

Sunday, April 16, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*

Lesson 201 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Purpose, Number, Furniture, & Care)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 200](#) we completed our discussion of subsection twelve in which Myles Smith responded to the translators’ Roman Catholic opposition. All told, Smith’s answer to the “imputations of our adversaries” centered around three different arguments:
 - Romanists have despised the spirit of grace that gave men the word of God by opposing English translations.
 - Romanists defended their burning of English translations by arguing they were produced by heretics.
 - Romanists were guilty of the very imputations they were leveling against Protestant translators i.e., changing, correcting, and revising the Latin Vulgate.
- Today we will begin looking at subsection thirteen in which Smith addresses four matters pertaining to the translators: 1) their purpose, 2) their number, 3) their furniture, and 4) their care. Given the dense nature of the subject matter, we will limit our discussion in this Lesson to the following two points:
 - What Does “Furniture” Mean In the Title To Subsection Thirteen?
 - Their Purpose

The Purpose of the Translators, With Their Number, Furniture, Care, Etc.

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶15) But it is high time to leave them, and to show in brief what we proposed to ourselves, and what course we held in this our perusal and survey of the Bible. Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, (for then the imputation of <i>Sixtus</i> had been true in some sort, that our people had been fed with gall of Dragons instead of wine, with whey instead of milk:) but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our endeavor, that our mark. To that purpose there were many chosen, that were greater in other men's eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise. Again, they came or were thought to come to the work, not <i>exercendi causa</i> (as one	¶15) But now we should show briefly what we proposed for ourselves, and what procedures we followed in our review and study of the Bible. Truly, good Christian Reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, or even to make a bad one into a good one (for then the criticism of <i>Sixtus</i> had been partly true, that our people had been fed with snake venom instead of wine, with whey instead of milk), but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones to make one principal good one, not justly to be objected to. This has been our endeavor, our goal. For this purpose many men were chosen who had earned the esteem of others yet remained humble, who sought the truth rather than a name for themselves. Again, they came, or were thought to come, to the work as accomplished scholars, and not as students. For

saith) but *exercitati*, that is, learned, not to learn: For the chief overseer and under his Majesty, to whom not only we, but also our whole Church was much bound, knew by his wisdom, which thing also *Nazianzen* taught so long ago, that it is a preposterous order to teach first and to learn after, yea that to learn and practice together, is neither commendable for the workman, nor safe for the work. Therefore such were thought upon, as could say modestly with Saint *Jerome*, *Et Hebraeum Sermonem ex parte didicimus, et in Latino pene ab ipsis incunabulis etc. detritum sumus. "Both we have learned the Hebrew tongue in part, and in the Latin we have been exercised almost from our very cradle."* S. *Jerome* maketh no mention of the Greek tongue, wherein yet he did excel, because he translated not the old Testament out of Greek, but out of Hebrew. And in what sort did these assemble? In the trust of their own knowledge, or of their sharpness of wit, or deepness of judgment, as it were in an arm of flesh? At no hand. They trusted in him that hath the key of *David*, opening and no man shutting; they prayed to the Lord the Father of our Lord, to the effect that *S. Augustine* did; "*O let thy Scriptures be my pure delight, let me not be deceived in them, neither let me deceive by them.*" In this confidence, and with this devotion did they assemble together; not too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things haply might escape them. If you ask what they had before them, truly it was the *Hebrew* text of the Old Testament, the *Greek* of the New. These are the two golden pipes, or rather conduits, where-through the olive branches empty themselves into the gold. Saint *Augustine* calleth them precedent, or original tongues; Saint *Jerome*, fountains. The same Saint *Jerome* affirmeth, and *Gratian* hath not spared to put it into his Decree, That "*as the credit of the old Books*" (he meaneth of the Old Testament) "*is to be tried by the Hebrew Volumes, so of the New by the Greek tongue,*" he meaneth by the original *Greek*. If truth be tried by these tongues, then whence should that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see. a

