

Sunday, March 5, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 197 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Translation Sections, Cont.)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 196](#) we began looking at the subsections of the Preface related to the translation of the scriptures. Myles Smith devoted four subsections to this topic. In the previous Lesson we considered two of those subsections.
 - The Translation of the Old Testament Out of the Hebrew into Greek
 - Translation Out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin
- Today we want to finish our investigation of the translation subsections by considering the following.
 - The Translating of the Scripture into the Vulgar Tongues
 - The Unwillingness of Our Chief Adversaries, That the Scriptures Should be Divulged In The Mother Tongues, Etc.

The Translating of the Scripture into the Vulgar Tongues

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶9) Now though the Church were thus furnished with <i>Greek</i> and <i>Latin</i> Translations, even before the faith of CHRIST was generally embraced in the Empire; (for the learned know that even in S. Jerome's time, the Consul of <i>Rome</i> and his wife were both Ethnics, and about the same time the greatest part of the Senate also) yet for all that the godly-learned were not content to have the Scriptures in the Language which they themselves understood, <i>Greek</i> and <i>Latin</i> , (as the good Lepers were not content to fare well themselves, but acquainted their neighbors with the store that God had sent, that they also might provide for themselves) but also for the behoof and edifying of the unlearned which hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and had souls to be saved as well as they, they provided Translations into the vulgar for their Countrymen, insomuch that most nations under heaven did shortly after their conversion, hear CHRIST speaking unto them in their mother tongue, not by the voice of their Minister only, but also by the written word translated. If any doubt hereof, he may be satisfied by examples enough, if enough will serve the turn. First <i>S. Jerome</i> saith, <i>Multarum gentium linguis Scriptura ante</i>	¶9) “The Church had already been supplied with Greek and Latin translations, even before the faith of Christ was generally accepted in the Empire (for scholars know that even in St. Jerome’s time the Consul of Rome and his wife were both pagan, as was also the majority of the Senate). Yet even so, godly scholars were not satisfied merely with having the Scriptures in the languages which they themselves understood, Greek and Latin, just as the good lepers were not satisfied with being healed themselves, but told their neighbors about the gift that God had sent, so that they also might provide for themselves. Therefore they made translations into the native languages of their countrymen for the benefit and enlightenment of those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and who also had souls to be saved. Consequently most nations under heaven, shortly after their conversion, heard Christ speaking to them in their own languages, not just by the voice of their minister, but also by the translated written word. If anyone doubts this, there is more than adequate evidence if proof is required. To begin with, St. Jerome says, “The Scriptures translated earlier in the languages of many nations

translata, docet falsa esse quae addita sunt, etc. i.e. "The Scripture being translated before in the languages of many Nations, doth show that those things that were added (by Lucian and Hesychius) are false." The same Jerome elsewhere affirmeth that he, the time was, had set forth the translation of the *Seventy suae linguae hominibus*, i.e., for his countrymen of *Dalmatia* Which words not only Erasmus doth understand to purport, that S. Jerome translated the Scripture into the *Dalmatian* tongue, but also *Sixtus Senensis*, and *Alphonsus a Castro* (that we speak of no more) men not to be excepted against by them of *Rome*, do ingenuously confess as much. So, *S. Chrysostom* that lived in *S. Jerome's* time, giveth evidence with him: "*The doctrine of S. John* (saith he) *did not in such sort* (as the Philosophers' did) *vanish away: but the Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Ethiopians, and infinite other nations being barbarous people translated it into their (mother) tongue, and have learned to be (true) Philosophers,*" he meaneth Christians. To this may be added *Theodoret*, as next unto him, both for antiquity, and for learning. His words be these, "*Every Country that is under the Sun, is full of these words* (of the Apostles and Prophets) *and the Hebrew tongue* (he meaneth the Scriptures in the Hebrew tongue) *is turned not only into the Language of the Grecians, but also of the Romans, and Egyptians, and Persians, and Indians, and Armenians, and Scythians, and Sauromatians, and briefly into all the Languages that any Nation useth.* So he. In like manner, *Ulphilas* is reported by *Paulus Diaconus* and *Isidor* (and before them by *Sozomen*) to have translated the Scriptures into the *Gothic* tongue: *John Bishop of Sevil* by *Vasseus*, to have turned them into *Arabic*, about the year of our Lord 717; *Bede* by *Cistertiensis*, to have turned a great part of them into *Saxon*: *Efnard* by *Trithemius*, to have abridged the French Psalter, as *Bede* had done the *Hebrew*, about the year 800: King *Alfred* by the said *Cistertiensis*, to have turned the Psalter into *Saxon*: *Methodius* by *Aventinus* (printed at *Ingolstadt*) to have turned the Scriptures into *Slavonian*: *Valdo*, Bishop of *Frising* by *Beatus Rhenanus*, to have caused about that time, the Gospels to be translated into *Dutch* rhythm, yet extant in the Library of *Corbinian*: *Valdus*, by divers to have turned them himself into *French*, about the year 1160: *Charles* the Fifth of that

