

Producing A Proper Perspective On the Preface: A Textual And Historical Study of Myles Smith's Preface To The King James Bible



Prepared & Taught By:

Bryan C. Ross

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[From This Generation For Ever: A Study of God's Promise to Preserve His Word](#)

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Table of Contents

Lesson 193—Access, Structure, & Style	1
Lesson 194—Slander Sections	12
Lesson 195—Praise of the Scriptures & Translation Necessary	21
Lesson 196—Translation Sections	29
Lesson 197—Translation Sections, Continued	36
Lesson 198—Answer to Adversaries	43
Lesson 199—Answer to Adversaries, Continued	52
Lesson 200—Answer to Adversaries, Continued	64
Lesson 201—Purpose, Number, Furniture, & Care	74
Lesson 202—Purpose, Number, Furniture, & Care, Continued	85
Lesson 203—Diversity of Senses in The Margin	96
Lesson 204—Identity of Phrasing	104
Lesson 205—Final Paragraph	117
Lesson 206—Apologetic Analysis	124
Lesson 207—Apologetic Analysis, Continued	132
Lesson 208—Leveraging, Misuse & Presentism	142
Lesson 209—Leveraging, Misuse & Presentism, Continued	149

Sunday, February 5, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 193 The AV 1611: Producing a Proper Perspective on the Preface (Access, Structure, & Style)

Introduction

- In Lesson 190 we began looking at the 1611 edition of the AV as a historical artifact. In doing so, we began surveying the Preliminary contents found within the 1611 as a means of ascertaining the values, interests, and concerns of those responsible for publishing it. After concluding this survey in Lesson 192 we offered the following summative remarks.
 - Much of the preliminary material included within the 1611 was designed to aid the reader in following the liturgical calendar/life of the Anglican church. As Dr. Campbell noted intermittently throughout his comments, some of the preliminary material would have been viewed unfavorably by the Puritan faction of the English church. This makes sense given the historical/political context during which the King James Bible was created. It was after all a revision of the Bishops' Bible, the official Bible of the Anglican Church. It was, as the Title Page declares, "appointed to be read in churches."
 - These realities have engendered two different extreme views with respect to the King James Bible. Some King James Only advocates have sought to downplay, if not outrightly ignore, the connection the King James Bible has with high church Anglicanism. On the other side, critics of the King James Bible have castigated it for being a wholly partisan Bible. Neither of these extremes is accurate. The King James Bible is a product of the historical/political context in which it was created. As such, it needs to be evaluated fairly and honestly as a historical document.
- As we saw in Lesson 192, the Preface officially titled "The Translators to the Reader" follows the Epistle Dedicatory in the preliminary material found in the 1611 edition of the AV. The Preface, authored by Myles Smith is eleven pages long, in the folio edition of 1611, covering a host of different topics related to the production and publication of the AV.
- In our day, the Preface has become a lightning rod for discussion in modern debates about text and translation. The "The Translators to The Reader" is often rhetorically leveraged by those seeking to score points for their position on both sides of the bible version debate. Therefore, possessing a proper perspective on the preface is of the utmost importance and is the subject matter to which we will now turn our attention.
- In this Lesson we will consider the following points regarding the Preface before beginning a deep dive into its contents in the next Lesson.
 - Access
 - Structure
 - Style

Access

- In his 1935 work *The Translators to the Reader: Preface to the King James Version 1611*, editor Edgar J. Goodspeed presented the text of the Preface with modern spelling along with an introduction discussing how contemporary ignorance of the Preface led to misconceptions about the AV in the first half of the 20th century. Goodspeed's work was republished in 2017 in paperback form by CrossReach Publications.
- In the introduction, Goodspeed addresses modern misconceptions regarding the AV and argues that awareness of the Preface's contents is the antidote to these misunderstandings.
 - "His Preface [Myles Smith's] for many years stood at the beginning of the version. But for various reasons—its length, its obscurity, its controversial and academic character—it has gradually come to be omitted by modern publishers of the King James, which is thus made to present itself to the reader abruptly and without explanation or introduction of any kind.

The result of this upon the hosts of ignorant and untrained people who use the version is disastrous in the extreme. My own correspondence abounds in letters from well-meaning people who have been led into the strangest misconceptions by its absence. It is indeed long, controversial and pedantic, but this very fact is significant. And with all its faults, it says some things about the version and its makers and their aims that still greatly need to be said, indeed, that must be said, if the readers of the version are to be given the protection and guidance that they deserve and that its makers provided for them.

For they will accept this guidance and protection from no one else. It is idle for any modern to attempt to correct these misapprehensions; his efforts will only be resented or ignored. But if the King James Bible itself can be shown to say to its adherents the very things they most need to know about their version, it will be possible for them to benefit by them without embarrassment or inconsistency." (Goodspeed, 8)

- In short, Goodspeed identified these so-called "illusions" as follows:
 - the King James Bible is "the original Bible" (9-12)
 - the King James Bible is the "Authorized Bible" (12-13),
 - the verbal inspiration of the King James Version i.e., "Divinely Authorized." (13-15)
 - the King James Bible is "poetry" (15-16)
 - the King James Bible is "the sole, unique, divine Bible untouched by human hands" (16-17)

- Citing various passages from the Preface, Goodspeed endeavors to demonstrate how the Preface provides the solution to these “misapprehensions.” Essentially Goodspeed is arguing that if people only knew the contents of the Preface, they would not make these arguments.
- Before moving on with Goodspeed’s analysis it is important to acknowledge the timing of his book in the middle of the 1930s. The volume was written before the advent of modern King James Onlyism (in the 1950s) during the Modernist/Fundamentalist controversies of the first half of the 20th century. Note the similarities between Goodspeed’s comments from 1935 and those of William B. Riley from his 1917 publication *The Menace of Modernism*. Describing the nature of the “old conception” before the advent of Modernism, Riley states,
 - “There are at least three features of the old conception, each of which has now passed away. They are, first, that the Bible was finished in heaven and handed down; second, that the King James Version was absolutely inerrant; third, that its literal acceptance and interpretation was, alone, correct.” (Riley, 9)
- Riley is noting that historically the plain folk of the English-speaking world believed their English King James Bible to be the “inerrant” word of God. Careful readers will note how these components of the “old conception” identified by Riley in 1917 will manifest themselves in Goodspeed’s discussion of the Preface.
- In the next section of his Introduction, Goodspeed identified three reasons why the Preface ceased to be printed in modern printings of the AV. Goodspeed’s reasons and explanations are as follows; he claims these reasons were given to him by prominent publishers of the AV in the 20th century (17-18):
 - Too Academic—“One of the most unfortunate things about the adherents of the King James Version is their antipathy to scholars. They regard them with grave suspicion. Yet their own version is the masterpiece of biblical scholarship in Jacobean England. If the Preface reveals no more to them than this, it would be worth printing, for it is precisely this rift between piety and learning that is most dangerous to the church.” (Goodspeed, 18)
 - Too Controversial & Nugatory [Of no value/importance]— “The version sprang out of controversy; the Preface reflects the fact; why conceal it? The hushing of the controversy in the history of Christianity does not make for intelligence. The New Testament itself springs, much of it, out of controversy; I and II Corinthians, for instance. It is precisely this muting that has produced the impression that the version originated in some other, better world than ours. If the Preface, shows its human background, let us have it, since it is a part of the truth.

[Quotes from the Preface and then states the following.] Without these trenchant sentences, people are left with the impression that the King James translation descended like the gentle dew from heaven, amidst universal acclaim. The silencing of the controversial note of the Preface puts a false face upon the version, for which its original makers are not to blame.” (Goodspeed, 19-20)

- Obscurity & Confusion— “. . . Confusion is the ordinary reader’s present condition of mind, as I have tried to show. Left without the translator’s guidance, he now believes the King James to be the “original” divinely inspired, unique, not made with hands, final, and definitive. To break in upon this false assurance with the clear statements of the Preface may produce a temporary confusion, but the confusion will be due to the disastrous practice of omitting the Preface, not the healthful one of including it.

As for obscurity, is the Preface any more obscure than the version it introduced? This is the strangest of all reasons for the King James printers to adduce, yet I have it before me in writing from one of the greatest of them.”

“The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.”—Ecclesiastes 12:11

So reads the King James Version. Is there anything in the Preface that approaches this obscurity. Yet publishers justify the omission of the Preface on the ground that it is “obscure.” There is not a sentence in it as obscure as this one, or as hosts of others in the King James Version. No, if obscurity is the criterion, the publishers, might have omitted the version and printed the Preface, but hardly the other way. It must be that the publishers are quite unaware of the marked obscurity of great areas of their own version. [Goodspeed does not state in what sense publishers deemed the Preface too obscure to print in modern editions. He applies it to difficult readings in the AV. It could be that the publishers had a different type of obscurity in view. Namely, historical obscurity i.e., few modern readers understand the historical context of early 17th century English in which the Preface was authored. As we will see, much of what Myles Smith states in the Preface has contemporary disputes with Roman Catholics and Protestants in view. Put another way, the Preface was authored to address possible objections to the AV within a specific historical context/framework.] (Goodspeed, 20)

- Later in the Introduction, Goodspeed does address how reading the Preface is essential for approaching the “version historically.”
 - “To approach that version historically, and as any student should, without the Preface, is simply impossible. . . For the past hundred years, from the point of view of everyone—ministers, professors, students, general readers, pious readers—the Preface has been virtually suppressed. [Recall that Goodspeed wrote this in the mid-1930s before modern interest in the Preface experienced a resurgence.] (Goodspeed, 23)
- After, recounting the fact that few printings of the AV published in the late 19th and early 20th centuries published the Preface, Goodspeed stated, “the Preface is practically out of print.” (25) Olga S. Opfell, writing in 1982, nearly a half century after Goodspeed, stated that the Preface is “never printed in modern editions of the King James Bible.” (Opfell, 108)

- In the next section of his Introduction, Goodspeed called for the restoration of the Preface.
 - “This is no idle demand of a few savants and specialists, in the interests of mere erudition, but a crying need of present-day religion, of which the King James Bible is undeniably still the chief stay. That that edition should continue to sink into greater and greater misconception and misrepresentation, when much of it might be prevented by the simple and obvious device of restoring the Preface, is intolerable. That version is too deeply freighted with religious values to be left at the mercy of every charlatan to exploit. Its Preface is a great monument of sound biblical learning and method. Its readers need it as they have never needed it before. It lies ready to our hands, enfolding in itself the very correctives modern vagaries about the King James Bible so sadly need.” (Goodspeed, 24)
- Goodspeed’s comments foreshadow why the Preface has become a battleground in our day. Interlocutors on both sides of the Bible Version debate seek to cast King James translators as being wholly on their side. For example, 2022 saw the publication of *The Forgotten Preface: Surprising Insight on the Translation Philosophy of the King James Translators* by Joshua Barzon. In his volume, Barzon used the Preface to posit the argument that the King James translators would have approved of and supported the New King James Bible.
- While Goodspeed, in his day (mid-1930s), deemed the Preface to be “practically out of print”, that is certainly not the case today. The last decade of the 1990s and first quarter of the 21st century have witnessed a renewed interest in study of the Preface by scholars and historians. For example, 1997 saw the release of *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version of 1611 Revisited* by the American Bible Society. In this volume editors Drs. Erroll F. Rhodes and Liana Lupas present the Preface in three different Forms: 1) Facsimile, 2) Transcription with modern orthography and footnotes, and 3) Modern English. Moreover, modern anthologies such as *The King James Version At 400: Assessing Its Genesis as Bible Translation and Its Literary Influence* (2013) and *The Oxford Handbook of The Bible In Early Modern England* (2017) contain scholarly articles on the Preface. In addition, in 2017 CrossReach Publications rereleased Goodspeed’s *The Translators to the Reader: Preface to the King James Version*. Lastly, the Preface is readily available online on a host of different website and formats.
- Therefore, it is critical that we have a proper perspective of the Preface that seeks to understand it in its proper context. It is to this task that we will now turn our attention.

Structure

- Richard A. Burridge authored an essay titled “Priorities, Principles, and Prefaces: From The KJV To Today (1611-2011)” for the 2013 anthology *The King James Version At 400: Assessing Its Genius As Bible Translation and Its Literary Influence*. In his essay, Burridge makes the case that there are really “two prefaces” to the AV, the Epistle Dedicatory and The Translators to the Reader.

- “Interestingly, it is not always realized that there are two prefaces to the KJV. In the United Kingdom, the better known is the dedicatory preface, which is addressed to King James himself: [Quotes the title from the Epistle Dedicatory.] It then continues with a half a dozen paragraphs over a couple of pages, all addressed to the king himself, praising his accession after Elizabeth I and offering him the work of the translators. Since this preface is nearly always included in British editions of the KJV, I will begin each of my subsequent points with a quotation from this dedicatory preface.

However, in addition, there is also the explanatory preface that is not always included; it is simply headed, “The Translators to the Reader.” This preface is much longer, often running over twenty pages, and it is remarkable how few of the editions of the KJV included this translators’ preface, certainly from the nineteenth century on. Nonetheless, this preface is really important.” (Burridge, 197)

- Throughout his essay Burridge endeavors to show how both *prefaces* work in conjunction with each other to give the reader a full understanding of what the translators sought to accomplish with their volume.
 - “Thus, in addition to beginning each section with a quotation from the dedicatory preface, I will use various comments made in the preface from “The Translators to the Reader” to amplify the point being considered.” (Burridge, 197)
- This approach helps to accent how both Prefaces need to read in conjunction with each other. Regarding the structure of Myles Smith’s longer Preface, Burridge states the following:
 - “The essay contains fifteen subsections, each with a different heading, explaining what the translators have done. It is clear that Smith was expecting criticism, as he defends their methods and their approach to the translation against what he terms in the title to section 12, “the imputations of our adversaries.” Smith ends with a very moving exhortation addressed directly to the reader, . . .” (Burridge, 197)
- The Heading for each subsection was written in the inner margin with the outer margin being reserved for marginal/textual notes upon contents of the Preface. Please consider the following images of the first two pages of “The Translators to the Reader.”

THE TRANSLATORS TO THE READER.



ale to promote the common good, whether it be by deuising any thing our felues, or reuising that which hath bene laboured by others, deserueth certainly much respect and esteeme, but yet findeth but cold intertainment in the world. It is welcommed with suspicion in stead of loue, and with emulation in stead of thanks: and if there be any hole left for caull to enter, (and caull, if it doe not finde a hole, will make one) it is sure to bee misconstrued, and in danger to be condemned. This will easily be granted by as many as know story, or haue any experience. For, was there euer any thing projected, that sauoured any way of newnesse or renewing, but the same endured many a storme of gaine-saying, or opposition? A man would thinke that Ciuilitie, holmes Lawes, learning and eloquence, Synods, and Church-maintenance, (that we speake of no more things of this kinde) should be as safe as a Sanctuary, and stout of shot, as they say, that no man would lift vp the heele, no, nor dogge moue his tongue against the motioners of them. For by the first, we are distinguished from brut-beasts led with sensuality: By the second, we are bridled and restrained from outrageous behauiour, and from doing of iniuries, whether by fraud or by violence: By the third, we are enabled to informe and reforme others, by the light and feeling that we haue attained vnto our felues: Briefly, by the fourth being brought together to a parle face to face, we sooner compose our differences then by writings, which are endlesse: And lastly, that the Church be sufficiently provided for, is so agreeable to good reason and conscience, that those mothers are holden to be lesse cruell, that kill their children as soone as they are borne, then those nourishing fathers and mothers (where soeuer they be) that withdraw from them who hang vpon their breasts (and vpon whose breasts againe themselves doe hang to receiue the Spirituall and sincere milke of the word) liuelyhood and support fit for their estates. Thus it is apparent, that these things which we speake of, are of most necessary vse, and therefore, that none, either without absurditie can speake against them, or without note of wickednesse can spurne against them.

The best things haue beene calumniated.

2. Tim. 3. 16.

Amos 6. 1.

1. Cor.

Ca. 1. 1. 1.

Gregory the 10. 1.