the chief overseer and supervisor under his Majesty, to whom not only we but also our whole Church was much indebted, knew in his wisdom what *Gregory Nazianzen* taught so long ago, that it is preposterous to teach first and learn later, and that to learn and practice at the same time is neither advisable for the workman, nor safe for the work. Therefore only such persons were selected as could say modestly with St. *Jerome*, "We have some acquaintance with the Hebrew language, and we have been trained in the Latin almost from our very cradle." Although St. *Jerome* was competent in Greek, he does not mention that language because he translated the Old Testament not out of Greek, but out of Hebrew. And on what basis did these come together? Relying on their own knowledge, or their sharpness of wit, or depth of judgment, as it were on their human abilities? Not at all! They relied on the one who has the key of *David* (*Revelation 3.7*), who opens and no man shuts. They prayed to the Lord, the Father of our Lord, in the spirit of St. *Augustine*: "O let the Scriptures be my pure delight; do not let me be deceived in them, nor let me deceive by them." In this confidence and with this devotion they came together; not so many in number that they would impede each other, and yet enough so that few things would escape their notice. If you ask what texts they worked from, it was the Hebrew text for the Old Testament, the Greek text for the New. These are the two golden pipes, or channels, through which the olive branches empty themselves into the gold (*Zechariah 4.12*). St. *Augustine* calls them precedent, or original, languages; St. *Jerome* calls them fountains. The same St. *Jerome* affirms, and *Gratian* has quoted him in his decree, that "as the trustworthiness of the old books (i.e., the Old Testament) is to be tested against the Hebrew volumes; so of the new by the Greek language (i.e., meaning by the original Greek)." If truth is to be tested against these languages, then what else should a translation be made from, but them? These languages therefore (that is, the Scriptures in those languages) were what we based our translation on, because it was in these languages that God was pleased to speak to his Church through his Prophets and Apostles. We did not speed through the work at a gallop like the *Septuagint* translators, if the tradition is true that

<p>Translation be made, but out of them? These tongues therefore, the Scriptures we say in those tongues, we set before us to translate, being the tongues wherein God was pleased to speak to his Church by the Prophets and Apostles. Neither did we run over the work with that posting haste that the <i>Septuagint</i> did, if that be true which is reported of them, that they finished it in 72 days; neither were we barred or hindered from going over it again, having once done it, like S. <i>Jerome</i>, if that be true which himself reporteth, that he could no sooner write anything, but presently it was caught from him, and published, and he could not have leave to mend it: neither, to be short, were we the first that fell in hand with translating the Scripture into English, and consequently destitute of former helps, as it is written of <i>Origen</i>, that he was the first in a manner, that put his hand to write Commentaries upon the Scriptures, and therefore no marvel, if he overshot himself many times. None of these things: the work hath not been huddled up in 72 days, but hath cost the workmen, as light as it seemeth, the pains of twice seven times seventy two days and more: matters of such weight and consequence are to be speeded with maturity: for in a business of movement a man feareth not the blame of convenient slackness. Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators, <i>Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek or Latin</i>, no nor the <i>Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch</i>; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needful, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see.</p>	<p>they finished it in seventy-two days. Nor were we restricted or hindered from going over it again, once we had done it, like St. Jerome, if what he himself says is true, that he could not write anything that wasn't immediately caught away and published before he had a chance to correct it. In a word, we were not the first to undertake a translation of the Scripture into English, and consequently without any earlier examples to go by, unlike Origen, who was the first to undertake writing commentaries on the Scriptures, and therefore understandably overshot himself many times. There were none of these problems. The work was not crammed into seventy-two days, but cost the workmen, as light as it seems, the pains of more than twice seven times seventy-two days. Matters of such gravity and consequence are to be pursued with due deliberation: in matters of importance no one fears being blamed for taking all the time necessary. Nor did we hesitate to consult the work of translators or commentators, whether [ancient ones] in Aramaic, Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, or Latin, or [modern ones] in Spanish, French, Italian, or German. We did not refuse to revise what we had done, and to bring back to the anvil what we had once hammered. But having and using as many helps as were necessary, and fearing no reproach for slowness, nor coveting praise for speed, we have finally, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to its present state. (Rhodes & Lupas 81-82)</p>
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What Does "Furniture" Mean In the Title to Subsection Thirteen?

