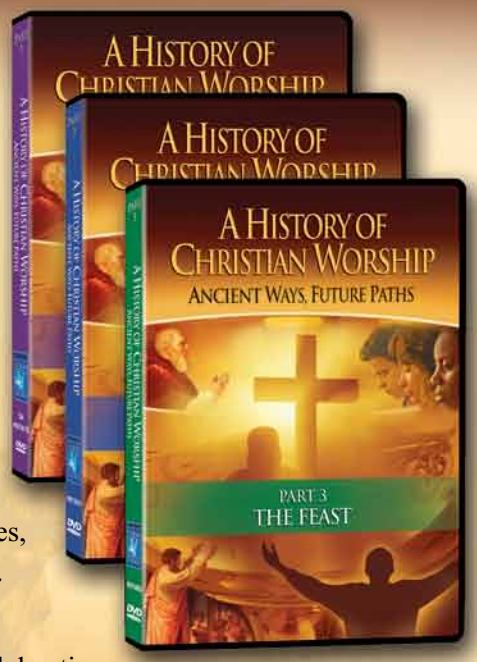
Nicolson is one of the best things about this film. Each documentary has its lineup of experts, but Nicolson's wit and chipmunkish charm trumps them all. While Stone's film plays Bishop Richard Bancroft as a scheming comic villain, Nicolson roots Bancroft's ruthlessness in his rough, rural Cumbrian origins. While Stone presents a James who protects his power by imposing his will on the competing religious parties, Nicolson gives us a wily James who grants the Puritan leader John Rainolds only one request—a fresh translation of the Scriptures—and then hands the Puritan project to Rainolds's nemesis Bancroft for implementation. By forcing the parties to work together, he hoped to bridge the gap.

The triumph of the KJV, both films point out, was more in its craftsmanship than in its popularity. It took a nation torn by civil war and wounded by both monarchist and Puritan excesses to embrace the KJV some 50 years later as a symbol of religious unity.

COURTESY OF *KJB: THE BOOK THAT CHANGED THE WORLD*

New DVDs Explore History of Worship & Faith

A History of Christian Worship



For followers of Jesus Christ, worship has spanned over two thousand years to include a long and diverse history of sacred practices. The faithful have preserved and celebrated God's story in a diversity of forms limited only by the human imagination. **A History of Christian Worship** is a six-part series that explores centuries of worship practices, as seen through the eyes of Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches and discussed by leading voices from a cross-section of the Christian community. Viewers will discover the significant people and events that have shaped history and learn how modern worship practices are rooted in the earliest foundations of the Christian faith. Each episode includes two 30-minute programs. Three episodes have been completed, with three more coming soon.

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Part 2: The Body explores how individuals are joined with the body of Christ through baptism and how the idea of community is essential to the worship experience. DVD - #501381D

Part 3: The Feast explores the significance of Communion in worship and reveals how the observance of special days and seasons of remembrance and anticipation such as Advent and Lent is essential to the worship experience. DVD - #501386D

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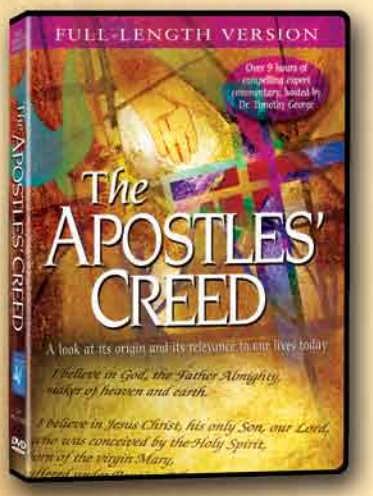
The Apostles' Creed



The Apostles' Creed is a living link that takes us back over centuries to the Early Church. This curriculum series traces the origin of the Apostles' Creed, placing it in its historical context. An international and interdenominational cast of notable theologians discusses each phrase of the Creed, emphasizing its relevance and application to our lives today. Theologians include Dr. Timothy George, Dr. N.T. Wright, Dr. Robert Mulholland, Dr. Alister McGrath, Dr. Derek Tidball, Dr. Kallistos Ware, Dr. Martin Marty, Dr. Tony Lane, Dr. William Johnson, Dr. Peter Contrell, Mark Galli, Rev. Richard Bewes, Rt. Rev. Timothy Dudley-Smith, and Dr. Susan Schreiner. Available in two versions:

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In celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible

KJV

THE MAKING OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Still a bestseller after 400 years!

The year 2011 marks the 400th anniversary of the creation of the King James Bible, arguably the greatest piece of English Literature ever produced. King James had a love of beautiful things, including language to stir the soul. With several English translations in use across the Kingdom, the Puritan leader John Rainolds took his opportunity to suggest that a new, more accurate translation was needed for the people. With the new king's blessing, a committee of 47 professors began the daunting task of creating a translation that was accurate, acceptable to all, and beautiful enough for the king! While Shakespeare's rich language lit up the stage, this committee penned a beautiful translation that would eventually bring new life to the churches.

Award-winning director Jerry Griffith doesn't disappoint as he brings to life the fascinating history of this great work, along with its impact for us today. *KJV: The Making of the King James Bible* brings the viewer right into the heart of the translation process through specific passage examples. While exploring the varying viewpoints of the different scholars, we get a firsthand look at the translators' careful attention to detail. This presentation gives the viewer a renewed appreciation for the sacred scriptures and their place in our homes, churches, and the English-speaking world.

DVD - #501373D, $19.99

- Main feature is 46 minutes
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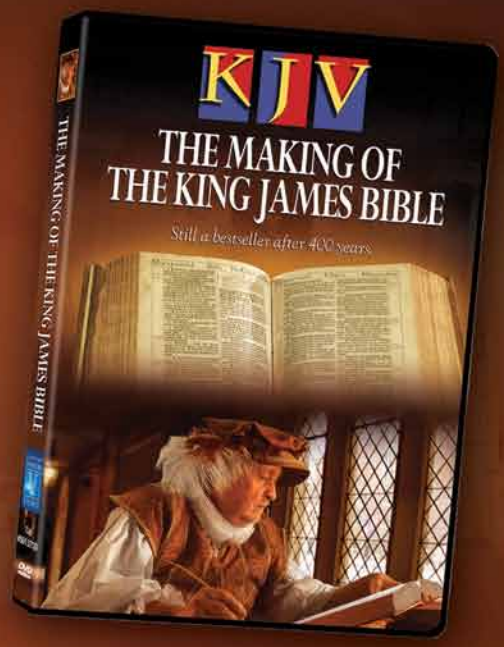
- Optional English subtitles on main feature



The Making of the King James Bible *film is both highly accurate to its history as well as a moving experience to view. This film draws the viewer into appreciation of both the scholarly accuracy of the King James Bible as well as the richness of language.... Live drama, pictures, narration, scholarly interviews, and costumed actors...all combine to lead the viewer to participate in the drama of the birth of the King James Bible.*

~ Dr. John R. Hellstern, President,
The Living Word National Bible Museum,
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