2. Cor. 1. 1.

1. Sam. 1. 1.

1. King. 1. 1.

1. Sam. 1. 1.

Yet for all that, the learned know that certaine worthy men haue bene brought to vntimely death for none other fault, but for seeking to reduce their Countrey-men to good order and discipline: and that in some Common-weales it was made a capitall crime, once to motion the making of a new Law for the abrogating of an old, though the same were most pernicious: And that certaine, which would be counted pillars of the State, and paternes of Vertue and Prudence, could not be brought for a long time to giue way to good Letters and refined speech, but bare themselves as auerse from them, as from rocks or boxes of poison: And fourthly, that hee was no babe, but a great clearke, that gaue forth (and in writing to remaine to posteritie) in passion peraduenture, but yet he gaue forth, that hee had not seene any profit to come by any Synode, or meeting of the Clergie, but rather the contrary: And lastly, against Church-maintenance and allowance, in such sort, as the Embassadors and messengers of the great King of Kings should be furnished, it is not vnknown what a fiction or fable (so it is esteemed, and for no better by the repotter himselfe, though superstitious) was deuised; Namely, that at such time as the professours and teachers of Christianitie in the Church of Rome, then a true Church, were liberally endowed, a voyce forsooth was heard from heauen, saying, Now is poison powred down into the Church, &c. Thus not only as oft as we speake, as one saith, but also as oft as we do any thing of note or consequence, we subiect our felues to euery ones censure, and happy is he that is least tossed vpon tongues; for vtterly to escape the snatch of them it is impossible. If any man conceit, that this is the lot and portion of the meaner sort onely, and that Princes are priuiledged by their high estate, he is deceived. As the sword deuoureth as well one as the other, as it is in Samuel, nay as the great Commander charged his souldiers in a certaine battell, to strike at no part of the enemy, but at the face; And as the King of Syria, commanded his chiefe Captaines to fight neither with small nor great, save onely against the King of Israel: so it is too true, that Enuie striketh most spitefully at the fairest, and at the chiefe. Dauid was a worthy Prince, and no man to be compared to him for his first deedes, and yet for as worthy an acte as euer he did (euen for bringing backe the Arke of God in solemnitie) he was scorned and scoffed at by his owne wife. Solomon was greater then Dauid, though

To the Reader.

though not in vertue, yet in power: and by his power and wisdom he built a Temple to the LORD, such a one as was the glory of the land of Israel, and the wonder of the whole world. But was that his magnificence liked of by all? We doubt of it. Otherwise, why doe they lay it in his finnes dish, and call vnto him for easing of the burden. *Make, say they, the grievous servitude of thy father, and his fore yoke, lighter.* Belike he had charged them with some leuies, and troubled them with some carriages; Hereupon they raise vp a tragedie, and with in their heart the Temple had neuer bene built. So hard a thing it is to please all, euen when we please God best, and doe seeke to approue our selues to euery ones conscience.

If wee will descend to later times, wee shall finde many the like examples of such kind, or rather vnkind acceptance. The first Romane Emperour did neuer doe a more pleasing deed to the learned, nor more profitable to posteritie, for conseruing the record of times in true supputation; then when he corrected the Calender, and ordered the yeere according to the course of the Sunne: and yet this was imputed to him for noueltie, and arrogancie, and procured to him great obloquie. So the first Christened Emperour (at the leastwise that openly professed the faith himselfe, and allowed others to doe the like) for strengthening the Empire at his great charges, and prouiding for the Church, as he did, got for his labour the name *Pupillus*, as who would say, a wastefull Prince, that had neede of a Guardian, or ouerseer. So the best Christened Emperour, for the loue that he bare vnto peace, thereby to enrich both himselfe and his subiects, and because he did not seeke warre but find it, was iudged to be no man at armes, (though in deed he excelled in feates of chiuallrie, and shewed so much when he was prouoked) and condemned for giuing himselfe to his ease, and to his pleasure. To be short, the most learned Emperour of former times, (at the least, the greatest politician) what thanks had he for cutting off the superfluities of the lawes, and digesting them into some order and method? This, that he hath been blotted by some to bee an Epitomist, that is, one that extinguished worthy whole volumes, to bring his abridgements into request. This is the measure that hath been rendred to excellent Princes in former times, euen, *Cum bene facerent, male audire*. For their good deedes to be euill spoken of. Neither is there any likelihood, that enuie and malignitie died, and were buried with the ancient. No, no, the reproofe of *Moses* taketh hold of most ages; *You are risen vp in your fathers stead, an increase of sinfull men. What is that that hath been done? that which shall be done: and there is no new thing vnder the Sunne*, saith the wiseman: and *S. Steuen, As your fathers did, so doe you*. This, and more to this purpose, His Maiestie that now reigneth (and long, and long may he reigne, and his offspring for euer, *Himselfe and children and childrens children alwayes*) knew full well, according to the singular wisdom giuen vnto him by God, and the rare learning and experience that he hath attained vnto; namely that whosoever attempteth any thing for the publike (specially if it pertaine to Religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himselfe vpon a stage to be gloured vpon by euery euil eye, yea, he casteth himselfe headlong vpon pikes, to be gored by euery sharpe tongue. For he that medleth with mens Religion in any part, medleth with their custome, nay, with their firehold; and though they finde no content in that which they haue, yet they cannot abide to heare of altering. Notwithstanding his Royall heart was not daunted or discouraged for this or that colour, but stood resolute, *as a statue immouable, and an anule not easie to be beaten into plates*, as one sayth, he knew who had chosen him to be a Souldier, or rather a Capitaine, and being assured that the course which he intended made much for the glory of God, & the building vp of his Church, he would not suffer it to be broken off for whatsoeuer speeches or practises. It doth certainly belong vnto Kings, yea, it doth specially belong vnto them, to haue care of Religion, yea, to know it aright, yea, to profess it zealously, yea to promote it to the vttermost of their power. This is their glory before all nations which meane well, and this will bring vnto them a faire most excellent weight of glory in the day of the Lord Iesus. For the Scripture saith not in vaine, *Them that honor me, I will honor*, neither was it a vaine word that *Eusebius* deliuered long agoe, that pietie towards God was the weapon, and the onely weapon that both preferred *Constantines* person, and auenged him of his enemies.

But now what pietie without trueth? what trueth (what sauing trueth) without the word of God? what word of God (whereof we may be sure) without the Scripture? The Scriptures we are commanded to search. *Ioh. 5. 39. Esa. 8. 20.* They are commended that searched & studied them. *Act. 17. 11. and 8. 28, 29.* They are reproofed that were vnskillful in them, or slow to beleue them. *Mat. 22. 29. Luk. 24. 25.* They can make vs wise vnto saluation. *1. Tim. 3. 15.* If we be ignorant, they will instruct vs; if out of the way, they will bring vs home; if out of order, they will reforme vs; if in heauines, comfort vs; if dull, quicken vs; if colde, inflame vs. *Tolle, lege; Tolle, lege*, Take vp and read, take vp and read the Scriptures, (for vnto them was the direction) it was laid vnto *S. Augustine* by a supernaturall voyce. *Whatsoeuer is in the Scriptures, beleue me*, saith the same *S. Augustine*, *is high and diuine: there is verily trueth, and a doctrine most fit for the refreshing and renewing of mens mindes, and truly so tempered, that*

euery
euen; 2. Sam.
1. King 11. 9

C. C. C. C.
P. P. P. P.

Confession.

Act. 1. 1. 1. 1.

Th. 1. 1. 1. 1.

2. 1. 1. 1.

1. 1. 1. 1.

Numb. 31. 74.

Eccles. 1. 9.

Act. 7. 51.

Act. 17. 1. 1. 1.
1. 1. 1. 1.

Swiss.
1. 1. 1. 1.
1. 1. 1. 1.

1. Sam. 1. 10.

2. 1. 1. 1.

Eusebius lib. 10.

cap. 8.

S. August. con-
fess. lib. 8. cap. 11.
S. August. de
u. 1. 1. 1. 1.
cap. 6.

The highest
personages
have been ca-
lumniated.

His Maiesties
constancie,
notwithstan-
ding calumnia-
tion, for the
survey of the
English trans-
lations.

The praise of
the holy Scrip-
tures.

- The “Transcription” portion of *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version of 1611 Revisited* edited by Drs. Rhodes and Lupas takes the notes from the outer margins and presents them as footnotes at the bottom of the page along with explanatory commentary. This volume is very helpful in elucidating the contents of the Preface.
- Structurally, the fifteen subsections of the Preface are as follows:
 - 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

Style

- Stylistically the Preface is varied when compared with the Biblical text found in the AV. Olga S. Opfell comments as follows:
 - “Some passages seem close in style to that of the Bible: “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God: but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh to us, to hearken. . .” But in other passages Smith falls into the ornamental style then in vogue. Of Holy Scripture he writes, “It is not a pot of manna, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal’s meat or two, but as it were a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be never so great. . .” (Opfell, 108)
- Rhodes and Lupas concur with Opfell regarding the stylistic differences between the Preface and Biblical text.
 - “The literary style the translators generally favored is illustrated in the preface, which reflects the classical education of the Renaissance, replete with its massive periodic sentences, heavily Latin vocabulary, and frequent allusions to examples from the Greco-Roman world. This contrasts markedly with the style of the Bible which the preface introduces.” (Rhodes & Lupas, 4)
- Dr. David Norton also comments upon the stylistic differences between the Preface and the Biblical text in his 2011 publication *The King James Bible: A Short History from Tyndale to Today*. After quoting the lengthy paragraph found in the “Praise of the Holy Scriptures” subsection of the Preface, Dr. Norton states the following:
 - “. . .taking this paragraph as a sample of their writing, it is clear that the translators’ idea of good writing was different from the English they used in the Bible. The length of the paragraph and the length and complexity of the sentence structures are alien to most of the Bible except some parts of the Apocrypha and the Epistles. Some of the vocabulary has similar simplicity to that commonly found in the translation, as in ‘repentance from dead works, newness of life, holiness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost’, but there are places where the scholarly background shows off in neologisms to rival any inkhorn writer of the period.” (Norton, 113)
- Professor Norton concludes his discussion of the Preface as follows:
 - “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 to 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)
- In the next Lesson we will begin a carefully study of the text of the Preface.

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Sunday, February 12, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 194 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Slander Sections)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 193](#) we considered the following three points regarding the Preface, The Translators to the Reader found in the preliminary material to the AV of 1611.
 - Access
 - Structure
 - Style
- In doing so, we observed that the content of the eleven-page Preface is broken down into fifteen subsections. In this Lesson we will begin our consideration of the contents of the Preface by looking at each subsection.

Slander Sections

- The first three subsections are related to the issue of “calumniation” or slander and are titled as follows:
 - The Best Things Have Been Calumniated [made false and defamatory statements about i.e., slandered]
 - The Highest Personages Have Been Calumniated
 - His Majesty’s Constancy, Notwithstanding Calumniation, For the Survey of The English Translations
- Given that these three subsections are about the same general subject matter, we will discuss their contents together as a unit.
- Before moving forward, it is important to understand the format we are adopting for studying the Preface. For each subsection, the title of which will be center justified and bolded, we will present the text of the Preface in a table with a Modern Spelling Transcription on the left and the “Modern Form” presented by Drs. Errol F. Rhodes and Liana Lupas in *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the King James Version of 1611 Revisited*, on the right. The Transcription on the left seeks to retain the original formatting of the Preface as much as possible including italicizing quotations and allusions to the Biblical text. To be clear, the Modern Spelling Transcription retains all the original wording and sentence structure of the Preface. The only changes that have been made are updates in the spelling. Those interested in viewing the Preface in its original format can do so by clicking on this [link](#). Within each table the individual paragraphs (¶) of the Preface will be numbered. Beneath each table, we will provide any necessary commentary or elucidation on the subsection in question.

The Best Things Have Been Calumniated [Slandered]

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
<p>¶1) Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which hath been laboured by others, deserveth certainly much respect and esteem, but yet findeth but cold entertainment in the world. It is welcomed with suspicion instead of love, and with emulation instead of thanks: and if there be any hole left for cavil to enter, (and cavil, if it do not find a hole, will make one) it is sure to be misconstrued, and in danger to be condemned. This will easily be granted by as many as know story, or have any experience. For, was there ever any projected, that savoured any way of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying, or opposition? A man would think that Civility, wholesome Laws, learning and eloquence, Synods, and Church-maintenance, (that we speak of no more things of this kind) should be as safe as a Sanctuary, and out of shot, as they say, that no man would lift up the heel, no, nor dog move his tongue against the motioners of them. For by the first, we are distinguished from brute beasts lead with sensuality; By the second, we are bridled and restrained from outrageous behaviour, and from doing of injuries, whether by fraud or by violence; By the third, we are enabled to inform and reform others, by the light and feeling that we have attained unto ourselves; Briefly, by the fourth being brought together to a parley face to face, we sooner compose our differences than by writings which are endless; And lastly, that the Church be sufficiently provided for, is so agreeable to good reason and conscience, that those mothers are holden to be less cruel, that kill their children as soon as they are born, than those nursing fathers and mothers (wheresoever they be) that withdraw from them who hang upon their breasts (and upon whose breasts again themselves do hang to receive the Spiritual and sincere milk of the word) livelihood and support fit for their estates. Thus it is apparent, that these things which we speak of, are of most necessary use, and therefore, that none, either without absurdity can speak against them, or without note of wickedness can spurn against them.</p>	<p>¶1) Any effort to promote the common good, whether by creating something ourselves, or by adapting the work of others, surely deserves serious respect and consideration, yet it finds only a cold reception in the world. It is greeted with suspicion instead of interest, and with disparagement instead of gratitude. And if there is any room left for quibbling (and quibblers will invent a pretext if they do not find one), it is sure to be misinterpreted and risk being condemned. Anyone who has any experience or familiarity with history will readily admit this. For was anything ever undertaken with a touch of newness or improvement about it that didn't run into storms of argument or opposition? Anyone would think that orderly government, sound laws, education, councils, and Church support, not to mention other such things, should be as safe as a sanctuary, and beyond the range, as they say, of anyone's carping or any dog's yapping. By orderly government we are distinguished from animals which follow their appetites. By sound laws we are controlled and restrained from disgusting behavior and from injuring others, whether by fraud or by violence. By education we are enabled to enlighten and help others by the insight and understanding that we ourselves have gained. Further, by councils we come together in direct negotiations to settle our differences more quickly than by writings, which can be interminable. Finally, giving adequate support to the Church is reasonable and appropriate, just as mothers are considered less cruel who kill their children as soon as they are born, than the nursing fathers and mothers (wherever they are) who keep from the babies at their breasts the support that they need (and who also depend on them for the spiritual and pure milk of the word). So it is obvious that the things we are speaking of are basic necessities, and that therefore no one can dispute them without being absurd, or object to them without note of wickedness.</p>

¶2) Yet for all that, the learned know that certain worthy men have been brought to untimely death for none other fault, but for seeking to reduce their Countrymen to good order and discipline; and that in some Commonwealths it was made a capital crime, once to motion the making of a new Law for the abrogating of an old, though the same were most pernicious; And that certain, which would be counted pillars of the State, and patterns of Virtue and Prudence, could not be brought for a long time to give way to good Letters and refined speech, but bare themselves as averse from them, as from rocks or boxes of poison; And fourthly, that he was no babe, but a great clerk, that gave forth (and in writing to remain to posterity) in passion peradventure, but yet he gave forth, that he had not seen any profit to come by any Synod, or meeting of the Clergy, but rather the contrary; And lastly, against Church-maintenance and allowance, in such sort, as the Ambassadors and messengers of the great King of Kings should be furnished, it is not unknown what a fiction or fable (so it is esteemed, and for no better by the reporter himself, though superstitious) was devised; Namely, that at such a time as the professors and teachers of Christianity in the Church of Rome, then a true Church, were liberally endowed, a voice forsooth was heard from heaven, saying: Now is poison poured down into the Church, etc. Thus not only as oft as we speak, as one saith, but also as oft as we do anything of note or consequence, we subject ourselves to everyone's censure, and happy is he that is least tossed upon tongues; for utterly to escape the snatch of them it is impossible. If any man conceit, that this is the lot and portion of the meaner sort only, and that Princes are privileged by their high estate, he is deceived. *"As the sword devoureth as well one as the other,"* as it is in *Samuel*, nay as the great Commander charged his soldiers in a certain battle, to strike at no part of the enemy, but at the face; And as the King of Syria commanded his chief Captains to *"fight neither with small nor great, save only against the King of Israel:"* so it is too true, that Envy striketh most spitefully at the fairest, and at the chiefest. *David* was a worthy Prince, and no man to be compared to him for his first deeds, and yet for as worthy an act as ever he did (even for bringing back the Ark of God in solemnity) he was scorned and scoffed at by his own wife. *Solomon* was

