

Sunday, May 21, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 205 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Final Paragraph)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 204](#) we began looking at the final subsection of the Preface titled “Reasons Inducing Us Not to Stand Curiously Upon An Identity of Phrasing.” In doing so we studied paragraph seventeen in which Myles Smith set forth the fact that the translators did not tie themselves “to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words.” Put another way, they did not employ a principle of rigidity in taking words of the donor languages of Hebrew and Greek and render them woodenly in the receptor language with the same English words. While there is one more paragraph, the seventeenth is arguably the last substantive paragraph of the Preface.
- As we will see shortly, the primary function of paragraph eighteen is the commend the AV to the reader. In addition to unpacking the contents of the final paragraph we will also consider the following points:
 - Summary Statements
 - Summary of Biblical Citations & Allusions

Reasons Inducing Us Not To Stand Curiously Upon An Identity of Phrasing

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶17) Another thing we think good to admonish thee of (gentle Reader) that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done, because they observe, that some learned men somewhere, have been as exact as they could that way. Truly, that we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified that same in both places (for there be some words that be not the same sense everywhere) we were especially careful, and made a conscience, according to our duty. But, that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the <i>Hebrew</i> or <i>Greek</i> word once by <i>Purpose</i> , never to call it <i>Intent</i> ; if one where <i>Journeying</i> , never <i>Traveling</i> ; if one where <i>Think</i> , never <i>Suppose</i> ; if one where <i>Pain</i> , never <i>Ache</i> ; if one where <i>Joy</i> , never <i>Gladness</i> , etc. Thus to mince the matter, we thought to savour more of curiosity than wisdom, and that rather it would breed scorn in the Atheist, than bring profit to the godly Reader. For is the kingdom of God to become words or syllables? why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when we may use another no less fit, as	¶17) Another thing that you should know, gentle Reader, is that we have not tried to be as consistent in translating words or phrases as some might wish, claiming that certain scholars elsewhere have observed just such a precision. Actually, we were especially careful, and we made it a matter of conscience as we were in duty bound, not to introduce inconsistencies as our translation progressed when a word is used in the same sense (for some words are not always used with the same meaning). But we thought it would be more fastidious than wise always to express the same idea with precisely the same word, e.g., if we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once by <i>purpose</i> , never to call it <i>intent</i> ; if once <i>journeying</i> , never <i>traveling</i> ; if once <i>think</i> , never <i>suppose</i> ; if once <i>pain</i> , never <i>ache</i> ; if once <i>joy</i> , never <i>gladness</i> , etc. Affecting such precision would breed scorn in the atheist rather than be useful to the godly reader. For has the kingdom of God become words and syllables? Why should we be slaves to them, if we could be free? Why use one word exclusively when another equally accurate word is appropriate? One godly Father in the early days was greatly perturbed by someone’s novelty in referring to a pallet as a <i>skimpus</i> instead of a

commodiously? A godly Father in the Primitive time showed himself greatly moved, that one of newfangledness called [NOTE: Greek omitted but was a dispute over the word for "a bed"] though the difference be little or none; and another reporteth that he was much abused for turning *Cucurbita* (to which reading the people had been used) into *Hedera*. Now if this happens in better times, and upon so small occasions, we might justly fear hard censure, if generally we should make verbal and unnecessary changings. We might also be charged (by scoffers) with some unequal dealing towards a great number of good English words. For as it is written of a certain great Philosopher, that he should say, that those logs were happy that were made images to be worshipped; for their fellows, as good as they, lay for blocks behind the fire: so if we should say, as it were, unto certain words, Stand up higher, have a place in the Bible always, and to others of like quality, Get ye hence, be banished forever, we might be taxed peradventure with S. James his words, namely, *To be partial in ourselves and judges of evil thoughts*. Add hereunto, that niceness in words was always counted the next step to trifling, and so was to be curious about names too: also that we cannot follow a better pattern for elocution than God himself; therefore he using divers words, in his holy writ, and indifferently for one thing in nature: we, if we will not be superstitious, may use the same liberty in our English versions out of *Hebrew* and *Greek*, for that copy or store that he hath given us. Lastly, we have on the one side avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave the old Ecclesiastical words, and betake them to other, as when they put *washing* for *Baptism*, and *Congregation* instead of *Church*: as also on the other side we have shunned the obscurity of the Papists, in their *Azimes*, *Tunike*, *Rational*, *Holocausts*, *Praepuce*, *Pasche*, and a number of such like, whereof their late Translation is full, and that of purpose to darken the sense, that since they must needs translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof, it may be kept from being understood. But we desire that the Scripture may speak like itself, as in the language of *Canaan*, that it may be understood even of the very vulgar.