- Subsection thirteen is titled "The Purpose of the Translators, With Their Number, Furniture, Care, Etc." Before analyzing the contents of paragraph fifteen (§15) we must unpack the meaning of the subsection's title. In the "Modern Form" of the Preface set forth by Drs. Rhodes and Lupas in *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version of 1611 Revisited*, the title of subsection thirteen has been restated as follows, "The Purpose of the Translators, their procedures and principles." Is this a suitable update? What did Myles Smith mean by "furniture" in this context? We must address this matter before commenting upon the contents of subsection thirteen.

- Smith’s use of the word “Furniture” in this context seems a bit odd to modern readers of the Preface. Most 21st century readers will no doubt think of the physical objects that furnish their homes such as couches, desks, bookshelves, lamps and the like when they hear the word “Furniture.” It seems odd that Smith would have this meaning in view when he penned the Preface. So, are there any other historical meanings of the English word “Furniture” that might make more sense in this context?
- The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) presents more definitions for the English word “Furniture” than one might expect, at least nine along with multiple subsenses for some of the major entries. Given the confines of time and space we will limit our comments to the most logical uses that Smith had in mind when he authored the Preface. Please consider the following options:
 - 1. The action of furnishing:
 - a. The action of fitting out or equipping, of accomplishing (a design), or of providing *with* (supplies); occasionally furniture forth. *Obsolete.*
 - 5. Apparatus, appliances, or instruments for work.
 - a. material: Implements, tools, utensils; rigging, stores, and tackle of a ship; military engines and defensive works. Now chiefly *Nautical.*
 - b. immaterial; esp. Of intellectual faculties, or aptitudes; now only with mental or some equivalent defining expression.
- After consulting with others on this matter, I have concluded that Myles Smith primarily had definition five in view when he used “Furniture” in the title for subsection thirteen. I take Smith to be talking about the resources they had been “furnished” with to accomplish their task. In the body of paragraph fifteen Smith states the following:
 - “If you ask what they had before them, truly it was the *Hebrew* text of the Old Testament, the *Greek* of the New. These are the two golden pipes, or rather conduits, where-through the olive branches empty themselves into the gold.”
- Later, in addition to the Hebrew and Greek texts, Smith identifies additional resources/implements that the translators utilized when conducting their work.
 - “Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators, *Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek* or *Latin*, no nor the *Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; . . .*”
- These were the “Furniture” that the translators were furnished with to complete their task. Therefore, as the title for subsection thirteen suggests, Myles Smith touches upon four things in paragraph fifteen that he wants the reader to be aware of: 1) their purpose, 2) their number, 3) their furniture (in the sense we just explained), and 4) their care in translating. Generally, Smith sticks with this order with occasional overlap.

Their Purpose

- Smith transitions from addressing his Roman Catholic adversaries in paragraphs thirteen (§13) and fourteen (§14) with the following sentence at the beginning of paragraph fifteen.
 - “But it is high time to leave them [Catholic adversaries], and to show in brief what we proposed to ourselves, and what course we held in this our perusal and survey of the Bible.”
- Notice that Smith characterizes the work of the translators as a “perusal and survey of the Bible.” This is not the first time we have seen Smith use the word “survey” to describe what transpired between 1604 and 1611. Please recall the title of subsection three “His Majesty’s Constancy, Notwithstanding Calumniation [Slander], For the Survey of The English Translations” (See [Lesson 194](#)). In our exposition of subsection three we connected the “survey of the English Translations” mentioned in the title with the Title Page from the 1611 which stated, “newly translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by his majesty’s special Commandment.” Moreover, the Epistle Dedicatory stated,
 - “For when Your Highness had once out of deep judgment apprehended how convenient it was, that out of the Original Sacred Tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our own, and other foreign Languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the English Tongue.”
- Taken together, the cumulative witness of these statements present a clear picture of what the King James translators did. According to their own testimony, they compared prior English Bibles, with the “original sacred tongues” along with “other foreign language” Bibles to produce “one more **exact Translation** of the holy Scriptures into the English Tongue.” These observations dovetail with what Smith states next in subsection thirteen:
 - “Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, (for then the imputation of Sixtus had been true in some sort, that our people had been fed with gall of Dragons instead of wine, with whey instead of milk:) but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our endeavor, that our mark.”
- Regarding the “purpose” of the translators’ work, Smith wrote that it was not their “purpose” to “make a new Translation” i.e., a fresh wholly new one from scratch. This is consistent with the statements cited above regarding a “survey of the English translations,” simply stated their “purpose” was never to make a fresh wholly new translation of the Bible into English. The following clauses make this expressly clear.
- Next Smith states, “nor yet to make of a bad one a good one,” thereby clearly stating that the translators by and large did not view prior Reformation Era English Bibles as “bad” or erroneous. But rather (skipping the parenthesis), “. . . to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one.” Put another way, their “purpose” was to “survey” the English Bibles