¶2) Yet despite this, scholars know that honorable men have been condemned to death for attempting to bring good order and discipline to their countrymen, and that in some states it was made a capital crime even to propose a new law abrogating an old law, even though the old law was pernicious. And that some leaders, who were regarded as pillars of State and models of virtue and prudence, have been very reluctant to accept common standards of good letters and refined speech, shying away from them as from rocks or from poison. And fourthly, it was not a rash youth but a reputable scholar who stated, perhaps in passion but yet clearly (in writing which remains to posterity), that he had never seen anything good come from a council or meeting of the Clergy, but rather the opposite. And finally, with regard to Church support and the subsidies that are provided for the ambassadors and messengers of the great King of kings, there is the story (or rather the fable, as our source called it) that when the professors and teachers of Christianity in the Church of Rome (when it was a true Church) were generously endowed, a voice was heard from heaven, saying, "Now poison has been poured into the Church." Thus not only whenever we say something, but also whenever we do anything of note or consequence, we lay ourselves open to everyone's criticism, and they are fortunate who are least subjected to idle gossip, because it is impossible to escape it altogether. Anyone is deceived who imagines that this is true only of unimportant people, and that princes are privileged by their position. "You never know who will be killed in a war," as it says in *Samuel* (2 Samuel 11.25). A great commander once charged his soldiers entering a battle to aim only at the faces of the enemy, and the king of Syria commanded his captains to attack no one but the king of Israel (1 Kings 22.31). And it is true that envy strikes most cruelly at the fairest and best. *David* was a worthy prince, outstanding among his peers for his early deeds; and yet for the worthiest act of his life, bringing back the Ark of God in solemn triumph, he was despised and scoffed at by his own wife (2 Samuel 6.16). *Solomon* was greater than *David*, not in virtue but in power. By his power and wisdom he built a temple to the Lord that was the glory of the land of Israel and the wonder of the whole world. But

<p>greater than <i>David</i>, though not in virtue, yet in power: and by his power and wisdom he built a Temple to the Lord, such a one as was the glory of the land of Israel, and the wonder of the whole world. But was that his magnificence liked of by all? We doubt it. Otherwise, why do they lay it in his son's dish, and call unto him for easing the burden, "<i>Make</i>", say they, "<i>the grievous servitude of thy father, and his sore yoke, lighter.</i>" Belike he had charged them with some levies, and troubled them with some carriages; Hereupon they raise up a tragedy, and wish in their heart the Temple had never been built. So hard a thing it is to please all, even when we please God best, and do seek to approve ourselves to every ones conscience.</p>	<p>was this magnificent achievement appreciated by everyone? Hardly! Otherwise, why do they blame the son and appeal to him to ease the burden, saying, "Lighten the hard service of your father, and his heavy yoke that he placed on us" (1 Kings 12.4). Evidently he oppressed them with conscripted labor and burdened them with taxes, and they reacted disastrously, wishing in their heart that the temple had never been built. It is so difficult to please everyone, even when we please God best, and try to commend ourselves to everyone's conscience. (Rhodes & Lupas, 67-68)</p>
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- In the first paragraph (§1), Myles Smith sets forth the general principle that "new things" whether they be original, or revisions of prior work, are likely to be met with "emulation instead of thanks" and are "sure to be misconstrued, and in danger to be condemned." Smith asks whether there has ever been a new undertaking that has not "endured many a storm of gainsaying, or opposition?" According to Smith, "civility, wholesome laws, learning and eloquence, Synods, and Church-maintenance," should be "as safe as a Sanctuary" from those who would "lift up the heel, no, nor dog move his tongue against the motioners of them." It is by orderly government and sound laws that humans "are controlled and restrained from disgusting behavior and from injuring others, whether by fraud or by violence." (Rhodes & Lupas, 67) After discussing the role of education and councils in settling disputes, Smith turns his attention to the role of the church in establishing societal order. Next, by way of illustration, Smith compares the cruelty of those who "kill their children as soon as they are born" and those "nursing fathers and mothers who keep from their babies at their breasts the support they need (and who also depend on them for the spiritual and pure milk of the word)," thus establishing a comparison with the work of the translators. (Rhodes & Lupas, 67) Therefore, it is at the risk of "absurdity" or "wickedness" that someone would speak against the "necessary" work that Smith is speaking of i.e., the translation he is presenting to the reader.
- In the second paragraph (§2), Smith builds upon the reasoning set forth in paragraph one. Despite the "absurdity" and "wickedness" of speaking against such a work, "the learned know that certain worthy men have been brought to untimely death for none other fault, but for seeking to reduce their Countrymen to good order and discipline." These factors have led "some leaders, who were regarded as pillars of the Senate and models of virtue and prudence, have been very reluctant to accept common standards of good letters and refined speech, shying away from them as from rocks or from poison." (Rhodes & Lupas, 67) Smith argues that this negative thinking extends into things pertaining to church so much so that "as oft as we do anything of note or consequence, we subject ourselves to everyone's censure, and happy is he that is least tossed upon tongues; for utterly to escape the snatch of them it is impossible." People who think that "this is the lot and portion of the meaner sort only, and that Princes are privilege by their estate," are deceived according to Smith. Next Smith cites II Samuel 11:25 and I King 22:31 in support of the statement, "so it is too true, that Envy striketh most spitefully at the fairest, and the chiefest." Smith then uses David being "scorned and scoffed at by own wife" (II Sam. 6:16) and Solomon

(I Kings 12:4) being derided for the temple as scriptural examples for the final sentence of the paragraph, “so hard a thing it is to please all, even when we please God best, and do seek to approve ourselves to every ones conscience.”

The Highest Personages Have Been Calumniated [Slandered]

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶(3) If we will descend to later times, we shall find many the like examples of such kind, or rather unkind acceptance. The first Roman Emperor did never do a more pleasing deed to the learned, nor more profitable to posterity, for conserving the record of times in true supputation; than when he corrected the Calendar, and ordered the year according to the course of the Sun; and yet this was imputed to him for novelty, and arrogance, and procured to him great obloquy. So the first Christened Emperor (at the least-wise that openly professed the faith himself, and allowed others to do the like) for strengthening the Empire at his great charges, and providing for the Church, as he did, got for his labour the name <i>Pupillus</i> , as who would say, a wasteful Prince, that had need of a Guardian or overseer. So the best Christened Emperor, for the love that he bare unto peace, thereby to enrich both himself and his subjects, and because he did not see war but find it, was judged to be no man at arms, (though indeed he excelled in feats of chivalry, and showed so much when he was provoked) and condemned for giving himself to his ease, and to his pleasure. To be short, the most learned Emperor of former times, (at the least, the greatest politician) what thanks had he for cutting off the superfluities of the laws, and digesting them into some order and method? This, that he had been blotted by some to be an Epitomist, that is, one that extinguishes worthy whole volumes, to bring his abridgments into request. This is the measure that hath been rendered to excellent Princes in former times, even, <i>Cum bene facerent, male audire</i> , For their good deeds to be evil spoken of. Neither is there any likelihood, that envy and malignity died, and were buried with the ancient. No, no, the reproof of <i>Moses</i> taketh hold of most ages; " <i>You are risen up in your fathers' stead, and increase of sinful men.</i> " " <i>What is that that hath been done? that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the Sun,</i> " saith the wiseman: and S. Stephen, " <i>As your fathers did, so do you.</i> "	¶(3) Coming down to later times we will find many similar examples of this kind, or rather unkind, treatment. Julius Caesar, the first Roman emperor, never did anything more convenient for scholarship, or more useful for later generations for recording events accurately, than when he reorganized the Calendar by basing it on the solar year. Yet for this he was accused of innovation and arrogance, and severely censured. Then Constantine, the first Christian emperor (at least the first to openly profess the faith himself and sanction it for others), by strengthening the empire at great expense and providing for the Church as he did, earned the name <i>Pupillus</i> (implying that he was a wasteful Prince, in need of a guardian or overseer). So Theodosius, the best named Emperor (literally “God's gift”), was considered to be a weakling because he did not go to war until he was forced into it, although in fact he excelled in feats of chivalry and demonstrated as much when he was provoked, and he was condemned for giving himself over to luxury and pleasure because he loved peace, to the benefit of both himself and his subjects. And Justinian, the most scholarly of the emperors (at least, the greatest statesman), who eliminated duplications in the legal code, systematizing the laws with some order and method, was smeared by some as an epitomist, that is, as one who destroyed valuable volumes simply to promote demand for his abridgments of them. This is how excellent princes have been treated historically, and their good deeds maligned. Nor is there any likelihood that envy and spite are dead and buried with the past. Rather, the reproof of Moses applies to every age: “And now you have taken your ancestors’ place, a new generation of sinful people” (Numbers 32.14). The wise man says, “What has been done before will be done again. There is nothing new in the whole world” (Ecclesiastes 1.9); and St. Stephen echoes, “You are just like your ancestors!” (Acts 7.51). (Rhodes & Lupas, 68-69)

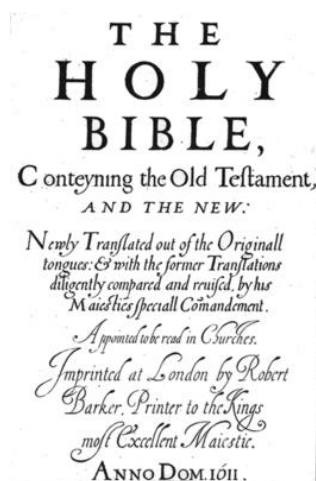
- In subsection two, paragraph three (§3), Smith continues to build upon his point from paragraph two that slander is not “the lot and portion of the meaner sort only,” but that even “Princes are privileged” to be “calumniated” by offering four examples from secular history. Julius Caesar’s work on the Julian Calendar, Constantine’s conversion, Christened Emperor Theodosius, and the Justinian Code [Law Code] of Emperor Justinian are all cited by Smith as examples of “highest personages” whose work was slandered (See the footnotes in Rhodes & Lupas, pages 27-28 for more historical information.). Smith ends this paragraph with the following summative statement along with three scriptural references as support.
 - “This is the measure that hath been rendered to excellent Princes in former times, even, *Cum bene facerent, male audire*, For their good deeds to be evil spoken of. Neither is there any likelihood, that envy and malignity died, and were buried with the ancient. No, no, the reproof of Moses taketh hold of most ages; “*You are risen up in your fathers' stead, and increase of sinful men.*” “*What is that that hath been done? that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the Sun,*” saith the wiseman: and S. Stephen, “*As your fathers did, so do you.*”
- Put a different way, “This is how excellent princes have been treated historically, and their good deeds maligned. Nor is there any likelihood that envy and spite are dead and buried with the past.” (Rhodes & Lupas, 69) Therefore, anticipating the content of the next subsection, why should this present Bible authorized by King James be any different from these ancient examples.

His Majesty’s Constancy, Notwithstanding Calumnation [Slander], For the Survey of The English Translations

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶4) This, and more to this purpose, His Majesty that now reigneth (and long, and long may he reign, and his offspring forever, " <i>Himself and children, and children's always</i>) knew full well, according to the singular wisdom given unto him by God, and the rare learning and experience that he hath attained unto; namely that whosoever attempteth anything for the public (especially if it pertain to Religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himself upon a stage to be gloated upon by every evil eye, yea, he casteth himself headlong upon pikes, to be gored by every sharp tongue. For he that medleth with men's Religion in any part, medleth with their custom, nay, with their freehold; and though they find no content in that which they have, yet they cannot abide to hear of altering. Notwithstanding his Royal heart was not daunted or discouraged for this that colour, but stood resolute, " <i>as a statue immovable, and an anvil not easy to be beaten into plates,</i> " as one	¶4) His Majesty now reigning (and long may he reign, and his descendants after him), thanks to the singular wisdom God has given him and to his rare learning and experience, was well aware that whoever attempts anything for the public, especially if it has to do with religion or with making the word of God accessible and understandable, sets himself up to be frowned upon by every evil eye, and casts himself headlong on a row of pikes, to be stabbed by every sharp tongue. For meddling in any way with a people’s religion is meddling with their customs, with their inalienable rights. And although they may be dissatisfied with what they have, they cannot bear to have it altered. And yet, his royal heart was not daunted or discouraged by any of the rival parties. He was resolute, as immovable as a statue, or like an anvil that cannot be beaten into plates, as they say. He knew who had chosen him as a soldier, or rather as a captain. He was confident that the course he had set was

<p>saith; he knew who had chosen him to be a Soldier, or rather a Captain, and being assured that the course which he intended made for the glory of God, and the building up of his Church, he would not suffer it to be broken off for whatsoever speeches or practices. It doth certainly belong unto Kings, yea, it doth specially belong unto them, to have care of Religion, yea, it doth specially belong unto them, to have care of Religion, yea, to know it aright, yea, to profess it zealously, yea to promote it to the uttermost of their power. This is their glory before all nations which mean well, and this will bring unto them a far most excellent weight of glory in the day of the Lord Jesus. For the Scripture saith not in vain, <i>"Them that honor me, I will honor,"</i> neither was it a vain word that Eusebius delivered long ago, that piety towards God was the weapon and the only weapon, that both preserved <i>Constantine's</i> person, and avenged him of his enemies.</p>	<p>for the glory of God and the building up of his Church, and he would not let it to be distracted by anyone's speeches or actions. It is not only the right of kings, it is their special responsibility to be concerned for religion, to understand it properly, to profess it earnestly, and to promote it to the best of their ability. This is their glory before all proper nations, and it will bring them a far more excellent weight of glory in the day of the Lord Jesus. For the Scripture is true that says <i>"those who honor me I will honor"</i> (1 Samuel 2.30), and Eusebius was right long ago when he said that reverence to God was the weapon, and the only weapon, that both preserved Constantine's person and avenged him on his enemies. (Rhodes & Lupas, 69)</p>
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- Subsection three, paragraph four, credits "His Majesty" for his "constancy" in seeing the project through to completion despite the slander it would engender. It is also instructive that Smith called the project a "survey of the English translations." This is precisely what the Title Page to the 1611 said occurred, "newly translated out of the original tongues: and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by his majesty's special Commandment."



- These statements from the Title Page and Preface dovetail with the following lines from the Epistle Dedicatory,
 - "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; Your MAJESTY did never desist to urge and to excite those to whom it was commended, that the work might be hastened, and that the business might be expedited in so decent a manner, as a matter of such importance might justly require.”

- The King James translators, according to their own testimony compared prior English Bibles, what Smith calls in the Preface a “survey of the English Translations,” 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.” This also comports with what Smith stated later in the Preface 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.”
- Rules 1 and 14 from Bancroft’s Rules are completely consistent with viewing the project as a “survey of the English translations.” The Bishops Bible served as the base text (Rule 1) and was revised according to the both “Original Sacred Tongues” and prior English Bibles (Rule 14). Observing these realities establishes a linkage between Bancroft’s Rules, the Epistle Dedicatory, and the Preface.
- Just as the author of the Epistles Dedicatory credits the production of the AV to James’ “deep judgment,” Smith credits the King’s “singular wisdom” with the following,
 - “according to the singular wisdom given unto him by God, and the rare learning and experience that he hath attained unto; namely that whosoever attempteth anything for the public (especially if it pertain to Religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himself upon a stage to be gloated upon by every evil eye, yea, he casteth himself headlong upon pikes, to be gored by every sharp tongue.”
- In the next line, arguably one of the most famous from the Preface, Smith asserts how those who meddle in “men’s religion” are particularly open to scorn.
 - “For he that medleth with men's Religion in any part, medleth with their custom, nay, with their freehold; and though they find no content in that which they have, yet they cannot abide to hear of altering.”
- Next, Smith praises James for not being “daunted” in his purpose but remains “resolute” to accomplish his purpose.
 - “Notwithstanding his Royal heart was not daunted or discouraged for this that colour, but stood resolute, "as a statue immovable, and an anvil not easy to be beaten into plates," as one saith; he knew who had chosen him to be a Soldier, or rather a Captain, and being assured that the course which he intended made for the glory of God, and the building up

of his Church, he would not suffer it to be broken off for whatsoever speeches or practices.”