show that those things which were added (by Lucian or Hesychius) are false." The same Jerome elsewhere affirms that earlier he had made a translation from the Septuagint for his countrymen of *Dalmatia*. Erasmus understands these words to mean that St. Jerome translated the Scriptures into the *Dalmatian* language, while *Sisto da Siena* and *Alfonso de Castro* (to mention only two), men not to be objected to by those of *Rome*, also frankly admit as much. St. *Chrysostom*, who lived in St. Jerome's time, agrees with him: "The teaching of St. John did not vanish away (like the philosophers' teaching): but the Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Ethiopians, and numerous other nations, being barbarous people, translated it into their languages, and have learned to be (true) philosophers (i.e., Christians)." To these may be added the evidence of *Theodoret* as the next both for antiquity and for learning. His words are: "Every country under the sun is full of these words (of the Apostles and Prophets), and the Hebrew language (i.e., the Scriptures in the Hebrew language) is turned not only into the language of the Greeks, but also of the Romans, and Egyptians, and Persians, and Indians, and Armenians, and Scythians, and Sauromatians, and, briefly, into all the languages used by any nation." Similarly *Ulphilas* is reported by *Paulus Diaconus* and *Isidore*, and before them by *Sozomen*, to have translated the Scriptures into the *Gothic* language. *John*, Bishop of *Seville*, is said by *Vassaeus* to have translated them into *Arabic* about a.d. 717. *Bede* is said by *Higden* to have translated a great part of them into *Saxon*. *Einhard* is said by *Trithemius* to have abridged the *French* Psalter, as *Bede* had done the *Hebrew*, about the year 800. King *Alfred* is said by the same *Higden* to have translated the Psalter into *Saxon*. *Methodius* is said by *Aventinus* to have translated the Scriptures into *Sclavonian* about a.d. 900. *Waldo*, Bishop of *Freising*, is said by *Beatus Rhenanus* to have commissioned about that time a metrical translation of the Gospels into *German*, which is still extant in the library of *Corbinian*. *Valdes* is said by several to have translated them himself, or to have had them translated into *French* about the year 1160. *Charles V*, called *The Wise*, had them translated into *French* about two hundred years after the time of *Valdes*, many copies of which are still

<p>name, surnamed <i>the Wise</i>, to have caused them to be turned into <i>French</i>, about 200 years after <i>Valdus</i> his time, of which translation there be many copies yet extant, as witnesseth <i>Beroaldus</i>. Much about that time, even in our King <i>Richard</i> the second's days, <i>John Trevisa</i> translated them into <i>English</i>, and many <i>English</i> Bibles in written hand are yet to be seen with divers, translated as it is very probable, in that age. So the <i>Syrian</i> translation of the New Testament is in most learned men's Libraries, of <i>Widminstadius</i> his setting forth, and the Psalter in <i>Arabic</i> is with many, of <i>Augustinus Nebiensis'</i> setting forth. So <i>Postel</i> affirmeth, that in his travel he saw the Gospels in the Ethiopian tongue; And <i>Ambrose Thesius</i> allegeth the Psalter of the Indians, which he testifieth to have been set forth by <i>Potken</i> in <i>Syrian</i> characters. So that, to have the Scriptures in the mother tongue is not a quaint conceit lately taken up, either by the Lord <i>Cromwell</i> in England, or by the Lord <i>Radeville</i> in Polony, or by the Lord <i>Ungnadius</i> in the Emperor's dominion, but hath been thought upon, and put in practice of old, even from the first times of the conversion of any Nation; no doubt, because it was esteemed most profitable, to cause faith to grow in men's hearts the sooner, and to make them to be able to say with the words of the Psalms, "<i>As we have heard, so we have seen.</i>" [Ps 48:8]</p>	<p>extant, as <i>Beroaldus</i> attests. At about that time, even in the days of our King <i>Richard II</i>, <i>John Trevisa</i> translated them into <i>English</i>, and many manuscript copies of <i>English</i> Bibles most probably translated in this period may still be seen in various places. The <i>Syriac</i> translation of the New Testament in <i>Widmanstadt's</i> edition is in most scholars' libraries, and many have copies of the Psalter in <i>Arabic</i> in the edition of <i>Augustinus Nebiensis</i>. <i>Postel</i> affirms that in his travels he saw the Gospels in the <i>Ethiopian</i> language, and <i>Ambrose Thesius</i> vouches for an <i>Indian</i> Psalter which he claims to have been published by <i>Potken</i> in <i>Syriac</i> characters. So that having the Scriptures in one's own language is not a quaint idea recently thought up, whether by Lord <i>Cromwell</i> in England, or by Lord <i>Radevil</i> in Poland, or by Lord <i>Ungnadius</i> in the Emperor's dominion, but it has been thought about and put into practice from antiquity, even from the earliest days of the conversion of any nation, probably because it was thought best to encourage faith to grow in men's hearts the sooner, and to enable them to say with the words of the Psalm, "We had heard about it, and now we have seen it" (Psalm 48.8)." (Rhodes & Lupas, 73-75)</p>
--	--

