

Sunday, May 28, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 206 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Apologetic Analysis)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 205](#) we finished our survey of the Myles Smith’s famous Preface to the King James Bible in our effort to produce a proper perspective on the Preface.
- Having completed our survey, it is prudent to analyze the historical context in which it was written to understand more clearly the goals and aims Myles Smith had in authoring it. Many students of the Preface believe that its primary purpose/function is apologetic in nature. As such, these commentators view Smith’s Preface as a direct Protestant response to the Gregory Martin’s Preface to the Rheims New Testament of 1582 and an extension of the Martin-Fulke Controversy of the late 16th century.
- To ascertain the historical context and the apologetic value of Smith’s Preface we will consider the following points.
 - Arguments for Apologetic Application
 - Smith’s Preface: An Extension of the Martin-Fulke Controversy
 - Work of Christopher Yetzer
 - Work of Katrin Ettenhuber (Lesson 207)
 - Conclusion (Lesson 207)

Arguments for Apologetic Application

- Barclay Newman and Charles Houser are authors of the essay “Rediscovering the Preface and Notes to the Original King James Version” in the anthology *Translation That Openeth the Window: Reflections on the History and Legacy of the King James Bible*. In their essay Newman and Houser stated the following regarding the purpose of the Preface:
 - “As Erroll Rhodes and Liana Lupas make clear in their brief essay on the history of the Preface, “The Translators to the Reader” was in effect an apologia. “This defense was written by Dr. Myles Smith of Bransenose, Prebendary of Hereford and Exeter Cathedrals, later bishop of Gloucester (1612). It bareth the reserve of careful scholarship in a spirit to prayerful devotion and pastor concern.” By taking a close look at some of these “defensive” statements, readers can get a better idea of how the translators understood their craft and their task.” (Newman & Houser, 74)
- Twice in the above citation the words “defense” and “defensive” are connected with the word “apologia.” The Greek word *apologia* is means to give a defense. Please consider the following uses of the word in the New Testament.

- Acts 22:1—Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my **defence** [*apologia*] which I *make* now unto you.
- I Corinthians 9:3—Mine **answer** [*apologia*] to them that do examine me is this,
- Philippians 1:7—Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the **defence** [*apologia*] and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.
- Philippians 1:17—But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the **defence** [*apologia*] of the gospel.
- I Peter 3:15—But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always **to give an answer** [*apologia*] to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:
- Newman and Houser, along with many others, believe that the chief purpose of Myles Smith's Preface is *apologetic* in nature i.e., to defend the work against primarily Roman Catholic adversaries and to a lesser extent Protestant/Puritan ones. Consider again the titles of the subsections:
 - The Best Things Have Been Calumniated [make false and defamatory statements about i.e., slandered]
 - The Highest Personages Have Been Calumniated
 - His Majesty's Constancy, Notwithstanding Calumny, For the Survey of The English Translations
 - The Praise of the Holy Scriptures
 - Translation Necessary
 - The Translation of the Old Testament Out of the Hebrew into Greek
 - Translation out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin
 - The Translating of the Scripture into the Vulgar Tongues
 - The Unwillingness of Our Chief Adversaries, That the Scriptures Should be Divulged in the Mother Tongue, Etc.
 - The Speeches and Reasons, Both of Our Brethren, and of our Adversaries Against This Work
 - A Satisfaction to Our Brethren

- An Answer to the Imputations of Our Adversaries
- The Purpose of the Translators, With Their Number, Furniture, Care, Etc.
- Reasons Moving Us to Set Diversity of Senses in the Margin, Where There is Great Probability for Each
- Reasons Inducing Us Not to Stand Curiously Upon an Identity of Phrasing
- Much of the content of the Preface is devoted to answering those who were “calumniating” i.e., slandering, or opposing all or some of the project.