- Lastly, Smith views such kingly work as worth of praise and glory in present as well as in the hereafter.
 - “It doth certainly belong unto Kings, yea, it doth specially belong unto them, to have care of Religion, yea, it doth specially belong unto them, to have care of Religion, yea, to know it aright, yea, to profess it zealously, yea to promote it to the uttermost of their power. This is their glory before all nations which mean well, and this will bring unto them a far most excellent weight of glory in the day of the Lord Jesus. For the Scripture saith not in vain, *Them that honor me, I will honor,*” [1 Sam 2:30] neither was it a vain word that Eusebius delivered long ago, that piety towards God was the weapon and the only weapon, that both preserved Constantine's person, and avenged him of his enemies.”

Conclusion

- The first three subsections of the Preface deal with “calumniation” or slander in three different categories: 1) general—any new thing, 2) princes and high “personages” are not free from slander, 3) his King’s Majesty James remained resolute in his purpose to “survey” English translations despite those who sought to gainsay the project and gore him with their “sharp” tongues.

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Sunday, February 19, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 195 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Praise of the Scriptures & Translation Necessary)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 194](#) we began a systemic study of Myles Smith's Preface to the AV. The first three subsections of the Preface deal with "calumny" or slander in three different categories: 1) general—any new thing, 2) princes and high "personages" are not free from slander, 3) his King's Majesty James remained resolute in his purpose to "survey" English translations despite those who sought to gainsay the project and gore him with their "sharp" tongues.
- We also began tracking Myles Smith's quotations of the Biblical text in the Preface to ascertain his source.
- In this Lesson we will continue our consideration of the Preface by looking at the following two subsections.
 - The Praise of the Holy Scriptures
 - Translation Necessary

The Praise of the Holy Scriptures

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶5) But now what piety without truth? what truth (what saving truth) without the word of God? What word of God (whereof we may be sure) without the Scripture? The Scriptures we are commanded to search. John 5:39. Isa 8:20. They are commended that searched and studied them. Acts 8:28-29, 17:11. They are reprov'd that were unskilful in them, or slow to believe them. <i>Matt 22:29. Luke 24:25.</i> They can make us wise unto salvation. <i>2 Tim 3:15.</i> If we be ignorant, they will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us. <i>Tolle, lege; Tolle, lege,</i> Take up and read, take up and read the Scriptures, (for unto them was the direction) it was said unto S. Augustine by a supernatural voice. " <i>Whatsoever is in the Scriptures, believe me,</i> " saith the same S. Augustine, " <i>is high and divine; there is verily truth, and a doctrine most fit for the refreshing of men's minds, and truly so tempered, that everyone may draw from thence that which is sufficient for him, if he come to draw with a devout and pious mind, as true Religion requireth.</i> " Thus S.	¶5) But now what is reverence without truth? What truth, what saving truth is there apart from the word of God? What word of God is there that we may be sure of, apart from the Scriptures? We are commanded to search the Scriptures (John 5.39; Isaiah 8.20). People are commended who searched and studied them (Acts 17.11 and 8.28, 29). People are reprov'd who did not know them, or were slow to believe them (Matthew 22.29; Luke 24.25). They can give us wisdom that leads to salvation (2 Timothy 3.15). If we are ignorant, they will teach us; if lost, they will bring us home; if confused, they will reform us; if sorrowful, they will comfort us; if dull, they will revive us; if cold, inspire us. A supernatural voice told St. Augustine, "Take and read, take and read [the Scriptures]." St. Augustine also says, "Whatever is in the Scriptures, believe me, is lofty and divine; it contains the truth, and teachings so able to refresh and renew the mind, and so well balanced that everyone may draw from them exactly what they need, if only they come with a devout and pious mind, as true religion requires." And St. Jerome says, "Love the Scriptures, and

Augustine. and S. Jerome: "*Ama scripturas, et amabit te sapientia etc.*" Love the Scriptures, and wisdom will love thee. And S. Cyril against Julian; "*Even boys that are bred up in the Scriptures, become most religious, etc.*" But what mention we three or four uses of the Scripture, whereas whatsoever is to be believed or practiced, or hoped for, is contained in them? or three or four sentences of the Fathers, since whosoever is worthy the name of a Father, from Christ's time downward, hath likewise written not only of the riches, but also of the perfection of the Scripture? "*I adore the fulness of the Scripture,*" saith Tertullian against Hermogenes. And again, to Apelles an heretic of the like stamp, he saith; "*I do not admit that which thou bringest in (or concludest) of thine own (head or store, de tuo) without Scripture.*" So Saint Justin Martyr before him; "*We must know by all means,*" saith he, "*that it is not lawful (or possible) to learn (anything) of God or of right piety, save only out of the Prophets, who teach us by divine inspiration.*" So Saint Basil after Tertullian, "*It is a manifest falling way from the Faith, and a fault of presumption, either to reject any of those things that are written, or to bring in (upon the head of them) any of those things that are not written.*" We omit to cite to the same effect, S. Cyril B. of Jerusalem in his 4::Cataches., Saint Jerome against Helvidius, Saint Augustine in his 3::book against the letters of Petilian, and in very many other places of his works. Also we forebear to descend to later Fathers, because we will not weary the reader. The Scriptures then being acknowledged to be so full and so perfect, how can we excuse ourselves of negligence, if we do not study them, of curiosity, if we be not content with them? Men talk much of [an olive bow wrapped about with wood, whereupon did hang figs, and bread, honey in a pot, and oil], how many sweet and goodly things it had hanging on it; of the Philosopher's stone, that it turned copper into gold; of *Cornucopia*, that it had all things necessary for food in it, of *Panaces* the herb, that it was good for diseases, of *Catholicon* the drug, that it is instead of all purges; of *Vulcan's* armor, that it was an armor of proof against all thrusts, and all blows, etc. Well, that which they falsely or vainly attributed to these things for bodily good, we may justly and with full measure ascribe unto the Scripture, for spiritual. It is not only an armor,

wisdom will favor you." St. Cyril in writing against Julian states, "Children that are brought up in the Scriptures, become very religious." But why should we mention these particular applications of the Scriptures when everything to be believed or practiced, or hoped for, is contained in them? or these few statements by the Fathers, when anyone worth calling a Father, from the time of Christ on down, has written not only of the riches, but also of the perfection of the Scriptures? "I adore the completeness of the Scriptures," says Tertullian writing to Hermogenes. And again he says to Apelles, a heretic of the same kind, "I do not accept anything you teach on your own apart from Scripture." So also St. Justin Martyr before him says, "We must always remember that it is not lawful (or possible) to learn (any thing) about God or about true piety, except from the Prophets, who teach us by divine inspiration." So also following Tertullian St. Basil says, "It is a clear departure from the faith, and a fault of presumption, either to reject any of those things that are written, or to bring up anything that is not written." We will omit statements to the same effect by St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in the fourth of his Catechetical Lectures, or St. Jerome against Helvidius, or by St. Augustine in his third book against the letters of Petilian, and in so many other places in his works. Nor will we mention the later Fathers, to avoid wearying the reader. But if the Scriptures are acknowledged to be so complete and so perfect, how can we avoid the charge of negligence if we do not study them, or the charge of pedantic quibbling if we are not satisfied with them? People talk about the Eiresion garland, the laurel branch wrapped in wool and filled with fruits; about the Philosopher's stone, that turns copper into gold; about the *Cornucopia*, filled with all kinds of food; about the herb *Panaces*, that was good medicine for all diseases; about the drug *Catholicon*, that works for all purgatives; about *Vulcan's* armor, that protects against any kind of attack, etc. Well, the claims falsely or wishfully attributed to these things for physical benefits, we may justly and confidently ascribe to the Scripture for spiritual benefits. It is not just a weapon, but a whole armory of weapons, both offensive and defensive, by which we may save ourselves and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree, or rather a whole garden of life-giving trees, which

<p>but also a whole armory of weapons, both offensive and defensive; whereby we may save ourselves and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree, or rather a whole paradise of trees of life, which bring forth fruit every month, and the fruit thereof is for meat, and the leaves for medicine. It is not a pot of <i>Manna</i>, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal's meat or two, but as it were a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be it never so great; and as it were a whole cellar full of oil vessels; whereby all our necessities may be provided for, and our debts discharged. In a word, it is a Panary of wholesome food, against fenowed traditions; a Physician's shop (Saint <i>Basil</i> called it) of preservatives against poisoned heresies; a Pandect of profitable laws, against rebellious spirits; a treasury of most costly jewels, against beggarly rudiments; finally a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life. And what marvel? The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the inditer, the holy spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the Penmen such as were sanctified from the womb, and endued with a principal portion of God's spirit; the matter, verity, piety, purity, uprightness; the form, God's word, God's testimony, God's oracles, the word of truth, the word of salvation, etc.; the effects, light of understanding, stableness of persuasion, repentance from dead works, newness of life, holiness, peace, joy in the holy Ghost; lastly, the end and reward of the study thereof, fellowship with the Saints, participation of the heavenly nature, fruition of an inheritance immortal, undefiled, and that never shall fade away: Happy is the man that delighted in the Scripture, and thrice happy that meditateth in it day and night.</p>	<p>produce fruit every month: the fruit is good for food, and the leaves for medicine (Revelation 22.2). It is not a pot of Manna, or a cruet of oil, good only as a symbol or perhaps as food for a meal or two; rather it is like a shower of heavenly bread, adequate for a whole army of any size, and a whole cellar filled with enough barrels of oil to provide for all our necessities and pay off our debts as well. In a word, it is a pantry filled with fresh food instead of moldy traditions; a whole drugist's supply (Saint Basil calls it) of antidotes for poisonous heresies; a comprehensive manual of useful laws against disruptive spirits; a treasury of the costliest jewels instead of uncut stones; finally, a fountain of the purest water springing up to everlasting life. And why not? Its original is from heaven, not from earth. The author is God, not a human. The source is the Holy Spirit, not the wisdom of the Apostles or Prophets. The scribes were sanctified from before their birth, and endued with a major portion of God's Spirit. The subject matter is truth, reverence, purity, uprightness. The form is God's word, God's testimony, God's oracles, the word of truth, the word of salvation, etc. The results are a clear understanding, a firm confidence, repentance from dead works, a new kind of life, holiness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Lastly, the end and reward of its study is fellowship with the saints, participation in the heavenly nature, and the flowering of an immortal inheritance that is undefiled and will never fade away. Happy is the person who delights in the Scriptures, and thrice happy the one who meditates on it day and night. (Rhodes & Lupas, 69-71)</p>
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- In subsection four, aptly titled “the praise of the Holy Scriptures”, Smith extols the virtues of the word of God in a general sense. This lengthy paragraph (§5) opens with a series of statements establishing the position along with statements regarding the benefits of searching them accompanied by supporting scripture references.
 - “But now what piety without truth? what truth (what saving truth) without the word of God? What word of God (whereof we may be sure) without the Scripture? The Scriptures we are commanded to search. John 5:39. Isa 8:20. They are commended that searched and studied them. Acts 8:28-29, 17:11. They are reproved that were unskilful in them, or slow to believe them. Matt 22:29. Luke 24:25. They can make us wise unto salvation. 2

Tim 3:15. If we be ignorant, they will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us.”

- The next portion of the paragraph contains citations from church fathers such as Augustine, Jerome, Cyril, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Basil on the “sufficiency” and “perfection” of the scriptures. Smith concludes this portion of the paragraph by alluding to the fact that many more citations from the “Fathers” could be produced but that he would, “forebear to descend to later Fathers, because we will not weary the reader.”
- After establishing his premise via scriptural allusions and patristic citations, Smith turns his attention to a practical comparison between fanciful notions of physical health and well-being to the importance of the scriptures for spiritual well-being.
 - “Men talk much of [an olive bow wrapped about with wood, whereupon did hang figs, and bread, honey in a pot, and oil], how many sweet and goodly things it had hanging on it; of the Philosopher's stone, that it turned copper into gold; of *Cornucopia*, that it had all things necessary for food in it, of *Panaces* the herb, that it was good for diseases, of *Catholicon* the drug, that it is instead of all purges; of *Vulcan's* armor, that it was an armor of proof against all thrusts, and all blows, etc. Well, that which they falsely or vainly attributed to these things for bodily good, we may justly and with full measure ascribe unto the Scripture, for spiritual. It is not only an armor, but also a whole armory of weapons, both offensive and defensive; whereby we may save ourselves and put the enemy to flight. It is not an herb, but a tree, or rather a whole paradise of trees of life, which bring forth fruit every month, and the fruit thereof is for meat, and the leaves for medicine. It is not a pot of *Manna*, or a cruse of oil, which were for memory only, or for a meal's meat or two, but as it were a shower of heavenly bread sufficient for a whole host, be it never so great; and as it were a whole cellar full of oil vessels; whereby all our necessities may be provided for, and our debts discharged. In a word, it is a Panary of wholesome food, against fenowed [corrupted, decayed, moldy] traditions; a Physician's shop (Saint *Basil* called it) of preservatives against poisoned heresies; a Pandect of profitable laws, against rebellious spirits; a treasury of most costly jewels, against beggarly rudiments; finally a fountain of most pure water springing up unto everlasting life.”
- While Smith provides scripture references in support of his statements, at the beginning of paragraph five there are no direct Biblical quotations. There are, however, two occurrences of different forms of the word “perfect” utilized in this subsection.
 - “But what mention we three or four uses of the Scripture, whereas whatsoever is to be believed or practiced, or hoped for, is contained in them? or three or four sentences of the Fathers, since whosoever is worthy the name of a Father, from Christ's time downward, hath likewise written not only of the riches, but also of the **perfection** of the Scripture?”
 - “The Scriptures then being acknowledged to be so full and so **perfect**, how can we excuse ourselves of negligence, if we do not study them, of curiosity, if we be not content with them?”

- A form of the word “perfect” occurs six times in Smith’s Preface (perfection, perfect, perfected, and imperfections). Given that the Preface is a hotbed of contention in the modern Bible version debate, it is essential to contextually consider the meaning and usage of each occurrence of “perfect” within “The Translators To The Reader.”
- Published in 1604, Robert Cawdrey’s *A Table Alphabetical of Hard Usual English Words* does not contain a stand-alone entry for the word “perfect.” It does, however, use the word “perfect” to define the following English words, “absolute,” “exquisite,” and “mature.” This suggests that the English word “perfect” possessed multiple differing meanings in the early 17th century when the AV was translated.
- It is also instructive to note that the word “perfect” occurs 99 times in 94 verses within the text of the AV. A survey of these occurrences in the AV reveals the veracity of our assertion in the previous point, namely, that the word “perfect” possessed multiple different meanings in the early 17th century. Here are but a few examples.
 - Psalm 37:37—Mark the **perfect** man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.
 - The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) lists this verse as one of its word usage examples for adjective definition 1.a. “Of, marked, or characterized by supreme moral or spiritual excellence or virtue; righteous, holy; immaculate; spiritually pure or blameless.”
 - II Timothy 3:17—That the man of God may be **perfect**, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.
 - As stated above, the *Table Alphabetical* (1604) uses the word “perfect” to define “mature.” This comports exactly with Paul’s meaning in II Timothy 3:17. Moreover, the OED states the following in adjective definition 3.b., “the age at which a person is considered to be mature or adult; esp. the age at which a person attains his or her legal majority, or becomes legally competent for a specified function.”
 - Psalm 19:7—The law of the LORD *is* **perfect**, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple.
 - This Psalm applies the word “perfect” to the “the law of the LORD” i.e., the scriptures, God’s word to Israel. This is different from the first two examples noted above where the word “perfect” was applied to humans (Psalm 37:37 and II Timothy 3:17) in various senses. Therefore, it is clear that “perfect” can be used in both an ultimate/absolute sense when applied to God himself (Deuteronomy 32:4) or the scriptures as well as lesser senses when applied to humans. I submit that when used in the ultimate sense, all the lesser senses are enveloped within the absolute one.