- The English word "vulgar" occurs twice in subsection eight, once in the title "translating of the Scripture into the vulgar tongues," and a second time in the body of paragraph nine, "they provided Translations into the vulgar for their Countrymen." Most people in the 21st century think of swearing or profanity when the word "vulgar" is used in a modern context. Therefore, it is important that we understand what the word "vulgar" meant in the early 17th century when Smith penned the Preface.
- Robert Cawdry's *A Table Alphabetical* published in 1604 contains the following entry for the word "vulgar": "common, much used." Likewise, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) contains the following entry for the noun form of the word "vulgar:" "1. The common or usual language of a country; the vernacular. *Obsolete.*" Next, the OED provides a citation from subsection eight paragraph nine of Myles Smith's Preface from 1611 as a word usage example of this form of "vulgar." Please see the following image.

†1. The common or usual language of a country; the vernacular. *Obsolete.*

Thesaurus »

- 1430–40 J. LYDGATE tr. Bochas *Fall of Princes* IX. xxxvi. (Bodl. 263) 441/1 Whos kyngdom hool, as maad is menciou, In that vulgar..Of Malliogres pleynti bar þe name.
- c1450 *Chaucer's Compl. Pite* (Harl.) (*heading*) Geoffrey Chaucier þe aureat Poete þat euer was fonde in oure vulgare to fore [t]hees dayes.
- ?1553 (► c1501) G. DOUGLAS *Palice of Honour* (London) II. l. 920 in *Shorter Poems* (1967) 62 3it thare I saw..Goffryd Chaucere, as a per se sance pere, In his wulgare [1579 *Edinb.* vulgare].
- 1589 G. PUTTENHAM *Arte Eng. Poesie* II. iii*. 60 Before Sir Thomas Wiats time they were not vsed in our vulgar.
- 1592 A. DAY *Eng. Secretorie* (rev. ed.) I. sig. B3 An Epistle therefore, is that which vsually wee in our vulgar, doo tearme a letter.
- 1611 M. SMITH in *Bible* (King James) Transl. Pref. ¶8 For the behoofe and edifying of the vnlearned..they prouided Translations into the vulgar.
- 1665 G. HAVERS tr. P. della Valle *Trav. E. India* 144 The Canara-Language, which is the vulgar in Ikkeri and all that State.

- Therefore, when Smith talks about “vulgar tongues” he is speaking about the vernacular or common language of a given area. For example, the “vulgar tongue” of Germany is German.
- The point of this subsection is to address the necessity of translating God’s word into the “vulgar” or common tongues of the people. In the first sentences of the paragraph, Smith discusses how the translation of God’s word into “vulgar tongues” was a concern of the body of Christ from early in church history.
 - “Now though the Church was thus furnished with *Greek* and *Latin* Translations, even before the faith of CHRIST was generally embraced in the Empire; (for the learned know that even in S. Jerome's time, the Consul of *Rome* and his wife were both Ethnics, and about the same time the greatest part of the Senate also) yet for all that the godly-learned were not content to have the Scriptures in the Language which they themselves understood, *Greek* and *Latin*, (as the good Lepers were not content to fare well themselves, but acquainted their neighbors with the store that God had sent, that they also might provide for themselves) but also for the behoof and edifying of the unlearned which hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and had souls to be saved as well as they, they provided Translations into the vulgar for their Countrymen, insomuch that most nations under heaven did shortly after their conversion, hear CHRIST speaking unto them in their mother tongue, not by the voice of their Minister only, but also by the written word translated.”
- After the opening sentence, Smith proceeds to satisfy any doubters by providing a lengthy list of historical examples of “vulgar” translations.
 - “. . . the Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Ethiopians, and infinite other nations being barbarous people translated it into their (mother) tongue, and have learned to be (true) Philosophers," he meaneth Christians. To this may be added *Theodoret*, as next unto him, both for antiquity, and for learning. His words be these, "Every Country that is under the Sun, is full of these words (of the Apostles and Prophets) and the Hebrew tongue (he meaneth the Scriptures in the Hebrew tongue) is turned not only into the Language of the Grecians, but also of the Romans, and Egyptians, and Persians, and Indians, and Armenians, and Scythians, and Sauromatians, and briefly into all the Languages that any Nation useth.”