Smith’s Preface: An Extension of the Martin-Fulke Controversy

- Recall from [Lesson 149](#) that we discussed the Martin-Fulke Controversy when we looked at the publication of the Rheims New Testament in 1582.
- In addition to releasing the Rheims New Testament in 1582, Gregory Martin also wrote a scathing attack on the Protestant Bible in his *A Discovery of the Manifold Corruptions of the Holy Scriptures by the Heretics of Our Days, Specially the English Sectaries*. Martin takes issue with the word choices of Protestant translators calling them heretical and directs attacks against the church.
 - “Now then to come to our purpose, such are the absurd translations of the English Bibles, and altogether like unto these. Namely, when they translate “congregation” for Church, “Elder” for Priest, “image” for idol, “dissension” for Schism, “General” for Catholic, “secret” for Sacrament, “overseer” for Bishop, “messenger” for Angel, “ambassador” for Apostle, “minister” for Deacon, and such like: to what other end be these deceitful translations but to conceal and obscure the name of the Church and dignities thereof mentioned in the Holy Scriptures: to dissemble the word “schism” (as they do also “Heresy” and “Heretic”) for fear of disgracing their schisms and Heresies, to say of Matrimony, neither Sacrament which is the Latin, nor mystery which is the Greek, but to go as far as they possibly can from the common usual and Ecclesiastical words, saying, “This is a great secret” (Eph. 5:32): in favour of their heresy, that Matrimony is no Sacrament.” (Martin, 36)
- At one point in his diatribe against Protestant English Bibles, Martin went so far as to call English Bibles translated by Tyndale and others as “the devil’s word.”
 - “If they appeal here to their later translations, we must obtain of them to condemn the former, and to confess this was a gross fault committed therein, and that the Catholic Church of our country did not ill to forbid and burn such books which were so translated by Tyndale and the like, as being not indeed God’s book, word, or Scripture, but the Devil’s word. Yea they must confess, that the leaving out of this word Church altogether, was of a heretical spirit against the Catholic Roman Church, because then they had no

Calvinistical church in any like form of religion and government to theirs now.”
(Martin, 39)

- The following year in 1583, William Fulke responded to Martin’s attack on the English Bible by writing *A Defense of the Sincere and True Translation of the Holie Scriptures into the English Tongue Against the Cavils of Gregory Martin*. According to Dr. David Daniell,
 - “William Fulke, Master of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and prolific Protestant polemicist, produced in 1583 a defence of the English versions, dedicated to the queen, attacking, and reprinting, Gregory Martin’s . . . *Discovery . . . 1582*, and including in places a line-by-line, word-by-word refutation of the Rheims New Testament in parallel with the Bishops’.” (Daniell, 366)
- Bible historian and collector, Dr. Donald L. Brake offers the most succinct summary of the controversy.
 - “The Reformation divided the Roman Catholic Church from the Protestant Church, but the battle over the Bible in English took the battle to pen and ink. The Fulke-Martin controversy over the Roman Catholic Rhemes and the Protestant translations became intense. Later, the King James translators could not avoid the “blood spilt” over the issues of notes added, language used, and methods employed. Martin used disparaging language to discredit Protestant translations, such as: “manifold corruptions,” “foul dealing,” “false translations,” and “heresies.” He said, “[Translators were] corrupting both the letter and sense by false translation, adding, detracting, altering, transposing, pointing, and all other guileful means.