¶18) Many other things we might give thee warning of (gentle Reader) if we had not exceeded the measure of a Preface already. It

krabbaton, although there is little or no difference in their meaning. Another Father reports that he was reviled for replacing *cucurbita* ("gourd," at the time the familiar reading in Jonah 4.6) with *hedera* ("vine"). Now if this happened in better times and in such small matters, we should expect to be censured if we went about making unnecessary changes in words. We could also be accused (by scoffers) of bias in dealing with a great number of good English words. A certain great philosopher is reputed to have said that some logs were fortunate to be made into images and worshiped, while their comrades, just as good as they, were placed beside the fire as kindling. Similarly we could say, as it were, to some words, Stand up higher, have a permanent place in this Bible, and to others that are equally good, Get out, be banished for ever. Then we could perhaps be accused, in the words of St. James, of making distinctions among ourselves and making judgments based on false motives. And besides, being overly precise with words has always been considered close to triviality, as was also being too particular about names too. We cannot observe a better pattern of expression than God himself; who used different words without distinction in his holy scriptures when referring to the same thing. Unless we are superstitious, we may use the same liberty in our English versions of the Hebrew and Greek, based on the resources he has given us. Finally, we have on the one hand avoided the strictness of the Puritans, who reject old ecclesiastical words and adopt other words, preferring *washing* for *baptism*, and *Congregation* instead of *Church*. And then on the other hand we have avoided the obscurity of the Papists, with their *Azimes*, *Tunike*, *Rational*, *Holocausts*, *Prcepuce*, *Pasche*, and other such words typical of their recent translation. Their purpose is to obscure the meaning, so that if they have to translate the Bible, at least its language can keep it from being understood. But we want the Scripture to speak like itself, as it does in Hebrew, and be understood even by the uneducated.

¶18) There are many other things we could mention, gentle Reader, if we had not gone beyond the limits of a preface already. It remains

remaineth, that we commend thee to God, and to the Spirit of his grace, which is able to build further than we can ask or think. He removeth the scales from our eyes, the veil from our hearts, opening our wits that we may understand his word, enlarging our hearts, yea correcting our affections, that we may love it to the end. Ye are brought unto fountains of living water which ye digged not; do not cast earth into them with the Philistines, neither prefer broken pits before them with the wicked Jews. Others have laboured, and you may enter into their labours; O receive not so great things in vain, O despise not so great salvation! Be not like swine to tread under foot so precious things, neither yet like dogs to tear and abuse holy things. Say not to our Saviour with the *Gergesites*, Depart out of our coast [Matt 8:34]; neither yet with *Esau* sell your birthright for a mess of pottage [Heb 12:16]. If light be come into the world, love not darkness more than light; if food, if clothing be offered, go not naked, starve not yourselves. Remember the advice of *Nazianzene*, *It is a grievous thing (or dangerous) to neglect a great fair, and to seek to make markets afterwards*: also the encouragement of *S. Chrysostom*, *It is altogether impossible, that he that is sober" (and watchful) should at any time be neglected*: Lastly, the admonition and menacing of *S. Augustine*, *They that despise God's will inviting them, shall feel God's will taking vengeance of them*. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; [Heb 10:31] but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh unto us, to hearken; when he setteth his word before us, to read it; when he stretcheth out his hand and calleth, to answer, Here am I, here we are to do thy will, O God. The Lord work a care and conscience in us to know him and serve him, that we may be acknowledged of him at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the holy Ghost, be all praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

to commend you to God, and to his gracious Spirit, which is able to build further than we can ask or think. He removes the scales from our eyes, the veil from our hearts, opening our minds so that we may understand his word, enlarging our hearts, and correcting our affections, so that we may love it above gold and silver, indeed, so that we may love it to the end. You have come to fountains of fresh water which you did not dig. Don't throw dirt into them, like the Philistines, and don't prefer broken pits to them, like the wicked Jews. Others have done the hard work, and you can enjoy the results. So don't take such great things lightly. Don't despise such a great salvation. Don't be like swine to tread under foot such precious things, nor like dogs to tear and abuse holy things. Don't say to our Savior like the *Gergesites* did, "Get out of our land!" Nor like *Esau* sell your birthright for a bowl of soup. If light has come into the world, don't love darkness more than light: if food, if clothing be offered, don't go naked, don't starve yourselves. Remember the advice of *Gregory Nazianzen*, "It is a sad thing to let the market day go by, and then try to do business." Remember also the advice of *St. Chrysostom*, "It is quite impossible that anyone who is serious (and attentive) should ever be ignored." And finally, remember *St. Augustine's* advice and threat, "They that ignore the will of God inviting them, shall feel the will of God taking vengeance of them." It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God; but it is a blessed thing which will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, to listen when God speaks to us, to read his word when he sets it before us, and when he stretches out his hand and calls, to answer, "Here I am, here we are to do your will, O God." May the Lord create in us a care and conscience to know him and serve him, that we may be acknowledged by him at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the Holy Ghost be all praise and thanksgiving. Amen. (Rhodes & Lupas, 83-85)