- Next, Smith offers a historical list in roughly chronological order of those who translated portions or the entirety of the scriptures into various “vulgar” languages. Rather than re quoting the entirety of this lengthy section, we have prepared the following summative list of Smith’s verbose prose.
 - *Ulfilas* is reported by *Paulus Diaconus & Isidor*—“translated the scriptures into the *Gothic* tongue”
 - *John* Bishop of *Sevil* by *Vasseus*—“turned them into *Arabic*” (717 AD)
 - *Bede* by *Cistertius*—“turned a great part of them into *Saxon*” (800 AD)
 - *Efnard* by *Trithemius*—“abridged the French Psalter”
 - King *Alfred* by *Cistertiensis*—“turned the Psalter into *Saxon*”
 - *Methodius* by *Aventinus*—“turned the Scriptures into *Slavonian*”
 - *Valdo*, Bishop of *Frising* by *Beatus Rhenanus*—“the Gospels to be translated into *Dutch* rhythm”
 - *Valdus* by divers—“to have turned them himself into *French* about the year 1160”
 - *Charles* the Fifth, surnamed *the Wise*—“ to have caused them to be turned into *French*, about 200 years after *Valdus* his time, of which translation there be many copies yet extant, as witnesseth *Beroaldus*.”
 - *John Trevisa* in King Richard the second’s days—“translated them into *English*.”
 - *Widminstadius*—“the *Syrian* translation of the New Testament”
 - *Augustinus Nebiensis*—set forth “the Psalter in *Arabic*”
 - “So *Postel* affirmeth, that in his travel he saw the Gospels in the Ethiopian tongue; And *Ambrose Thesius* allegeth the Psalter of the Indians, which he testifieth to have been set forth by *Potken* in *Syrian* characters.”
- After chronicling the history of vulgar translations of the scriptures, Smith concludes the paragraph with the following statement regarding why the setting forth of the scriptures into vulgar tongues was deemed important.
 - “So that, to have the Scriptures in the mother tongue is not a quaint conceit lately taken up, either by the Lord *Cromwell* in England, or by the Lord *Radeville* in Polony, or by the Lord *Ungnadius* in the Emperor's dominion, but hath been thought upon, and put in practice of old, even from the first times of the conversion of any Nation; no doubt, because it was esteemed most profitable, to cause faith to grow in men's hearts the

sooner, and to make them to be able to say with the words of the Psalms, "As we have heard, so we have seen."

- At the very end of the paragraph nine (¶9) Smith quotes Psalm 48:8 in support of the final sentence of the paragraph.

Passage	Preface	AV	Geneva
Psalm 48:8	As we have heard, so we have seen.	As we haue heard, so haue wee seene . . .	As we haue heard, so haue we seene . . .

- I believe Smith to be quoting from the Geneva Bible in this verse. The Bishops Bible that served as the base text for the AV according to Rule 1 reads as follows in the first two clauses in Psalm 48:8, "Lyke as we haue hearde, so haue we seene . . ." Note how the King James translators altered the first clause of the Bishops, "Lyke as we have hearde" to read as does the Geneva, "As we have heard." This is yet another case of the translators reinstating a Geneva reading in the AV.

The Unwillingness of Our Chief Adversaries, That the Scriptures Should be Divulged In The Mother Tongues, Etc.