that already existed and “out of many good ones” set forth “one principal good one.” This statement from the pen of Myles Smith in the Preface is completely consistent with what William Barlow recorded in his account of the Hampton Court Conference *The Sum and Substance* as well as the Rules set forth by Archbishop Richard Bancroft to govern the project. Please recall the following points from prior Lessons:

- Barlow—“Whereupon his Highness wished, that some especial pains should be taken in that behalf for one uniform translation (professing that he could never, yet, see a Bible well translated in English, but the worst of all his Majesty thought the Geneva to be) . . .” (Barlow, 47)
 - Please note the following two points of interest from Barlow’s account: 1) King James expressed “that he could never, yet, see a Bible well translated in English,” therefore, 2) James wished “that some especial pains should be taken in that behalf for one uniform translation.” Simply stated, the King desired that at the end of this laborious project that he was sanctioning there would be “one uniform translation” of the Bible into English.
- Rule 1—“The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops’ Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.”
- Rule 14— “These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops’ Bible: Tyndale’s, Matthew’s, Coverdale’s, Whitchurch’s [Great Bible], Geneva.”
- The preponderance of historical evidence furnishes us with a case of cumulative force that the King James translators, in accordance with the King’s desire “for one uniform translation” and the Rules set forth by Bishop Bancroft, accomplished their “purpose” in surveying existing English Bibles and comparing them to the “Original Sacred Tongues” to arrive at “one principal good one.”
- Before moving on we should pause and make sure we define the word “principal” in the phrase “one principal good one.” The OED presents the following relevant meanings for the adjective form of “principal.”
 - I. General senses.
 - 1. Of a number of things or persons, or one of their number: belonging to the first rank; among the most important; prominent, leading, main; = chief *adj.* 4.
 - 2. Of a particular thing or person: first or highest in rank or importance; that is at the head of all the rest; of the greatest account or value.
- So, out of the “many good ones” that the King James translators surveyed, they endeavored to make “one principal good” i.e., one that was of “the highest in rank” and “the head of all the rest” of the English Bibles that they consulted.

- According to Myles Smith, their “purpose” in creating “one principal good one”, as defined in the pervious point, was that it was “not justly to be excepted against.” Once again, this is completely consistent with James’ desire “for one uniform translation” as recorded by Barlow in *The Sum and Substance* as well as Smith’s previous statements in subsection eleven that “nothing is begun and perfected at the same time.” Please recall from our discussion of subsection eleven in [Lesson 198](#), that we concluded the following regarding Smith’s intended meaning of “perfected:”
 - “Smith says, “Yet for all that, as nothing is begun and perfected at the same time.” In this occurrence we see the use of the past tense form of the verb “perfect” being employed in a context that speaks of the completion of the process that had begun at a prior time. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) there is an “*obsolete*” meaning of “perfect” that means: “to complete or finish successfully; to carry through, accomplish. In early use also: † to bring to fulfilment or full development (*obsolete*).” I believe this was the meaning that Smith had in mind when he used the word “perfected” in this subsection of the Preface. In other words, Smith viewed the work of the translators as completing, successfully finishing, improving upon, or bringing to completion the translational work begun by prior English Bibles. Therefore, Smith concludes that their translational forebears would have no reason to “mislike” the King James translators, but would rather “thank” them for finishing their work.” (Lesson 198, 7)
- Smith views the translators as having “perfected” the English Bible i.e., completing/finishing the process that had begun before them. Therefore, the “one principal good one” the King James translators had completed was “not justly to be excepted against,” according to Myles Smith. This of course raises the question, what does “excepted against” mean?
- The OED provides four-word usages examples for the phrase “excepted against” for definition 2.a. in the verb entry for “except.” One of which happens to be the following line from subsection eight of Myles Smith’s Preface titled, “The Translating of the Scripture into the Vulgar Tongues:”
 - “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.”
- First note the similarity between how Smith uses the verb in both subsection eight and here in subsection thirteen.
 - Eight— “. . . men **not to be excepted against** by them of *Rome*, . . .”
 - Thirteen— “. . . **not justly to be excepted against**, . . .”
- Notice that both of these are negative statements containing the word “not” in front of the phrase “excepted against.” Therefore, whatever the verb “except” meant in the early 17th century Smith is using it in a negative sense.