- The main point of paragraph eighteen is to commend the present volume to the readers for their edification. Smith begins paragraph eighteen by stating the following:
 - "Many other things we might give thee warning of (gentle Reader) if we had not exceeded the measure of a Preface already. It remaineth, that we commend thee to God,

and to the Spirit of his grace, which is able to build further than we can ask or think. He removeth the scales from our eyes, the vail from our hearts, opening our wits that we may understand his word, enlarging our hearts, yea correcting our affections, that we may love it to the end.”

- In the first sentence of paragraph eighteen Smith acknowledged that had he not “exceeded the measure of a Preface already” there would be more things to warn the “gentle Reader” of. Rather than prolong his “warning”, Smith shifts his focus in the next sentence to closing off his lengthy Preface. The second sentence is a compound allusion taken from Paul’s farewell to the Ephesians saints in Acts 20:32 and Ephesians 3:20.
 - Acts 20:32—And now, brethren, I **commend you to God**, and to the **word of his grace, which is able to build you up**, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.
 - Ephesians 3:20—Now unto him that is able to do exceeding **abundantly above all that we ask or think**, according to the power that worketh in us,
- According to Smith, it is God who “removeth the scales from our eyes, the vail from our hearts, opening our wits that we may understand his word, enlarging our hearts, yea correcting our affections, that we may love it to the end.”
- In the next few sentences Smith highlights the fact that it is through the Word that God brings his children the afore mentioned and following benefits.
 - “Ye are brought unto fountains of living water which ye digged not; do not cast earth into them with the Philistines, neither prefer broken pits before them with the wicked Jews. Others have laboured, and you may enter into their labours; O receive not so great things in vain, O despise not so great salvation!”
- What a blessing to have access to the “fountains of living water” that we did not dig. How much do we, like the Englishmen of the early 17th century, have cause to rejoice that God has granted us access to the “living water” of his Word via the “labours” of others. Smith’s admonition to “despise not so great salvation” has lost none of its power over more than four centuries.
- Next, Smith offers Scriptural allusions from Matthew 8:34 and Hebrews 12:16 in support of his admonition to “O despise not so great salvation!”
 - “Be not like swine to tread under foot so precious things, neither yet like dogs to tear and abuse holy things. Say not to our Saviour with the *Gergesites*, Depart out of our coast [Matt 8:34]; neither yet with *Esau* sell your birthright for a mess of pottage [Heb 12:16]. If light be come into the world, love not darkness more than light; if food, if clothing be offered, go not naked, starve not yourselves.”
- The nature of Smith’s admonition is clear. Readers of the AV should not forsake the spiritual riches provided for the growth and edification furnished by the Word of God. In the next section

Smith quotes from the church fathers Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom, and Augustin to buttress the force of his admonition.

- “Remember the advice of *Nazianzene*, *It is a grievous thing* (or dangerous) *to neglect a great fair, and to seek to make markets afterwards*: also the encouragement of S. *Chrysostom*, *It is altogether impossible, that he that is sober*" (and watchful) *should at any time be neglected*: Lastly, the admonition and menacing of S. *Augustine*, *They that despise God's will inviting them, shall feel God's will taking vengeance of them.*”
- The last portion of the Preface serves as a doxology extolling the virtues of the scripture and why they should be read and utilized in a life of service to God Almighty.
 - “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; [Heb 10:31] but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh unto us, to hearken; when he setteth his word before us, to read it; when he stretcheth out his hand and calleth, to answer, Here am I, here we are to do thy will, O God. The Lord work a care and conscience in us to know him and serve him, that we may be acknowledged of him at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom with the holy Ghost, be all praise and thanksgiving. Amen.”