- The Hebrew word *tāmîm* rendered “perfect” in Psalm 19:7 is elsewhere rendered “without blemish” forty-four times and “without spot” six times in reference to Israel’s sacrificial system. The animal sacrifice was to be “perfect” i.e., “without blemish” or “without spot.” When used in the absolute sense, “perfect” carries the meaning of adjective entry 1.b in the OED: “In a state of complete excellence; free from any imperfection or defect of quality; that cannot be improved upon; flawless, faultless.” According to the Law, an animal offered in sacrifice to the Lord needed to be a “perfect” physical specimen that is “free from imperfection or defects of quality,” one whose quality “cannot be improved upon” i.e., without spot or blemish. The Psalmist applies this quality and an ultimate sense to “the law of the LORD” itself. Put another way, the scriptures speak of themselves in absolute terms.
- It is clear from these three examples that the word “perfect” possessed multiple contextual meanings in the early 17th century when the AV was translated. In other words, throughout the Biblical text the AV used the word “perfect” in a variety of different senses. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume the same when it comes to Smith’s utilization of word in the Preface.
- The first occurrence of “perfect” in the Preface speaks “of the perfection of the Scripture,” in the absolute sense. I believe that Smith used “perfection” here in the sense of OED entry 3.a. “the condition, state, or quality of being free from defect; flawlessness, faultlessness; purity.” Put another way, the scriptures are free from defects of any kind, flawless, and pure in their nature and character in all that they report.
- Secondly, we encounter the adjective form of “perfect” in Smith’s statement, “the Scriptures then being acknowledged to be so full and so perfect.” Once again “perfect” is being used in an absolute sense when applied to the words of God. As we observed above, the scriptures are perfect in the sense of OED entry 1.b., “in a state of complete excellence; free from any imperfection or defect of quality; that cannot be improved upon; flawless, faultless.”
- We will address the remaining occurrences of perfect when discussing the subsections in which they appear.

Translation Necessary

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶(6) But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue? as it is written, <i>"Except I know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh, a Barbarian, and he that speaketh, shall be a Barbarian to me."</i> The Apostle excepteth no tongue; not Hebrew the ancientest, not Greek the most copious, not Latin the finest. Nature taught a natural man to confess, that all of us in those tongues which we do not understand, are plainly deaf; we may turn the deaf ear unto them. The <i>Scythian</i> counted the <i>Athenian</i> , whom he did not	¶(6) But how will people meditate on something they cannot understand? How will they understand something that is kept hidden in an unknown language? As it is written, “If I don’t understand the language someone is using, we will be like foreigners to each other” (1 Corinthians 14.11). The Apostle does not make an exception for any language, whether Hebrew as the oldest, or Greek as the most versatile, or Latin as the most precise. It is only common sense to admit that all of us are plainly deaf in the languages we do not understand. We turn a deaf ear to them. The Scythian considered the

<p>understand, barbarous; so the <i>Roman</i> did the <i>Syrian</i>, and the <i>Jew</i> (even <i>S. Jerome</i> himself called the Hebrew tongue barbarous, belike because it was strange to so many) so the Emperor of <i>Constantinople</i> calleth the <i>Latin</i> tongue, barbarous, though Pope <i>Nicolas</i> do storm at it: so the <i>Jews</i> long before <i>Christ</i> called all other nations, <i>Lognazim</i>, which is little better than barbarous. Therefore as one complaineth, that always in the Senate of <i>Rome</i>, there was one or other that called for an interpreter: so lest the Church be driven to the like exigent, it is necessary to have translations in a readiness. Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as <i>Jacob</i> rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of <i>Laban</i> were watered. Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at <i>Jacob's</i> well (which is deep) without a bucket or something to draw with; or as that person mentioned by <i>Isaiah</i>, to whom when a sealed book was delivered, with this motion, "<i>Read this, I pray thee,</i>" he was fain to make this answer, "<i>I cannot, for it is sealed.</i>"</p>	<p>Athenian, whom he did not understand, as barbarous. So also the Roman considered the Syrian and the Jew. Even <i>St. Jerome</i> himself calls the Hebrew language barbarous, probably because it was foreign to so many. Similarly the Emperor of Constantinople calls the Latin language barbarous, against the strong objection of Pope Nicholas. And the Jews long before Christ called all other nations "speakers of strange languages" (Psalm 114.1), which is little better than barbarous. Therefore as in the Roman Senate they complained that someone was always calling for an interpreter, so the Church should always be ready with translations in order to avoid the same kind of emergencies. Translation is what opens the window, to let the light in. It breaks the shell, so that we may eat the kernel. It pulls the curtain aside, so that we may look into the most holy place. It removes the cover from the well, so that we may get to the water; just as Jacob rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well so the flocks of Laban could be watered (Genesis 29.10). In fact, without a translation in the common language, most people are like the children at Jacob's well (which was deep) without a bucket or something to draw the water with; or like the person mentioned by Isaiah who was given a sealed book and told, "Please read this," and had to answer, "I can not, because it is sealed" (Isaiah 29.11). (Rhodes & Lupas, 71-72)</p>
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- In subsection five, Smith extends his argumentation from the previous section into an argument for why translation of the scriptures is necessary. He begins by asking two questions and quoting I Corinthians 14:11 in support:
 - "But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue? as it is written, "Except I know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh, a Barbarian, and he that speaketh, shall be a Barbarian to me."
- In other words, even if the word of God is close in physical proximity it is of no value if one cannot understand it because it is an "unknown tongue." According to Smith, Paul "excepteth no tongue" whether Hebrew ("the ancientest"), or Greek ("the most copious"), or Latin ("the finest") as the sole conduit for God's word. Smith regards this as a lesson taught by nature, "nature taught a natural man to confess, that all of us in those tongues which we do not understand, are plainly deaf; we may turn the deaf ear unto them."

- In the middle section of paragraph six (§6), Smith offers examples from secular history/politics of the principles he is enunciating.
 - “The *Scythian* counted the *Athenian*, whom he did not understand, barbarous; so the *Roman* did the *Syrian*, and the *Jew* (even *S. Jerome* himself called the Hebrew tongue barbarous, belike because it was strange to so many) so the Emperor of *Constantinople* calleth the *Latin* tongue, barbarous, though Pope *Nicolas* do storm at it: so the *Jews* long before *Christ* called all other nations, *Lognazim*, which is little better than barbarous. Therefore as one complaineth, that always in the Senate of *Rome*, there was one or other that called for an interpreter: so lest the Church be driven to the like exigent, it is necessary to have translations in a readiness.”
- If the “Senate of Rome” needed to utilize and have interpreters on standby to conduct its official business, likewise must the Church “have translations in readiness” to avoid the use of interpreters, according to Smith. In the next line Smith utters one of the most well-known lines from the Preface regarding the importance and necessity of translations.
 - “Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as *Jacob* rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of *Laban* were watered. Indeed without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacob's well (which is deep) without a bucket or something to draw with; or as that person mentioned by *Isaiah*, to whom when a sealed book was delivered, with this motion, “*Read this, I pray thee,*” he was fain to make this answer, “*I cannot, for it is sealed.*”
- Simply stated, translation grants people access to the “kernel” of the word of God and allows people to see and understand what would otherwise be inaccessible to them.

Works Cited

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

Sunday, February 26, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 196 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Translation Sections)

Introduction

- After assessing the Primary Contents of the 1611 in Lessons [190](#), [191](#), and [192](#), we began a systematic study of the Preface under the title “Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface” in Lesson 193. Thus far we have considered the following with respect to the Preface.
 - [Lesson 193](#)—Access, Structure, & Style
 - [Lesson 194](#)—Calumination (Slander Sections)
 - [Lesson 195](#)—Praise of the Holy Scriptures & Translation Necessary
- In this Lesson we will continue this study by looking at the following two subsections related to the topic translation.
 - The Translation of the Old Testament Out of the Hebrew into Greek
 - Translation Out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin

The Translation of the Old Testament Out of the Hebrew into Greek

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶(7) While God would be known only in <i>Jacob</i> , and have his Name great in <i>Israel</i> , and in none other place, while the dew lay on <i>Gideon's</i> fleece only, and all the earth besides was dry; then for one and the same people, which spake all of them the language of <i>Canaan</i> , that is, <i>Hebrew</i> , one and the same original in <i>Hebrew</i> was sufficient. But, when the fulness of time drew near, that the Sun of righteousness, the Son of God should come into the world, whom God ordained to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood, not of the <i>Jew</i> only, but also of the <i>Greek</i> , yea, of all them that were scattered abroad; then lo, it pleased the Lord to stir up the spirit of a Greek Prince (<i>Greek</i> for descent and language) even of <i>Ptolemy Philadelph</i> King of <i>Egypt</i> , to procure the translating of the Book of God out of Hebrew into Greek. This is the translation of the Seventy Interpreters, commonly so called, which prepared the way for our Saviour among the Gentiles by written preaching, as Saint <i>John Baptist</i> did among the <i>Jews</i> by vocal. For the <i>Grecians</i> being desirous of learning, were not wont to suffer books of worth to lie moulding in Kings' libraries,	¶(7) “When God was to be known exclusively in Jacob, and his name praised only in Israel and nowhere else; when the dew lay only on Gideon’s fleece, and all the ground around it was dry (Judges 6.37); in those days it was sufficient for the Scriptures to be in Hebrew, because all the people spoke the language of Canaan, namely Hebrew. But then the fullness of time drew near, when the Sun of righteousness, the Son of God should come into the world. God appointed him to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood, not only for the Jew, but also for the Greek, and for all peoples throughout the world. At that time it pleased the Lord to inspire the Greek Prince Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt (a Greek by ancestry and language), to commission the translation of the book of God out of Hebrew into Greek. This is the Septuagint, as the translation of the Seventy Interpreters is commonly called, which prepared the way for our Savior among the Gentiles by a written form of preaching, just as St. John Baptist did among the Jews by an oral form. For the Greeks, with their love of learning, were not willing to let valuable books lie collecting

but had many of their servants, ready scribes, to copy them out, and so they were dispersed and made common. Again, the *Greek* tongue was well known and made familiar to most inhabitants in *Asia*, by reason of the conquest that there the *Grecians* had made, as also by the Colonies, which thither they had sent. For the same causes also it was well understood in many places of *Europe*, yea, and of *Africa* too. Therefore the word of God being set forth in *Greek*, becometh hereby like a candle set upon a candlestick, which giveth light to all that are in the house, or like a proclamation sounded forth in the market place, which most men presently take knowledge of; and therefore that language was fittest to contain the Scriptures, both for the first Preachers of the Gospel to appeal unto for witness, and for the learners also of those times to make search and trial by. It is certain, that that Translation was not so sound and so perfect, but it needed in many places correction; and who had been so sufficient for this work as the Apostles or Apostolic men? Yet it seemed good to the holy Ghost and to them, to take that which they found, (the same being for the greatest part true and sufficient) rather than making a new, in that new world and green age of the Church, to expose themselves to many exceptions and cavillations, as though they made a Translations to serve their own turn, and therefore bearing a witness to themselves, their witness not to be regarded. This may be supposed to be some cause, why the Translation of the *Seventy* was allowed to pass for current. Notwithstanding, though it was commended generally, yet it did not fully content the learned, no not of the Jews. For not long after *Christ*, *Aquila* fell in hand with a new Translation, and after him *Theodotion*, and after him *Symmachus*; yea, there was a fifth and a sixth edition, the Authors whereof were not known. These with the *Seventy* made up the *Hexapla* and were worthily and to great purpose compiled together by *Origen*. Howbeit the Edition of the *Seventy* went away with the credit, and therefore not only was placed in the midst by *Origen* (for the worth and excellency thereof above the rest, as *Epiphanius* gathered) but also was used by the *Greek* fathers for the ground and foundation of their Commentaries. Yea, *Epiphanius* above named doeth attribute so much unto it, that he holdeth the Authors thereof not only for Interpreters, but also

dust in royal libraries. They had their servants, many of whom were competent scribes, make copies of them so that they could be widely circulated. Further, the Greek language was widely known and familiar to most of the peoples of Asia because of the Greek conquests and the colonies they established. For the same reasons it was widely understood in many areas of Europe and also of Africa. Thus the word of God in Greek translation became like a candle set on a candlestick, giving light to everyone in the house, or like a proclamation broadcast in the market-place, soon heard by everyone. Therefore this language was most appropriate for the Scriptures, both for the first preachers of the Gospel to appeal to as a witness, and also for the learners in those days to use for study and reference. It is true that this translation was not done so well or so perfectly that it did not need to be corrected in many places. And who would have been as apt for this work as the Apostles and their colleagues? Yet it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and also to them to take what they found, (since it was mostly true and adequate) rather than by making a new translation in that new world and green age of the Church, to expose themselves to many objections and quibblings such as having made a translation to serve their own purpose, so that by bearing witness to themselves their word could be discounted. This may partly explain why the Septuagint was accepted as authoritative. And yet, although it was accepted generally, it did not satisfy scholars completely, particularly among the Jews. For not long after Christ, a new translation was undertaken by Aquila, and after him by Theodotion, and then Symmachus, and there was a fifth translation, and a sixth, the authors of which are unknown. These together with the Septuagint made up the Hexapla, a valuable and most useful work compiled by Origen. But the Septuagint gained acceptance, and therefore was not only given central position by Origen (for its value and superiority over the rest, as Epiphanius infers), but also was used by the Greek fathers as the basis for their commentaries. Epiphanius even attributes so much authority to it that he regards its authors not just as translators, but also in a sense as prophets. And when the Emperor Justinian exhorted his Jewish subjects to use the Septuagint, he cites as his reason that "they were, as it were, enlightened

<p>for Prophets in some respect; and <i>Justinian</i> the Emperor enjoining the <i>Jews</i> his subjects to use especially the Translation of the <i>Seventy</i>, rendreth this reason thereof, because they were as it were enlightened with prophetical grace. Yet for all that, as the <i>Egyptians</i> are said of the Prophet to be men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit; so it is evident, (and Saint <i>Jerome</i> affirmeth as much) that the <i>Seventy</i> were Interpreters, they were not Prophets; they did many things well, as learned men; but yet as men they stumbled and fell, one while through oversight, another while through ignorance, yea, sometimes they may be noted to add to the Original, and sometimes to take from it; which made the Apostles to leave them many times, when they left the <i>Hebrew</i>, and to deliver the sense thereof according to the truth of the word, as the spirit gave them utterance. This may suffice touching the Greek Translations of the Old Testament.</p>	<p>with the gift of prophecy.” And yet, as the prophet said that “the Egyptians are human, and not God; their horses are flesh, and not spirit” (Isaiah 31.3), so it is evident (and Saint Jerome affirms as much) that the <i>Seventy</i> were translators. They were not prophets. They did many things well as scholarly men, but as men they stumbled and fell. Sometimes it was through oversight, sometimes through ignorance; sometimes they added to the original, and sometimes they omitted from it. When they left the Hebrew, accordingly, many times the Apostles departed from them in order to convey the true meaning of the word as the Spirit gave them ability. This may suffice with regard to the Greek translations of the Old Testament.” (Rhodes & Lupas, 72-73)</p>
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- After addressing the necessity of the translation in the previous subsection, in paragraph seven (§7) Smith turns his attention to a historic example of translation by discussing the Greek translation of the Old Testament otherwise known as the Septuagint or LXX. In doing so, Smith recounts a bit of Biblical history and explains its impact upon Biblical languages and translation(s). According to Smith, when God was dealing with Israel in the Old Testament, it was sufficient for his word to be in Hebrew only.
 - “While God would be known only in *Jacob*, and have his Name great in *Israel*, and in none other place, while the dew lay on *Gideon's* fleece only, and all the earth besides was dry; then for one and the same people, which spake all of them the language of *Canaan*, that is, *Hebrew*, one and the same original in *Hebrew* was sufficient.”
- However, when “the fulness of time drew near” that “the son of God should come into the world,” it pleased God to have His word translated out of Hebrew into Greek.
 - “But, when the fulness of time drew near, that the Sun of righteousness, the Son of God should come into the world, whom God ordained to be a reconciliation through faith in his blood, not of the *Jew* only, but also of the *Greek*, yea, of all them that were scattered abroad; then lo, it pleased the Lord to stir up the spirit of a Greek Prince (*Greek* for descent and language) even of *Ptolemy Philadelph* King of *Egypt*, to procure the translating of the Book of God out of Hebrew into Greek.”
- The translation that Smith is mentioning is known as “the translation of the Seventy Interpreters” or the LXX (the number 70 in Roman numerals). The reason this was done is because the Greek language had been spread throughout the ancient world via the conquests of Alexander the Great. Smith briefly recounts this history as follows:

- “This is the translation of the Seventy Interpreters, commonly so called, which prepared the way for our Saviour among the Gentiles by written preaching, as Saint *John* Baptist did among the *Jews* by vocal. For the *Grecians* being desirous of learning, were not wont to suffer books of worth to lie moulding in Kings' libraries, but had many of their servants, ready scribes, to copy them out, and so they were dispersed and made common. Again, the *Greek* tongue was well known and made familiar to most inhabitants in *Asia*, by reason of the conquest that there the *Grecians* had made, as also by the Colonies, which thither they had sent. For the same causes also it was well understood in many places of *Europe*, yea, and of *Africa* too. Therefore the word of God being set forth in *Greek*, becometh hereby like a candle set upon a candlestick, which giveth light to all that are in the house, or like a proclamation sounded forth in the market place, which most men presently take knowledge of; and therefore that language was fittest to contain the Scriptures, both for the first Preachers of the Gospel to appeal unto for witness, and for the learners also of those times to make search and trial by.”
- While Smith states that the LXX was utilized by “the first Preachers of the Gospel to appeal unto for witness” and for “the learners also of those times to make search and trial by” he notes in the next line that it was not “perfect.”
 - “It is certain, that that Translation was not so sound and so perfect, but it needed in many places correction; and who had been so sufficient for this work as the Apostles or Apostolic men?”
- This constitutes the next occurrence of “perfect” in the Preface. Here the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) is exceedingly helpful in that it cites this line from the Preface as a word usage example for adjective definition 6.b., “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*).”

b. 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*).