- OED entry 2.a. for the verb form of “except” that contains the word usage example from subsection eight of Smith’s Preface defines the word as follows:
 - “*intransitive*. **To make objection; to object or take exception.** **Const. *against* (exceedingly common in 17th cent.)**, †*at, to*. Also in indirect passive. From the use of Latin *excipere (adversus aliquem)* in Roman Law; the etymological notion being that of limiting the right alleged in an opponent's declaration by setting up a countervailing right in the defendant which excepts his case (see [exception n. 4](#)). [*<* the use of Latin *excipere (adversus aliquem)* in Roman Law; the etymological notion being that of limiting the right alleged in an opponent's declaration by setting up a countervailing right in the defendant which excepts his case (see [exception n. 4](#)).]”
- While I provided the OED’s entry for 2.a. we are primarily concerned with the bolded portion noted above. The word “except” meant to “make objection,” “to object,” “or take exception.” Then the OED states that it was an “exceedingly common” construct (“Const.”) in the 17th century to couple the word “except” with the word “against” exactly as we find in subsections eight and thirteen of Smith’s preface. To illustrate the “common” 17th century nature of this construct as well as for the sake of completeness, we should also note Smith’s other use of this construct in subsection twelve of the Preface,
 - “If they say, it was one Pope's private opinion, and that he consulted only himself; then we are able to go further with them, and to aver, that more of their chief men of all sorts, even their own *Trent* champions *Paiva* and *Vega*, and their own Inquisitors, *Hieronimus ab Oleastro*, and their own Bishop *Isidorus Clarius*, and their own Cardinal *Thomas a Vio Caietan*, do either make new Translations themselves, or follow new ones of other men's making, or note the vulgar Interpreter for halting; none of them fear to dissent from him, nor yet to **except against** him.”
- Simply stated, the English construct “except(ed) against” carries the following meanings according to the OED, “to make objection; to object or take exception.” Now, insert the negative “not” in front of the construct and it takes on the opposite meaning i.e., to not “object” or “take exception” with. This means that in the mind of Myles Smith the King James translators had produced “one principal good” English translation that could “not justly” be objected to, or exception taken with i.e., it was to serve as the standard English Bible moving forward. Which is precisely what King James said he wanted at Hampton Court when he “wished that some especial pains should be taken in that behalf for one uniform translation.” (Barlow, 47)
- Given the pivotal and potentially controversial nature of this conclusion, prudence dictates that we consider a bit more evidence and not rely exclusively on the OED. While the OED is “the definitive record of the English language” it did not exist in the early 17th century when Smith penned the Preface. Consequently, a look at 16th and 17th century English language resources is in order to assist with ascertaining the meaning of the phrase “excepted against” at the time of the translation. The Lexicons of Early Modern English (LEME) established by the University of Toronto digitally “searches and displays word-entries from monolingual English dictionaries, bilingual lexicons, technical vocabularies, and other encyclopedic-lexical works, 1480-1755.” (LEME Website) A search of the LEME for the word “excepted” reveals some interesting

findings. Additionally, further refinement is possible if one searches the “LEME Search Results” browser window, using the keyboard command Control F, for the word “against.” This additional search will allow the researcher to isolate occurrences of “excepted against”, the exact phrase we are studying in the LEME. When one does this the findings are extremely enlightening. Consider the following results listed by year in descending order along with the pertinent entry.