Summary Statements

- So ends Myles Smith’s famous Preface to the King James Bible. Having devoted better than ten Lessons to producing a proper perspective on the Preface, a few summary comments on the part of recognized scholars in the field seem prudent.
 - Gordon Campbell—“The dauntingly learned address to the reader on behalf of the translators is the work of Miles Smith, who sat on the First Oxford Company (responsible for the Old Testament from Isaiah to Malachi) and on the Committee of Revisers. The language is sonorous and at times majestic; indeed, its Latinate cadences are cast in much more formal idiom than that used by the translators of the Bible. The range of allusion to patristic sources is well beyond the educational thresholds of most twenty-first-century readers, and Smith quotes Greek, Latin, and sometimes without translations. There is a helpful set of annotations to the epistle in the New Cambridge Paragraph Bible.” (Campbell, 303)
 - David Norton—“ ‘The translators to the reader’ is both heavy and admirable, and much the most important part of the preliminary material that appeared in the original edition of the 1611. It has been a casualty of its length, and is rarely reprinted. I have taken it first because of the importance of what it has to say about the nature of the Bible in general and of the translation in particular.” (Norton, 117)

Summary of Biblical Citations & Allusions

- While the final paragraph contains many Biblical Allusions there is only one direct scriptural quotation found in paragraph eighteen. The citation is of Hebrews 10:31.

Passage	Preface	AV	Geneva
Heb. 10:31	It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; . . .	It is a fearefull thing to fall into the hands of the liuing God.	It is a fearefull thing to fall into the hands of the liuing God.

- In this case, the AV and Geneva read exactly as does the Preface. A comparison with the Bishops Bible reveals that it also reads identically with both the Geneva Bible and AV in this verse. Therefore, Smith was simply giving the accepted and established English reading of this verse in the Preface.
- Since Lesson 194, when we began tracking Biblical quotations in the Preface, a side project related to this endeavor presented itself. Timothy Berg, Christopher Yetzer, Robert Vaughn, and I collaborated to create an [Excel Spreadsheet](#) charting all of the Biblical citations and allusions utilized by Myles Smith in the Preface. This project was much more thorough and extensive than I was originally hoping it to be. Rather than just tracking direct Biblical quotations, our joint project endeavored to track the following seven categories.
 - 1) Quoted in the text in italics with marginal reference to verse.
 - 2) Quoted in the text in italics without marginal reference to verse.
 - 3) Cited in the text (not in italics) with marginal verse references.
 - 4) Cited in the text (not in italics) with verse references in the text (not in the margin).
 - 5) Clearly alluded to but no reference.
 - 6) Possible allusion.
 - 7) General term (Including Biblical proper nouns).
- All told, 116 entries were cataloged in the spreadsheet. The following table summarizes these entries by category.

Category Type	# of Entries
1) Quoted in the text in italics with marginal reference to verse.	14
2) Quoted in the text in italics without marginal reference to verse.	2
3) Cited in the text (not in italics) with marginal verse references.	15
4) Cited in the text (not in italics) with verse references in the text (not in the margin).	4
5) Clearly alluded to but no reference.	25
6) Possible allusion.	33
7) General term (Including Biblical proper nouns).	23
Total	116

- Of the 116 entries dispersed into seven different categories, there are eight different classifications that we need to consider based upon the source of Smith's quotation/allusion. Smith's reading matches the reading found in:
 - Authorized Version—AV
 - Geneva Bible—G only
 - Bishops Bible—B only
 - AV & Geneva—AV/G

AV & Bishops—AV/B
 Geneva & Bishops—G/B
 AV, Bishops, & Geneva—ALL
 Smith's original reading—SMITH

Cat. #	AV	G only	B only	AV/G	AV/B	G/B	ALL	SMITH
1	2	5	0	4	0	0	0	2
2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
3	0	0	1	0	2	2	5	4
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
5	1	1	2	3	1	3	5	4
6	1	2	1	3	4	0	12	6
7	1	0	2	8	1	1	6	3
Total	5	8	6	18	9	6	30	21
%	4.31	6.90	5.17	15.52	7.76	5.17	25.86	18.10

- A categorial and statistical analysis of the Biblical quotations/allusions utilized by Myles Smith in the Preface reveals that 30 of the 116 instances (25.86%) were from places where the Geneva, Bishops, and AV all contain the same reading. The second highest percentage is 18.10% from the SMITH column of the spreadsheet. Which means that of the 116 citations/allusions Smith provides his own original reading 21 times. The next highest is the AV & Geneva column with 18 entries accounting for 15.52% of the citations. Lastly, there are only 5 entries in the Authorized Version column, indicating exclusive use of the AV in the Preface by Smith only 4.31% of the time.

Works Cited

- Berg, Timothy, Bryan Ross, Robert Vaughn, and Christopher Yetzer. [*Biblical Citations or Allusions in the 1611 KJB Preface*](#). Excel Spreadsheet.
- Campbell, Gordon. *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011*. Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Norton, David. *The King James Bible: A Short History From Tyndale to Today*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- 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.