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶10) Now the Church of Rome would seem at the length to bear a motherly affection towards her children, and to allow them the Scriptures in their mother tongue: but indeed it is a gift, not deserving to be called a gift, an unprofitable gift: they must first get a licence in writing before they may use them, and to get that, they must approve themselves to their Confessor, that is, to be such as are, if not frozen in the dregs, yet soured with the leaven of their superstition. Howbeit, it seemed too much to <i>Clement the 8</i> that there should be any Licence granted to have them in the vulgar tongue, and therefore he overruleth and frustrateth the grant of <i>Pius the Fourth</i> . So much are they afraid of the light of the Scripture, (<i>Lucifugae Scripturarum</i> , as <i>Tertulian</i> speaketh) that they will not trust the people with it, no not as it is set forth by their own sworn men, no not with the Licence of their own Bishops and Inquisitors. Yea, so unwilling they are to communicate the Scriptures to the people's understanding in any sort, that they are not ashamed to confess, that we forced them to translate it into English against their wills. This seemeth to argue a bad cause, or a bad conscience, or both. Sure we are, that it is not he that hath good gold, that is afraid to bring it to the touchstone, but he that hath the counterfeit; neither is it the true man that shunneth the light,	¶10) "Now the Church of Rome would seem finally to be showing a motherly affection towards her children by allowing them to have the Scriptures in their mother tongue. But while it is a gift, it is not really a gift, because it is a useless gift. They must first get a license in writing before they may use them; and to get that, they must demonstrate to their Confessor that they are, if not frozen in the dregs, at least soured with the leaven of their superstition. But then, it seemed too much to <i>Clement VIII</i> that there should be any license granted to have them in the common language, and therefore he overrules and frustrates the grant of <i>Pius IV</i> . They are so afraid of the light of the Scriptures (as <i>Tertullian</i> puts it) that they will not trust the people with it, not even when it is translated by their own loyal scholars, and not even with the license of their own bishops and inquisitors. They are so unwilling to open the Scriptures to the people's understanding in any way, that they are not ashamed to confess that we forced them to translate it into English against their will. This seems to argue a bad cause, or a bad conscience, or both. We know that it is not the person with good gold who is afraid to bring it to the touchstone, but the one that has the counterfeit; nor is it the honest person that avoids the light, but the evil, lest his deeds be exposed

<p>but the malefactor, lest his deeds should be reprov'd: neither is it the plain dealing Merchant that is unwilling to have the weights, or the meteyard brought in place, but he that useth deceit. But we will let them alone for this fault, and return to translation.</p>	<p>(John 3.20). It is not the straightforward merchant that is unwilling to have the weights or the measures examined, but the one who cheats. But let us overlook this fault and return to the matter of translation.” (Rhodes & Lupas, 75)</p>
---	--

- In subsection nine paragraph ten (§10) Myles Smith addresses the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) toward vernacular translations of the word of God. While the RCC had technically allowed the scriptures to be put into the English by 1611 via the Douay-Rheims Bible, Smith is quick to point out in this subsection that the Church was still restricting access to them in the Mother Tongue.
 - “Now the Church of Rome would seem at the length to bear a motherly affection towards her children, and to allow them the Scriptures in their mother tongue: but indeed it is a gift, not deserving to be called a gift, an unprofitable gift: they must first get a licence in writing before they may use them, and to get that, they must approve themselves to their Confessor, that is, to be such as are, if not frozen in the dregs, yet soured with the leaven of their superstition.”
- After pointing out how various Popes have contradicted themselves on the matter of granting “licence” that the scriptures be available in the “vulgar tongue”, Smith accuses them of being “afraid of the light of the Scripture” and being “forced” to do so by Protestants.
 - “Howbeit, it seemed too much to *Clement the 8* that there should be any Licence granted to have them in the vulgar tongue, and therefore he overruleth and frustrateth the grant of *Pius* the Fourth. So much are they afraid of the light of the Scripture, (*Lucifugae Scripturarum*, as *Tertulian* speaketh) that they will not trust the people with it, no not as it is set forth by their own sworn men, no not with the Licence of their own Bishops and Inquisitors. Yea, so unwilling they are to communicate the Scriptures to the people's understanding in any sort, that they are not ashamed to confess that we forced them to translate it into English against their wills.”
- Smith concludes the paragraph by accusing the RCC with possessing a “bad conscience” and dealing dishonestly with respect to the divulging of the scriptures in the “mother tongue.”
 - “This seemeth to argue a bad cause, or a bad conscience, or both. Sure we are, that it is not he that hath good gold, that is afraid to bring it to the touchstone, but he that hath the counterfeit; neither is it the true man that shunneth the light, but the malefactor, lest his deeds should be reprov'd: neither is it the plain dealing Merchant that is unwilling to have the weights, or the meteyard brought in place, but he that useth deceit. But we will let them alone for this fault and return to the matter of translation.”
- In the next three subsections we will see Myles Smith address both the translators “adversaries” and “brethren” who opposed their work.

Works Cited

Rhodes, Errol F. and Liana Lupas. *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version of 1611*. New York, NY: American Bible Society, 1997.