Thesaurus »

1523 in J. B. Paul *Accts. Treasurer Scotl.* (1903) V. 218 For perfitte noumer of thare cariage hors to be send in bill to the secretare.

1541 T. ELYOT *Image of Gouvernance* Pref. sig. aii^v In this boke was expressed of gouernance so perfit an ymage.

1574 W. BOURNE *Regin. for Sea* (1577) xvii. 46 The perfit houre and minute of the chaunges of the Moone.

1576 T. DIGGES in L. Digges *Prognostication* (rev. ed.) (title) A perfit description of the caelestiall orbes.

1611 M. SMITH in *Bible* (King James) Transl. Pref. 4 That Translation was not so sound and so perfect, but that it needed in many places correction.

- In this case Myles Smith is clearly intending to say that the LXX was not “perfect” in the sense of being “accurate” and “correct” because it required “correction.” Put another way, the LXX was deficient in that it was not “accurately reproducing or reflecting the original” or “exactly corresponding to the facts.” This is a different meaning of “perfect” than what we saw in the first two occurrences in the Preface where the absolute sense (1.b.) was used. Therefore, it is not difficult to observe that Myles Smith employed different senses of the word “perfect” when he authored the Preface. This should not be surprising given that the text of the AV does the same thing. Please also note that this use of “perfect” is explicitly marked “obsolete” by the OED.

This corresponds to the “obsolete” use of “exact” in paragraph four of the Epistle Dedicatory. Please see our discussion of the Epistle Dedicatory in [Lesson 191](#) for more information.

- Despite imperfections, Smith explains why God allowed use of the LXX in the early church as follows:
 - “Yet it seemed good to the holy Ghost and to them, to take that which they found, (the same being for the greatest part true and sufficient) rather than making a new, in that new world and green age of the Church, to expose themselves to many exceptions and cavillations, as though they made a Translation to serve their own turn, and therefore bearing a witness to themselves, their witness not to be regarded. This may be supposed to be some cause, why the Translation of the *Seventy* was allowed to pass for current.”
- Basically, God allowed use of the LXX, despite its shortcomings, because He did not want the early church to suffer derision on the charge that they created their own Bible, according to Smith. That said, the “learned” were not fully content with the LXX which led to a series of revisions chronicled by Smith.
 - “Notwithstanding, though it was commended generally, yet it did not fully content the learned, no not of the Jews. For not long after *Christ, Aquila* fell in hand with a new Translation, and after him *Theodotion*, and after him *Symmachus*; yea, there was a fifth and a sixth edition, the Authors whereof were not known. These with the *Seventy* made up the *Hexapla* and were worthily and to great purpose compiled together by *Origen*. Howbeit the Edition of the *Seventy* went away with the credit, and therefore not only was placed in the midst by *Origen* (for the worth and excellency thereof above the rest, as *Epiphanius* gathered) but also was used by the *Greek* fathers for the ground and foundation of their Commentaries. Yea, *Epiphanius* above named doeth attribute so much unto it, that he holdeth the Authors thereof not only for Interpreters, but also for Prophets in some respect; and *Justinian* the Emperor enjoining the *Jews* his subjects to use especially the Translation of the *Seventy*, rendreth this reason thereof, because they were as it were enlightened with prophetical grace.”
- Smith closes the subsection by noting the “Seventy” who created the LXX were not “Prophets” but “Interpreters” who were subject to error. As such, Smith notes the types of errors that can be found within the Septuagint. Moreover, the Apostles many times followed the Hebrew text when they found it more accurate than the LXX.
 - “Yet for all that, as the *Egyptians* are said of the Prophet to be men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit; so it is evident, (and Saint *Jerome* affirmeth as much) that the *Seventy* were Interpreters, they were not Prophets; they did many things well, as learned men; but yet as men they stumbled and fell, one while through oversight, another while through ignorance, yea, sometimes they may be noted to add to the Original, and sometimes to take from it; which made the Apostles to leave them many times, when they left the *Hebrew*, and to deliver the sense thereof according to the truth of the word, as the spirit gave them utterance. This may suffice touching the Greek Translations of the Old Testament.”

- Smith's discussion of the LXX as existing before the time of Christ, in the Preface to the 1611, is interesting given that many King James Only advocates deny its existence altogether or call it a myth. For example, Dr. Peter Ruckman devotes an entire chapter of *The Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* to a discussion of the "Mythological LXX" Meanwhile, some within mainstream Evangelical scholarship view every quotation of the Old Testament in the New Testament by Christ and the Apostles as proof of a BC Septuagint. History bears out that at some point a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek was conducted. Whether this occurred before the time of Christ remains an open question in my mind. David Daniels of Chick Publications authored an interesting book on this subject matter titled *Did Jesus Use the Septuagint?* In this volume Daniels argues that extra verses from Romans 3 are inserted into Psalm 14 in the LXX thereby proving that whoever created the Septuagint had a copy of the book of Romans in front of them and accidentally included too many verses from Romans 3 in Psalm 14. This of course would mean that the LXX could not have been written before the time of Christ since the book of Romans did not yet exist. I covered this controversy in my video titled, [6\) The Word For All Ages: Did Jesus Read From the Septuagint in Luke 4?](#)
- Wherever one falls on the debate regarding the LXX, it is clear that Myles Smith believed in a BC Septuagint when he penned the Preface to the AV 1611.

Translation Out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶(8) There were also within a few hundred years after CHRIST, translations many into the Latin tongue: for this tongue also was very fit to convey the Law and the Gospel by, because in those times very many Countries of the West, yea of the South, East and North, spake or understood Latin, being made Provinces to the <i>Romans</i> . But now the Latin Translations were too many to be all good, for they were infinite (<i>Latini Interprets nullo modo numerari possunt</i> , saith S. Augustine.). Again they were not out of the <i>Hebrew</i> fountain (we speak of the <i>Latin</i> Translations of the Old Testament) but out of the <i>Greek</i> stream, therefore the Greek being not altogether clear, the <i>Latin</i> derived from it must needs be muddy. This moved S. <i>Jerome</i> a most learned father, and the best linguist without controversy, of his age, or of any that went before him, to undertake the translating of the Old Testament, out of the very fountain with that evidence of great learning, judgment, industry, and faithfulness, that he had forever bound the Church unto him, in a debt of special remembrance and thankfulness.	¶(8) "Within a few hundred years after Christ many translations were made into the Latin language. This language was also a very appropriate medium for the Law and the Gospel, because in those times very many countries of the West, as well as of the South, East and North, spoke or understood Latin, since they had become Roman provinces. But there were too many Latin translations for all of them to be good (Augustine describes them as innumerable). Further, the translations of the Old Testament were not made from the Hebrew source but out of the Greek stream, and as the Greek was not altogether clear, the Latin derived from it was inevitably even muddier. This prompted St. Jerome, a scholarly Father and undoubtedly the best linguist of his age, or of any that were before him, to undertake a translation of the Old Testament from the sources themselves. This he accomplished with such evidence of great learning, judgment, industry, and faithfulness, that he has forever bound the Church to him in a debt of special remembrance and thankfulness." (Rhodes & Lupas, 73)

- After addressing the Septuagint (LXX) or Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament in the previous subsection, here in subsection seven paragraph eight (§8), Myles Smith addresses the utility of the early Latin translations of the Hebrew and Greek.
 - “There were also within a few hundred years after CHRIST, translations many into the Latin tongue: for this tongue also was very fit to convey the Law and the Gospel by, because in those times very many Countries of the West, yea of the South, East and North, spake or understood Latin, being made Provinces to the *Romans*.”
- Next, Smith speaks of both the proliferation of Latin translations and their lack of cohesion to one another. Smith attributes the varied nature of these Latin translations to the fact that they were not all drawn “out of the Hebrew fountain . . . but out the Greek stream”. Therefore, the translations derived from this Greek stream that was “not altogether clear” resulted in the “muddy” Latin translations.
 - “But now the Latin Translations were too many to be all good, for they were infinite (*Latini Interprets nullo modo numerari possunt*, saith S. *Augustine*.). Again they were not out of the *Hebrew* fountain (we speak of the *Latin* Translations of the Old Testament) but out of the *Greek* stream, therefore the Greek being not altogether clear, the *Latin* derived from it must needs be muddy.”
- Therefore, it fell to Jerome the “best linguist” of his age to rectify the situation and translate the Latin afresh directly out of the Hebrew “fountain.”
 - “This moved S. Jerome a most learned father, and the best linguist without controversy, of his age, or of any that went before him, to undertake the translating of the Old Testament, out of the very fountain with that evidence of great learning, judgment, industry, and faithfulness, that he had forever bound the Church unto him, in a debt of special remembrance and thankfulness.”

Works Cited

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

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
- In the present Lesson we will 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, *Ulfilas* 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 *Ulfilas* 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>"</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)." (<i>Rhodes & Lupas</i>, 73-75)</p>
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- 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 menciouun, In that vulgar..Of Malliogres pleynti bar be name.
- c1450 *Chaucer's Compl. Pite* (Harl.) (heading) Geoffrey Chaucier be aureat Poete þat euer was fonde in oure vulgar 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. Secreterie* (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.
 - *Ulphilas* 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."

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
<p>¶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, 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>¶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 (<i>John 3.20</i>). 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 reproved: 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.

Sunday, March 12, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 198 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Answer to Adversaries)

Introduction

- Since [Lesson 190](#) we have been looking at the AV of 1611 as a historical artifact. After looking at the Preliminary Materials in Lessons [190](#), [191](#), and [192](#) we began an intensive study of the Preface in Lesson 193. Thus far we have considered the following in our mini-series titled Producing A Proper Perspective of the Preface.
 - [Lesson 193](#)—Access, Structure, & Style
 - [Lesson 194](#)—Calumny (Slander Sections)
 - [Lesson 195](#)—Praise of the Holy Scriptures & Translation Necessary
 - [Lesson 196](#)—Translation Sections: LXX & Latin Vulgate
 - [Lesson 197](#)—Translation Sections: Vulgar Tongues & Opposition of Adversaries
- In this Lesson we will continue our systematic study of the Preface by looking at the following subsections.
 - The Speeches And Reasons, Both Of Our Brethren, And Of Our Adversaries Against This Work
 - A Satisfaction To Our Brethren

The Speeches And Reasons, Both Of Our Brethren, And Of Our Adversaries Against This Work

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶11) Many men's mouths have been open a good while (and yet are not stopped) with speeches about the Translation so long in hand, or rather perusals of Translations made before: and ask what may be the reason, what the necessity of the employment: Hath the Church been deceived, say they, all this while? Hath her sweet bread been mingled with leaven, her silver with dross, her wine with water, her milk with lime? (<i>Lacte gypsum male miscetur</i> , saith S. Ireney.) We hoped that we had been in the right way, that we had the Oracles of God delivered unto us, and that though all the world had cause to be offended and to complain, yet that we had none. Hath the nurse holden out the breast, and nothing but wind in it? Hath the bread been delivered by the fathers of the Church, and the same proved to be <i>lapidosus</i> , as <i>Seneca</i> speaketh? What is it to handle the word of	¶11) “Many have been arguing for a good while now, and are still arguing, about the translation so long under way, or rather reviews of translations made in the past. And they ask what is the reason or the necessity for all the effort. Has the Church been deceived, they say, for so long? Has her unleavened bread been tainted with leaven, her silver with dross, her wine with water, her milk with lime? We had hoped that all was well, that the oracles of God had been given to us, and that although everyone else might have cause to be embarrassed or reason to complain, yet that we had none. Has the nurse held out her breast with nothing but wind in it? Has the bread delivered by the Fathers of the Church proved (in Seneca’s words) to be nothing but stones? If this isn’t handling the word of God deceitfully, as some of our brethren say, what is? We are told that the

<p>God deceitfully, if this be not? Thus certain brethren. Also the adversaries of <i>Judah</i> and <i>Jerusalem</i>, like <i>Sanballat</i> in <i>Nehemiah</i>, mock, as we hear, both the work and the workmen, saying; "<i>What do these weak Jews, etc. will they make the stones whole again out of the heaps of dust which are burnt? although they build, yet if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stony wall.</i>" Was their Translation good before? Why do they now mend it? Was it not good? Why then was it obtruded to the people? Yea, why did the Catholics (meaning Popish <i>Romanists</i>) always go in jeopardy, for refusing to go to hear it? Nay, if it must be translated into English, Catholics are fittest to do it. They have learning, and they know when a thing is well, they can <i>manum de tabula</i>. We will answer them both briefly: and the former, being brethren, thus, with <i>S. Jerome</i>, "<i>Damnamus veteres? Minime, sed post priorum studia in domo Domini quod possumus laboramus.</i>" That is, "<i>Do we condemn the ancient? In no case: but after the endeavors of them that were before us, we take the best pains we can in the house of God.</i>" As if he said, Being provoked by the example of the learned men that lived before my time, I have thought it my duty, to assay whether my talent in the knowledge of the tongues, may be profitable in any measure to God's Church, lest I should seem to laboured in them in vain, and lest I should be thought to glory in men, (although ancient,) above that which was in them. Thus <i>S. Jerome</i> may be thought to speak.</p>	<p>enemies of <i>Judah</i> and <i>Jerusalem</i>, like <i>Sanballat</i> in <i>Nehemiah</i>, mocked both the workers and their work, saying, "What are these weak Jews doing? Can they make solid stones again out of the burnt dust heaps? Even if they build a stone wall, a fox could go up and break it down (<i>Nehemiah</i> 4.3). Was the first translation good? Why mend it now? Was it not good? Then why was it foisted on the people? Or again, why did the Catholics (meaning Popish <i>Romanists</i>) consistently and confidently ignore it? Really, if it must be translated into English, Catholics are the most competent to do it. They have the scholarship, they know when a thing is good, and they know when to quit. We will answer them both briefly: to the former, who are brethren, we say with <i>St. Jerome</i>, "Do we condemn the earlier work? Not at all, but following the endeavors of those who were before us, we do the best we can in the house of God." He could as well have said, "Being inspired by the example of the scholars who lived before my time, I thought it my duty to test whether my linguistic skills might in any way be useful to God's Church, that I might not seem to have studied the languages in vain, or to have given more credit to human scholars (however ancient) than they deserved." This would be <i>St. Jerome's</i> statement. (<i>Rhodes & Lupas</i>, 75-76)</p>
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- After having addressed Roman Catholic opposition to the notion "that the scriptures should be divulged in the mother tongue" in the previous subsection, Smith now addresses the contents of "speeches and reasons" given by both Catholics and Protestants against the new translation in subsection ten. The main argument Smith is addressing here is what was wrong with the English scriptures already in existence? Were they not the "oracles of God?" Why does there need to be a new translation if the people were not complaining and/or clamoring for a new one?
 - "Many men's mouths have been open a good while (and yet are not stopped) with speeches about the Translation so long in hand, or rather perusals [the action of reading or examining something] of Translations made before: and ask what may be the reason, what the necessity of the employment: Hath the Church been deceived, say they, all this while? Hath her sweet bread been mingled with leaven, her silver with dross, her wine with water, her milk with lime? (*Lacte gypsum male miscetur*, saith *S. Ireney*.) We hoped that we had been in the right way, that we had the Oracles of God delivered unto us, and that though all the world had cause to be offended and to complain, yet that we had none. Hath the nurse holden out the breast, and nothing but wind in it? Hath the bread been

delivered by the fathers of the Church, and the same proved to be *lapidosus*, as *Seneca* speaketh? What is it to handle the word of God deceitfully, if this be not? ”