- 1607—*The Interpreter: or Book Containing the Signification of Words* by John Cowell
 - Record—“. . . And his person may not bee impeached (or **excepted against**) either in this or any other thing. . .”
 - Notice that a person who “may not bee impeached” may **not** bee “excepted against.”
- 1611—*A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* by Randle Cotgrave
 - Reproché—“Reproached, disgraced, blemished, branded, tainted; vpbraided, twitted or cast in the teeth with; disabled, **excepted against**.”
- 1677—*An English Dictionary* by Elisha Coles
 - Decem tales— “the Judges granting a supply of ten such Jurors as do appear, or as are **not excepted against**.”
- 1702—*A New English Dictionary* by John Kersey the Younger
 - Exceptionable—“that **may be excepted against**.”
 - Undisprovable—“**not to be excepted against**.”
 - Notice how something that can “not be excepted against” is “undisprovable.” Put another way, as the OED asserted, one cannot take “exception” with or “object” to something that is “not to be excepted against.”
- 1737—*Universal Etymological English Dictionary* by Noah Bailey
 - Bible—“William Tindal afterwards translated it, and it was brought to England from Antwerp in the 21st year of the reign of Henry VIII. and then printed, but being **excepted against** a revision and alteration was published in 1538 with a preface by archbishop Cranmer. In 1549 and in 1551 another translation was reviewed by several bishops and from them called the bishops bible, It was again translated in the reign of king James I. . .”
 - Finding the expression “excepted against” in an entry for the Bible in Noah Bailey’s dictionary is interesting to say the least. So, since

Tyndale’s Bible was “excepted against” it was deemed that a revision was in order. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that if Tyndale’s had “not” been “excepted against” there would have been no need to revise it which is exactly what Myles Smith stated in the Preface to the AV.

- The final clause of the sentence we have been dissecting in this Lesson solidifies the “purpose” of the translators, according to Myles Smith, “that hath been our endeavor, that our mark.” The “endeavor” and “mark” that the King James translators were aiming for in their work was the creation of “one principal good” English translation that was “not justly to be excepted against.” In the words of our friend and research associate Steven Hayes,
 - “This passage indicates that the KJV translators believed their translation should be taken as the standard text of the Bible in English (ranking above those English translations, albeit “good”, that came before it), and that objections to it should not be entertained without justification.”
- It is my belief, despite popular sentiments to the contrary, that the translators believed that they had accomplished their “purpose.” Therefore, the Epistle Dedicatory commends their work to his King’s Majesty as “one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the English Tongue.” The work was to be viewed as the “principal good one” i.e., chief among the previous “good ones” used to create it. Therefore, in the judgment of Myles Smith it was “not justly to be excepted against,” and therefore serve as the standard English Bible. The King James translators did view their work as “perfect” in the following senses:
 - Exact—“perfectly done” (See Table Alphabetical entry from 1604)
 - Perfect—“Accurate, correct; *spec.* (of a copy, representation, etc.) accurately reproducing or reflecting the original; †(of a notion, thought, record, etc.) exactly corresponding to the facts (*obsolete*).” (OED adjective entry 6.b.)
 - Perfected—“To complete or finish successfully; to carry through, accomplish. In early use also: † to bring to fulfilment or full development (*obsolete*).” (OED verb entry 1.a.)
- Therefore, categorical and/or unequivocal statements that the King James translators did not believe their work was “perfect” are erroneous. Smith believed that the “purpose” and “mark” of the translators in that matter had been accomplished via the product of their work in surveying and comparing prior English Bibles with the “original sacred tongues” to fulfill King James’ desire that there might be “one uniform translation.” (Barlow, 47)
- Attempts to leverage statements from Smith’s Preface to advance that argument that the King’s translators would have approved of continued revision based upon the modern Critical Text and/or modern text critical methodologies and practice are ahistorical and guilty of the historical error of presentism.

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