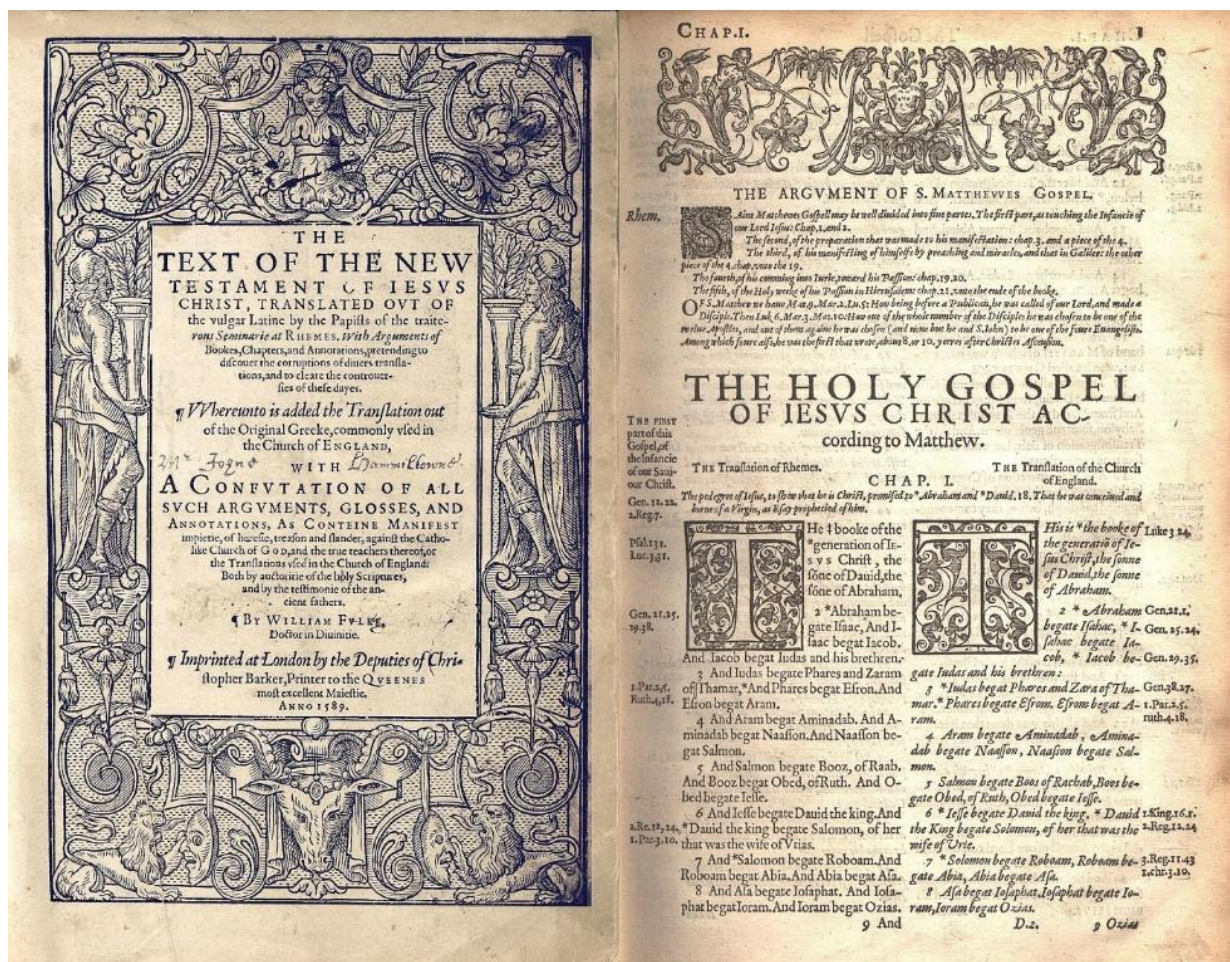
As might be expected, Fulke was ready to respond. He shot back equally inflammatory accusations about the Rhemes translators: “They [translations, glosses, and annotations] contain manifest impieties, heresies, idolatries, superstitions, profaneness, treasons, slanders, absurdities, falsehoods, and other evils.” (Brake, 174-175)

- Seven years later in 1589, Fulke published *The text of the New Testament of Jesus Christ, translated out of the Vulgar Latin by the Papists of the Traiterous Seminary at Rheims. With Arguments of Books, Chapters, and Annotations, pretending to discover the corruptions of divers translations, and to clear the controversies of these days. Whereunto is Added the Translation Out of the Original Greek, Commonly Used in the Church of England. With a Confutation of all such Arguments, Glosses, and Annotations, as Contain Manifest impiety, of heresy, treason and slander, against the Catholic Church [that is, the worldwide, not the Roman] of God, and the true teachers thereof, or the Translations used in the Church of England: Both by authority of the holy Scriptures, and by the testimony of the ancient fathers* (See picture of Title Page below).
- Regarding the publication of Fulke’s massive volume in 1589, Dr. Brake states the following:
 - “Dedicated to the Protestant Queen Elizabeth, this prodigious work laid side by side the text of Bishops’ and Rhemes New Testament. Fulke blasts both the translation and the

notes in the Rhemes New Testament. He refers to the pope and the church in the most vulgar of terms: “The Babylonical harlot and the spouse of the Antichrist.”