- In the next couple lines Smith uses the story of Sanballat and Tobias from Nehemiah 4 to illustrate how “both the work and the workmen” were being mocked via the speeches made against the work of the translators.
 - “Thus certain brethren. Also the adversaries of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, like *Sanballat* in *Nehemiah*, mock, as we hear, both the work and the workmen, saying; “*What do these weak Jews, etc. will they make the stones whole again out of the heaps of dust which are burnt? although they build, yet if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stony wall.*” [Neh 4:3] Was their Translation good before? Why do they now mend it? Was it not good? Why then was it obtruded to the people? Yea, why did the Catholics (meaning Popish *Romanists*) always go in jeopardy, for refusing to go to hear it? Nay, if it must be translated into English, Catholics are fittest to do it. They have learning, and they know when a thing is well, they can *manum de tabula.*”
- Smith concludes the paragraph by answering the former challenges possessed by his “brethren” by appealing to Jerome.
 - “We will answer them both briefly: and the former, being brethren, thus, with *S. Jerome*, “*Damnamus veteres? Minime, sed post priorum studia in domo Domini quod possums laboramus.*” That is, “*Do we condemn the ancient? In no case: but after the endeavors of them that were before us, we take the best pains we can in the house of God.*” As if he said, Being provoked by the example of the learned men that lived before my time, I have thought it my duty, to assay whether my talent in the knowledge of the tongues, may be profitable in any measure to God's Church, lest I should seem to laboured in them in vain, and lest I should be thought to glory in men, (although ancient,) above that which was in them. Thus *S. Jerome* may be thought to speak.”
- The current subsection lays the groundwork for the next two dealing with “a satisfaction to our brethren” whom Smith addresses first and his Catholic opposition whom he addresses in “an answer to the imputations of our adversaries” in subsection twelve.

A Satisfaction To Our Brethren

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶12) And to the same effect say we, that we are so far off from condemning any of their labors that travailed before us in this kind, either in this land or beyond sea, either in King <i>Henry's</i> time, or King <i>Edward's</i> (if there were any translation, or correction of a translation in his time) or Queen <i>Elizabeth's</i> of ever renowned memory, that we acknowledge them to have been raised up of God, for the building and furnishing of his Church, and that they deserve to be had of us and of posterity in everlasting remembrance. The judgment of	¶12) “And we would say the same, that far from condemning the work of any of our predecessors, whether here or abroad, whether in King Henry’s time, or King Edward’s (if there was any translation, or revision of a translation, in his time), or Queen Elizabeth’s of ever renowned memory. We acknowledge that they were raised up by God to build up and equip his Church, and that they should always be remembered by us and by our descendants. The opinion of Aristotle is true and familiar, that while we are indebted to

Aristotle is worthy and well known: "*If Timotheus had not been, we had not had much sweet music; but if Phrynus (Timotheus his master) had not been, we had not had Timotheus.*" Therefore blessed be they, and most honoured be their name, that break the ice, and giveth onset upon that which helpeth forward to the saving of souls. Now what can be more available thereto, than to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they understand? Since of a hidden treasure, and of a fountain that is sealed, there is no profit, as *Ptolemy Philadelphus* wrote to the Rabbins or masters of the Jews, as witnesseth *Epiphanius*: and as *S. Augustine* saith; "*A man had rather be with his dog than with a stranger* (whose tongue is strange unto him)." Yet for all that, as nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, and the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser: so, if we building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavor to make that better which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; they, we persuade ourselves, if they were alive, would thank us. The vintage of *Abiezzer*, that strake the stroke: yet the gleanings of grapes of *Ephraim* was not to be despised. See *Judges* 8:2. *Joash* the king of *Israel* did not satisfy himself, till he had smitten the ground three times; and yet he offended the Prophet, for giving over then. *Aquila*, of whom we spake before, translated the Bible as carefully, and as skilfully as he could; and yet he thought good to go over it again, and then it got the credit with the Jews, to be called accurately done, as Saint *Jerome* witnesseth. How many books of profane learning have been gone over again and again, by the same translators, by others? Of one and the same book of *Aristotle's Ethics*, there are extant not so few as six or seven several translations. Now if this cost may be bestowed upon the gourd, which affordeth us a little shade, and which today flourisheth, but tomorrow is cut down; what may we bestow, nay what ought we not to bestow upon the Vine, the fruit whereof maketh glad the conscience of man, and the stem whereof abideth forever? And this is the word of God, which we translate. "*What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?*" *Tanti vitreum, quanti verum margaritum* (saith *Tertullian*), if a toy of glass be of that reckoning with us, how ought we to value the true pearl? Therefore let no man's eye be evil, because his Majesty's is good;

Timotheus for much sweet music, we are indebted to Phrynus (Timotheus' master) for Timotheus. Therefore we should bless and honor the names of those who break the ice, and take the first steps toward something which promotes the saving of souls. And what can be more useful for this purpose than giving God's book to God's people in a language they can understand? As *Ptolemy Philadelphus* wrote to the Jewish leaders (according to *Epiphanius*), a hidden treasure or a sealed fountain is quite useless; and as St. *Augustine* says, anyone would rather be with his dog than with a stranger (who speaks a language he can't understand). In any event, nothing is begun and brought to perfection all at once, and later thoughts are considered to be the wiser. Therefore, if we build on the foundation laid by those who went before us, and profiting from their work we attempt to improve on what they did so well, certainly no one can reasonably disapprove, and we are persuaded that if they were alive, they themselves would thank us. The vintage of *Abiezzer* was good, yet even the gleanings from *Ephraim's* vineyard were better (*Judges* 8:2). King *Joash* of *Israel* was not satisfied until he had struck the ground three times, and yet he offended the prophet for giving up then (2 *Kings* 13:18,19). *Aquila*, whom we mentioned before, translated the Bible as carefully and as skillfully as he could; and yet he prudently went over it again, and his work became known among the Jews for its accuracy, as *Jerome* attests. How many books of profane learning have been revised over and over, by the same translators or by others? There are at least six or seven different translations available of one and the same book of *Aristotle's Ethics*. Now if this effort may be spent on the gourd, which provides us with so little shade, which flourishes today but tomorrow is cut down, how much should we, or rather, how much shouldn't we spend on the vine that has fruit to warm the heart and whose roots are perennial? And this is the word of God that we are translating. "What good is straw compared with wheat?" says the Lord (*Jeremiah* 23:28). Or (as *Tertullian* says), if a glass bauble is so valuable to us, how much more so a true pearl? Therefore no one should be jealous because his Majesty is generous. No one should mourn because we have a Prince who seeks to increase the spiritual wealth of *Israel*.

<p>neither let any be grieved, that we have a Prince that seeketh the increase of the spiritual wealth of Israel (let <i>Sanballats</i> and <i>Tobiahs</i> do so, which therefore do bear their just reproof) but let us rather bless God from the ground of our heart, for working this religious care in him, to have the translations of the Bible maturely considered of and examined. For by this means it cometh to pass, that whatsoever is sound already (and all is sound for substance, in one or other of our editions, and the worst of ours far better than their authentic vulgar) the same will shine as gold more brightly, being rubbed and polished; also, if anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place. And what can the King command to be done, that will bring him more true honour than this? and wherein could they that have been set a work, approve their duty to the King, yea their obedience to God, and love to his Saints more, than by yielding their service, and all that is within them, for the furnishing of the work? But besides all this, they were the principal motives of it, and therefore ought least to quarrel it: for the very Historical truth is, that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans, at his Majesty's coming to this Crown, the Conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints: when by force of reason they were put from other grounds, they had recourse at the last, to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was as they said, a most corrupted translation. And although this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift; yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this Translation which is now presented unto thee. Thus much to satisfy our scrupulous Brethren.</p>	<p>Sanballats and Tobiahs may do so, for which they rightly deserve to be reprov'd. Let us rather bless God from the depths of our heart for arousing in him this religious concern for a deliberate and careful consideration of Bible translations. For in this way whatever is valid already (and our [Protestant] versions are all valid in substance, the worst of them being far better than the [Roman Catholics'] standard Vulgate) will shine more brightly, like gold that has been rubbed and polished. And if there is anything dubious, or superfluous, or not in agreement with the original, it may be corrected, and the truth set in its place. And what can the King commission to be done that will bring him more true honor than this? And how could those who are commissioned better fulfil their duty to the King, their obedience to God, and their love of his saints, than by devoting their efforts to the best of their ability to accomplishing the work? And besides, they were themselves the initial proponents of it, and therefore they ought least to quarrel about it. For the real historical fact is, that it was at the insistence of the Puritans when his Majesty was crowned, that the conference at Hampton Court was appointed for hearing their complaints, and when they could not make a case on any other grounds, they had recourse at the last to the argument that they could "not in good conscience subscribe to the Communion book because they claimed that the Bible used in it was a most corrupted translation. And although this was considered to be a very poor and empty ploy, yet it suggested to his Majesty how much good might result from a new translation, and immediately afterward he commissioned this translation which is now offered to you. This much in answer to our scrupulous brethren. (Rhodes & Lupas, 76-77)</p>
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- Recall that at the end of the previous subsection, Smith began his answer to the translators' Protestant adversaries who slandered the new translation by quoting from Jerome. Here in paragraph twelve subsection eleven, Smith elaborates as he attempts to provide "a stratification to our brethren." He begins by saying that it was never the intention of the King James translators to "condemn" the labors of those who toiled on the text before them.

- “And to the same effect say we, that we are so far off from condemning any of their labors that travailed before us in this kind, either in this land or beyond sea, either in King *Henry's* time, or King *Edward's* (if there were any translation, or correction of a translation in his time) or Queen *Elizabeth's* of ever renowned memory, that we acknowledge them to have been raised up of God, for the building and furnishing of his Church, and that they deserve to be had of us and of posterity in everlasting remembrance.”
- After quoting Aristotle, to illustrate his point, “*If Timotheus had not been, we had not had much sweet music; but if Phrynīs (Timotheus his master) had not been, we had not had Timotheus,*” Smith states the following:
 - “Therefore blessed be they, and most honoured be their name, that break the ice, and giveth onset upon that which helpeth forward to the saving of souls. Now what can be more available thereto, than to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they understand? Since of a hidden treasure, and of a fountain that is sealed, there is no profit, as *Ptolemy Philadelph* wrote to the Rabbins or masters of the Jews, as witnesseth *Epiphanius*: and as *S. Augustine* saith; “*A man had rather be with his dog than with a stranger* (whose tongue is strange unto him).”
- Those who translated the Bible in the time of Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth broke the ice in order “to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they understand?” In the next sentence Smith makes it clear that the King James translators were “building upon their foundation that went before us.” This was not done to deride this earlier work but rather to perfect what had been previously started.
 - “Yet for all that, as nothing is begun and **perfected** at the same time, and the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser: so, if we building upon their foundation that went before us, and being holpen by their labours, do endeavor to make that better which they left so good; no man, we are sure, hath cause to mislike us; they, we persuade ourselves, if they were alive, would thank us.”
- Here we encounter the fourth occurrence of a form of the word “perfect” in the Preface. 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 the 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.

- In the next portion of paragraph twelve, Smith offers examples, both Biblical and secular, to illustrate his points. Specifically, he alludes to Judges 8:2 and II Kings 13:18-19 without quoting them directly before moving on to Aquila's translation and Aristotle's Ethics as examples.
 - "The vintage of *Abienzer*, that strake the stroke: yet the gleanings of grapes of *Ephraim* was not to be despised. See *Judges* 8:2. *Joash* the king of *Israel* did not satisfy himself, till he had smitten the ground three times; and yet he offended the Prophet, for giving over then. *Aquila*, of whom we spake before, translated the Bible as carefully, and as skilfully as he could; and yet he thought good to go over it again, and then it got the credit with the Jews, to be called accurately done, as Saint *Jerome* witnesseth. How many books of profane learning have been gone over again and again, by the same translators, by others? Of one and the same book of *Aristotle's* Ethics, there are extant not so few as six or seven several translations. Now if this cost may be bestowed upon the gourd, which affordeth us a little shade, and which today flourisheth, but tomorrow is cut down; what may we bestow, nay what ought we not to bestow upon the Vine, the fruit whereof maketh glad the conscience of man, and the stem whereof abideth forever? And this is the word of God, which we translate. "What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?" [Jer 23:28] *Tanti vitreum, quanti verum margaritum* (saith *Tertullian*;) if a toy of glass be of that reckoning with us, how ought we to value the true pearl?"
- Next, with these illustrations in mind, Smith turns his attention to why no one should speak ill of King James for thinking it prudent that there should be an additional English Bible. In fact, Smith attributes the King's honorable decision to the Lord's special leading. In Smith's mind there is nothing more honorable for a king to be involved in than "to have the translations of the Bible maturely considered of and examined."
 - "Therefore let no man's eye be evil, because his Majesty's is good; neither let any be grieved, that we have a Prince that seeketh the increase of the spiritual wealth of Israel (let *Sanballats* and *Tobiahs* do so, which therefore do bear their just reproof) but let us rather bless God from the ground of our heart, for working this religious care in him, to have the translations of the Bible maturely considered of and examined. For by this means it cometh to pass, that whatsoever is sound already (and all is sound for substance, in one or other of our editions, and the worst of ours far better than their authentic vulgar) the same will shine as gold more brightly, being rubbed and polished; also, if anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place. And what can the King command to be done, that will bring him more true honour than this? and wherein could they that have been set a work, approve their duty to the King, yea their obedience to God, and love to his Saints more, than by yielding their service, and all that is within them, for the furnishing of the work?"
- According to Smith, the translators of the AV took what was "sound already" and "rubbed and polished" it, thereby removing anything that was "not so agreeable to the original" that it "may be corrected and the truth set in place." These sentiments comport with what we have observed from the Epistle Dedicatory and elsewhere in the Preface regarding James ordering a "survey of the English translations" (title of subsection three). Smith clearly viewed the work of the King James translators as having "corrected" and "perfected" the work that was begun by prior English translations.