. . . In four editions . . . (1589, 1601, 1617, and 1633), Fulke attempted to set the Rhemes New Testament against the Bishops’ New Testament refuting each argument, gloss, and annotation point by point and word by word. . . one major target for Fulke was Martin’s use of the English language. He consistently accused Martin of using ecclesiastical terms instead of words used by common people. To Martin, as to most Roman Catholics of the time, the English language was not capable of fully expressing the theological language, as was the sacred Latin. Martin argues, “As when you affect new strange words, which the people are not acquainted withal, but it is rather Hebrew to them than English” [e.g., Jeshuah for Jesus].

Fulke responds, “Seeing the most of the proper names of the Old Testament were unknown to the people before the Scripture was read in English, it was best to utter them according to the truth of their pronunciation in Hebrew, rather than after the common corruption which they had received in the Greek and Latin tongues.” (Brake, 174-175)



Work of Christopher Yetzer

- Our friend and research partner Brother Christopher Yetzer argues in his yet unpublished essay “The Very Vulgar” that the bulk of Smith’s Preface was aimed at answering arguments posited by the Roman Catholic translator Gregory Martin in the Preface to the 1582 Rheims New Testament and to a lesser extent the 1609 Douay Old Testament.
 - “As mentioned, the largest portion of the preface is Smith’s attempt at responding to the papists’ arguments, and primarily the ones made by Gregory Martin in the preface to the 1582 Rheims New Testament³⁶ (sometimes through the 1609 Douai Old Testament preface)³⁷ but also in a lesser manner to the material in Martin’s book published the same year as the Rheims New Testament which was a critique against the Protestant English Translations [*A Discouerie of the Manifold Corruptions of the Holy Scriptures by the Heretikes of Our Daies*].” (Yetzer, 4)
- Brother Yetzer goes on to cite King James translators Francis Dillingham and William Barlow as evidence that Gregory Martin’s work loomed large in the minds of the translators as they executed their charge.
 - “KJV translator Francis Dillingham said, “Master Martins discovery of our translations argueth either blind ignorance or extreme malice “and translator William Barlow said, “Indeed Gregory Martin hath, in his Pharisaical discovery, compassed sea and land, traversed much ground mounted himself upon every molehill, ransacked all corners, to descry our translators ignorance and malice, and when all is done, it is but the suruay of drunken zebull, Jud. 9. a shadow of mountains, for a band of soldiers...”” (Yetzer, 4)
- In the following portion of his essay, Brother Yetzer makes the connection between the Rheims Preface authored by Gregory Martin and the Preface to the 1611 authored by Myles Smith. Through his preface Smith was endeavoring to respond to Martin and the arguments that had been advanced by Roman Catholic opponents to the Reformation.
 - “In the preface to the Rheims New Testament, Martin had included a lengthy passage defending the suppression of Bible reading by the general public. He makes it clear that “we must not imagine that in the primitive Church... the translated Bibles into the vulgar tonges, were in the hands of every husbandman, artificer, prentice, boys, girls, mistress, maid, man: that they were sung, played, alleged, of every tinker, taverner, rimer, minstrel: that they were for table talk, for alebenches, for boates and barges, and for every porphane person and companie.”⁴¹ Further on, after explaining that the Scriptures were maintained by the institutions of the church, he adds, “The poor ploughman, could then in laboring the ground, sing the hymns and psalms either in known or unknown languages, as they heard them in the holy Church, though they could neither read nor know the sense, meaning, and mysteries of the same.” and “the word of God can not be preached nor certain mysteries uttered to all men alike, but are to be delivered according to the capacity of the hearers: as he proveth both by S. Paules example, who gave not to every sort strong meat but milk to many, as being not spiritual, but carnal and not capable: and by our lords also, who spake to some plainly, and to others in parables, & affirmed that

he had many things to utter which the hearers were not able to bear. How much more may we gather, that all things that be written, are not for the capacity and diet of every of the simple readers, but that very many mysteries of holy writ, be very far above their reach, & may and ought to be (by as great reason) delivered them in measure & means most meet for them?" And so Martin makes it clear that the Catholic position was that the average man could not understand the Scriptures and therefore had no need to have access to them through translations into the vulgar tongues.

Miles Smith, in the KJV preface, handled the above claims mostly in paragraphs 5 titled Translation necessary, 8 The translating of the Scripture into the vulgar tongues and 9 The unwillingness of our chief Adversaries, that the Scriptures should be divulged in the mother tongue, &c. However the phrase under consideration for this article is found at the end of paragraph 16 Reasons inducing us not to stand curiously upon an identity of phrasing. Here Smith returned to his adversaries once more and assailed them because they "of purpose darken the sense" by using terms such as Holocaust or Pasche. Then Smith adds the subsequent point, "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." By including this at the end of paragraph 16 directly after his point concerning the clarity of terms, was not Smith referencing the vocabulary used more than the overall intelligibility of the Scriptures? Was he responding more clearly to this portion from the Rheims preface:

"most shamefully in all their versions Latin, English, and other tongues, corrupting both the letter and sense by false translation, adding, detracting, altering, transposing, pointing, and all other guileful means... To say nothing of their intolerable liberty and license to change the accustomed callings of God, Angel, men, places, & things used by the Apostles and all antiquity, in Greek, Latin, and all other languages of Christian Nations, into new names, sometimes falsely, and always ridiculously and for ostentation taken of the Hebrews: to frame and fine the phrases of holy Scriptures after the form of prophane writers, sticking not, for the same to supply, add, alter or diminish as freely as if they translated Livy, Virgil, or Terence. Having no religious respect to keep either the majesty or sincere simplicity of that venerable style of Christes spirit, as S. Augustine speaketh, which kind the holy Ghost did choose of infinite wisdom to have the divine mysteries rather uttered in, then any other more delicate, much less in that meretricious manner of writing that sundry of these new translators doe use... that we have used no partiality for the disadvantage of our adversaries, nor no more license then is suffereable in translating of holy Scriptures: continually keeping our selves as neere as is possible, to our text & to the very words and phrases which by long use are made venerable, though to some prophane or delicate ears they may seem more hard or barbarous, as the whole style of Scripture doth lightly to such at the beginning."⁴⁵

By using burnt offering in place of the Rheims *holocaust*, *passover* in place of *pasche*, *robe* in place of *tunic*, *unleavened bread* in place of *azymes*, *breastplate* in place of *rational*, and *uncircumcised* in place of *prepuces*, the language of the KJV was more on the level of the common man, but that does not necessarily mean that the phrasing or sense was entirely intelligible or that that was their goal.” (Yetzer, 5-6)

- Brother Yetzer’s paper also contains an interesting section in which he compares Smith’s Preface from 1611 with the Prefaces found in earlier English Bibles including Tyndale (1526), Coverdale (1535), Matthew (1537), Great (1540), Taverner (1551), Geneva (1560), and Bishops (1568). After quoting from the Prefaces of these Bibles and comparing them with Smith’s Preface from 1611, Yetzer offers the following summative statement:
 - “So we see by comparing these prefaces that each author desired the Scriptures to be known by the common man and in most cases even by children. But we also see that they knew that the Scriptures were not written on their level nor were they translated on their level. They knew that the words of the Scriptures contained difficult themes from a foreign land and a foreign time as well as that their translations were not always in the most vulgar tongue legible by every ploughman.” (Yetzer, 17)
- Brother Yetzer has posited some strong arguments for seeing an apologetic connection between the work of Gregory Martin and Myles Smith.
- In the next Lesson we will examine the arguments made by Katrin Ettenhuber to support the apologetic connection between Gregory Martin’s 1582 Preface to the Rheims New Testament and Myles Smith’s Preface from 1611.

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