- We will revisit this subject matter of improving upon past translational work when we consider subsection thirteen, as Smith makes explicit statements about the methods and procedures utilized by the King’s translators. Smith concludes his answer to his Protestant brethren in paragraph twelve by recounting the history that gave birth to the project in the first place. It was upon petition by the Puritans at Hampton Court for a new translation that King James initiated the project.
 - “But besides all this, they were the principal motives of it, and therefore ought least to quarrel it: for the very Historical truth is, that upon the importunate petitions of the Puritans, at his Majesty's coming to this Crown, the Conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints: when by force of reason they were put from other grounds, they had recourse at the last, to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was as they said, a most corrupted translation. And although this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift; yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this Translation which is now presented unto thee. Thus much to satisfy our scrupulous Brethren.”
- Smith makes a couple of interesting statements in this final portion of the paragraph that merit further discussion. First, the statement “when by force of reason they were put from other grounds, **they had recourse at the last**, to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was as they said, a most corrupted translation” fits with what we observed in [Lesson 156](#) about the timing of John Rainolds’ (Reynolds) request for a new translation. After being thoroughly shut down by King James on all previous petitions for reforming the Anglican Church, at the tail end of a list of suggestions, John Rainolds the chief Puritan speaker floated the request for a new translation. William Barlow records the exchange in his record of the Hampton Court Conference *The Sum And Substance*.
- Smith’s next statement, “and although this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift,” is a reference to the immediate response to Rainolds’ petition. After recording the three textual examples that Rainolds’ presented to justify a new translation, Barlow commented that the objections were “trivial, old, and already in print, and often answered.” (Barlow, 46) Moreover, Barlow records the response of the Bishop of London Richard Bancroft, “if every man’s humor should be followed there would be no end of translating.” (Barlow, 46-47)
- Had it not been for the King’s response, there is little doubt that nothing would have come of Rainolds’ request. Immediately after noting Bancroft’s opposition, Barlow records the following:
 - “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) and this to be done by the best learned in both the Universities, after them to be reviewed by the Bishops, and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the Privy Council; and lastly, to be ratified by his Royal authority; and so this whole Church to be

bound unto it and none other: Mary, withal, he gave this caveat (upon a word cast out by my Lord of London that no marginal notes should be added, having found in them which are annexed to the Geneva translation (which he saw in a Bible given him by an English Lady) some notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and favouring too much of dangerous, and traitorous conceits) as, for example, Exod. 1:19, where the marginal notes alloweth disobedience to Kings. And 2 Chron. 15:16, the note taxeth Asa for deposing his mother, only, and not killing her.” (Barlow, 47)

- Therefore, the following statement by Myles Smith in the Preface coincides with the history recorded by Barlow in *The Sum and Substance*.
 - “. . . yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink himself of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this Translation which is now presented unto thee.”
- In the end, Smith’s answer to his “scrupulous Brethren” was to take it up with the King. It is also important to note the Hebraist Hugh Broughton is also no doubt in view as a Protestant who heavily criticized the new Bible both before and after it was released.

Works Cited

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Sunday, March 19, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 199 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Answer to Adversaries, Cont.)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 198](#) we looked at the following subsections.
 - The Speeches And Reasons, Both Of Our Brethren, And Of Our Adversaries Against This Work
 - A Satisfaction To Our Brethren
- Having acknowledged in subsection ten that both Catholics and Protestants were seeking to gainsay the King’s project to create “one uniform translation” (Barlow, 47), Smith elected to address his “Brethren” first in subsection eleven.
- Today we want to begin looking at subsection twelve titled “An Answer To The Imputations of Our Adversaries” where Smith provides answers to the translators’ Roman Catholic opposition. This is the longest subsection of the Preface, spanning two densely packed paragraphs. It is arguably one of the most important subsections to understand in terms of accurately grasping Smith’s overall argument. Consequently, we will be dealing only with paragraph thirteen in this Lesson. We will reserve comment upon paragraph fourteen for a future Lesson.

An Answer To The Imputations of Our Adversaries

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶13) Now to the latter we answer; that we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession, (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God. As the King’s speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into <i>French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin</i> , is still the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere. For it is confessed, that things are to take their denomination of the greater part; and a natural man could say, <i>Verum ubi multa nitent in carmine, non ego paucis offendor maculis, etc.</i> A man may be counted a virtuous man, though he have made many slips in his life, (else, there were none virtuous, <i>for in many things we offend all</i>) also a comely man and lovely, though he have some warts upon his hand, yea, not only freckles upon his face, but also scars. No cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be current,	¶13) “Now to answer our enemies: we do not deny, rather we affirm and insist that the very worst translation of the Bible in English issued by Protestants (for we have seen no Catholic version of the whole Bible as yet) contains the word of God, or rather, is the word of God. In the same way, when the King’s speech delivered in Parliament is translated into French, German, Italian, and Latin, it is still the King’s speech, even if it is not interpreted by every translator with the same skill, or perhaps with as appropriate phrasing or always with as great clarity. For as everyone knows, things are classified by their major characteristics. Anyone will admit that a person may be regarded as virtuous even though he has made many slips during his life, otherwise no one could be called virtuous, because “all of us make many mistakes” (James 3.2). A person may be called handsome and charming, even though he may have some warts on his hand, and not only some freckles on his face, but also scars. So there is no reason why the word when it is translated should be denied to be the word, or should be declared inauthentic, simply because there may be

notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it. For whatever was perfect under the Sun, where Apostles or Apostolic men, that is, men endued with an extraordinary measure of God's spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hand? The Romanists therefore in refusing to hear, and daring to burn the Word translated, did no less than despite the spirit of grace, from whom originally it proceeded, and whose sense and meaning, as well as man's weakness would enable, it did express. Judge by an example or two. *Plutarch* writeth, that after that *Rome* had been burnt by the *Gauls*, they fell soon to build it again: but doing it in haste, they did not cast the streets, nor proportion the houses in such comely fashion, as had been most slightly and convenient; was *Catiline* therefore an honest man, or a good patriot, that sought to bring it to a combustion? Or *Nero* a good Prince, that did indeed set it on fire? So, by the story of *Ezra*, and the prophecy of *Haggai* it may be gathered, that the Temple built by *Zerubbabel* after the return from *Babylon*, was by no means to be compared to the former built by *Solomon* (for they that remembered the former, wept when they considered the latter) notwithstanding, might this latter either have been abhorred and forsaken by the *Jews*, or profaned by the *Greeks*? The like we are to think of Translations. The translation of the *Seventy* dissenteth from the Original in many places, neither doth it come near it, for perspicuity, gravity, majesty; yet which of the Apostles did condemn it? Condemn it? Nay, they used it, (as it is apparent, and as Saint *Jerome* and most learned men do confess) which they would not have done, nor by their example of using it, so grace and commend it to the Church, if it had been unworthy of the appellation and name of the word of God. And whereas they urge for their second defence of their vilifying and abusing of the *English* Bibles, or some pieces thereof, which they meet with, for that heretics (forsooth) were the Authors of the translations, (heretics they call us by the same right that they call themselves Catholics, both being wrong) we marvel what divinity taught them so. We are sure *Tertullian* was of another mind: *Ex personis probamus fidem, an ex fide personas?* Do we try men's faith by their persons? we should try their persons by their faith. Also *S. Augustine* was of another

some imperfections and blemishes in the way it is published. For has there been anything perfect under the sun in which Apostles or their colleagues, people endued with an extraordinary measure of God's Spirit and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, were not involved? Therefore when the Romanists refused to hear, and even dared to burn the word when it is translated, they were only showing contempt for the Spirit of grace from whom it came originally, and whose sense and meaning it expressed as well as humanly possible. Consider some parallels. *Plutarch* writes that after *Rome* had been burnt by the *Gauls*, they soon set about rebuilding it. But they did it in haste, and they did not plan the streets or design the houses in the most attractive or practical way. Was *Catiline* therefore an honorable man, or a good patriot, when he tried to destroy it? Or was *Nero* a good prince, when he actually set it on fire? From the account of *Ezra* (*Ezra* 3.12) and the prophecy of *Haggai* (*Haggai* 2.3) it may be inferred that the temple built by *Zerubbabel* after the return from *Babylon* was in no way comparable to the one built earlier by *Solomon*. People who remembered the earlier one wept when they saw it, and yet was the new temple either regarded with disgust and rejected by the *Jews*, or profaned by the *Greeks*? We should think in the same way about translations. The translation of the *Septuagint* departs from the original in many places, and it does not come near the Hebrew for clarity, gravity, and majesty. And yet did any of the Apostles condemn it? Condemn it? Obviously they used it (as *St. Jerome* and most scholars confess), and they would not have done this, nor by their example of using it so honor and commend it to the Church, if it had been unworthy of the dignity and name of the word of God. Then they argue as their second reason, for vilifying and abusing *English* Bibles, or the portions of it they have seen, that the translations were made by heretics (they call us heretics by the same right that they call themselves Catholics, and they are wrong on both counts). This logic makes us wonder. We are sure *Tertullian* disagrees: "Do we judge peoples' faith by who they are? We should judge who they are by their faith." *St. Augustine* also disagrees, for when he found certain rules made by *Tychonius*, a Donatist, for better understanding the Word, he was not ashamed to make use of them, and even

mind: for he lighting upon certain rules made by *Tychonius* a *Donatist*, for the better understanding of the word, was not ashamed to make use of them, yea, to insert them into his own book, with giving commendation to them so far forth as they were worthy to be commended, as is to be seen in *S. Augustine's* third book *De doctrina Christiana*. To be short, *Origen*, and the whole Church of God for certain hundred years, were of another mind: for they were so far from treading under foot, (much more from burning) the Translation of *Aquila* a Proselyte, that is, one that had turned Jew; of *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*, both *Ebionites*, that is, most vile heretics, that they joined together with the *Hebrew* Original, and the Translation of the *Seventy* (as hath been before signified out of *Epiphanius*) and set them forth openly to be considered of and perused by all. But we weary the unlearned, who need not know so much, and trouble the learned, who know it already.

¶14) Yet before we end, we must answer a third cavil and objection of theirs against us, for altering and amending our Translations so oft; wherein truly they deal hardly, and strangely with us. For to whomever was it imputed for a fault (by such as were wise) to go over that which he had done, and to amend it where he saw cause? Saint *Augustine* was not afraid to exhort *S. Jerome* to a *Palinodia* or recantation; and doth even glory that he seeth his infirmities. If we be sons of the Truth, we must consider what it speaketh, and trample upon our own credit, yea, and upon other men's too, if either be any way an hindrance to it. This to the cause: then to the persons we say, that of all men they ought to be most silent in this case. For what varieties have they, and what alterations have they made, not only of their Service books, Portesses and Breviaries, but also of their *Latin* Translation? The Service book supposed to be made by *S. Ambrose* (*Officium Ambrosianum*) was a great while in special use and request; but Pope *Hadrian* calling a Council with the aid of Charles the Emperor, abolished it, yea, burnt it, and commanded the Service book of Saint *Gregory* universally to be used. Well, *Officium Gregorianum* gets by this means to be in credit, but doth it continue without change or altering? No, the very *Roman* Service was of two fashions, the New fashion, and the Old, (the one used in one Church, the other in another) as is to be seen

to insert them into his own book, duly commending them to the extent they were worth being commended (see his *De Doctrina Christiana*, book 3). In short, *Origen* together with the whole Church of God for some hundred years disagreed: they were so far from rejecting, much less from burning the translations by *Aquila*, a proselyte (i.e., a Jew by conversion), by *Symmachus* and by *Theodotion*, both *Ebionites* (i.e., vile heretics), that they added them together with the *Hebrew* original and the *Septuagint* (as noted by *Epiphanius* above), and published them openly to be considered and read by everyone. But this is tiresome for the general reader who is not interested, and boring for scholars, who know it already.

¶14) Yet before we finish, we must answer a third complaint and objection of theirs against us, of altering and amending our translations so often. This is truly a bold and odd accusation. For who was ever faulted (by anyone knowledgeable) for going over what they had done, and amending it where necessary? St. *Augustine* was not afraid to exhort St. *Jerome* to a *Palinodia* or reconsideration. The same St. *Augustine* was not ashamed to retract, we might say, revoke, many things he had written, and even boasts of seeing his own weaknesses. If we are to be loyal to the truth, we must be attentive to what it says, and disregard our own interests, and other men's too, if either stand in the way. So much for principles. Now to the accusers themselves we would say that of all people they have the least right to raise the charge. For how many different editions do they have, and how many alterations have they made, not only in their service books, manuals, and breviaries, but also in their *Latin* translation? The service book attributed to St. *Ambrose* (*Officium Ambrosianum*) had been in use and in great demand for a long while when Pope *Adrian* called a council with the aid of Charles the Emperor, and not only abolished it, but had it burnt, and commanded the service book of St. *Gregory* to be used universally. Then after the *Officium Gregorianum* is recognized as the authorized text, does it escape change or

in *Pamelius* a Romanist, his Preface, before *Micrologus*. the same *Pamelius* reporteth out *Radulphus de Rivo*, that about the year of our Lord, 1277, Pope *Nicolas* the Third removed out of the Churches of *Rome*, the more ancient books (of Service) and brought into use the Missals of the Friars Minorites, and commanded them to be observed there; insomuch that about an hundred years after, when the above name *Radulphus* happened to be at *Rome*, he found all the books to be new, (of the new stamp). Neither were there this chopping and changing in the more ancient times only, but also of late: *Pius Quintus* himself confesseth, that every Bishopric almost had a peculiar kind of service, most unlike to that which others had: which moved him to abolish all other Breviaries, though never so ancient, and privileged and published by Bishops in their Dioceses, and to establish and ratify that only which was of his own setting forth, in the year 1568. Now when the father of their Church, who gladly would heal the sore of the daughter of his people softly and slightly, and make the best of it, findeth so great fault with them for their odds and jarring; we hope the children have no great cause to vaunt of their uniformity. But the difference that appeareth between our Translations, and our often correcting of them, is the thing that we are specially charged with; let us see therefore whether they themselves be without fault this way, (if it be to be counted a fault, to correct) and whether they be fit men to throw stones at us: *O tandem maior parcas insane minori*: they that are less sound themselves, out not to object infirmities to others. If we should tell them that *Valla*, *Stapulensis*, *Erasmus*, and *Vives* found fault with their vulgar Translation, and consequently wished the same to be mended, or a new one to be made, they would answer peradventure, that we produced their enemies for witnesses against them; albeit, they were in no other sort enemies, than as *S. Paul* was to the *Galatians*, for telling them the truth: and it were to be wished, that they had dared to tell it them plainlier and oftener. But what will they say to this, that Pope *Leo* the Tenth allowed *Erasmus*' Translation of the New Testament, so much different from the vulgar, by his Apostolic Letter and Bull; that the same *Leo* exhorted *Pagnine* to translate the whole Bible, and bare whatsoever charges was necessary for the work? Surely, as the Apostle reasoneth to the

alteration? No, the Roman service itself was in two forms: the new form, and the old. The one was used in some churches, and the other in others, as the Romanist *Pamelius* notes in his preface to *Micrologus*. The same *Pamelius* cites *Radulphus de Rivo* to the effect that about a.d. 1277 Pope *Nicholas III* removed earlier service books from the churches of *Rome* and introduced the use of the Friars Minorites' missals, commanding them to be observed there, so that when *Radulphus* happened to be in *Rome* about a hundred years later, he found all the books to be new, of the new edition. Nor was this shifting back and forth done only in earlier times, but it has happened recently also. *Pius V* himself admits that almost every bishopric had its own kind of service, unlike the ones which others had. This moved him to abolish all the other breviaries, however ancient, privileged and published by Bishops in their Dioceses, and to establish and ratify only the one which he himself published in the year 1568. Now when the Father of their Church, who would gladly heal the sore of the daughter of his people gently and easily, and make the best of it, finds so much fault with them for their differences and inconsistencies, we hope the children have no great reason to boast of their uniformity. But the differences that appear among our translations, and our frequent corrections of them, is what we are charged with specifically. Let us see therefore whether they themselves are without fault in this respect (if it is a fault to make corrections), and whether they are qualified to throw stones at us: "they that are less healthy themselves ought not point out the infirmities of others" (*Horace*). If we should tell them that *Valla*, *Lefevre d'Etaples*, *Erasmus*, and *Vives* found fault with their Vulgate version, and consequently wished that either it should be corrected or a new version should be made, they would probably answer that we produced their enemies as witnesses against them. Yet they were no more enemies than *St. Paul* was to the *Galatians* for telling them the truth. If only they had dared tell them more plainly and oftener! But what will they say to the fact that Pope *Leo X*, by his Apostolic Letter and bull, sanctioned *Erasmus*'s translation of the New Testament, which differs so much from the Vulgate? And that the same *Leo* encouraged *Pagninus* to translate the whole Bible, and provided all the expenses

Hebrews, that if the former Law and Testament had been sufficient, there had been no need of the latter: so we may say, that if the old vulgar had been at all points allowable, to small purpose had labour and charges been undergone, about framing of a new. 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, *Hieronymus ab Oleastro*, and their own Bishop *Isidorus Clarius*, and their own Cardinal *Thomas a Vio Cajetan*, 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. And call they this an uniform tenor of text and judgment about the text, so many of their Worthies disclaiming the now received conceit? Nay, we will yet come nearer the quick: doth not their *Paris* edition differ from the *Lovaine*, and *Hentenius* his from them both, and yet all of them allowed by authority? Nay, doth not *Sixtus Quintus* confess, that certain Catholics (he meaneth certain of his own side) were in such an humor of translating the Scriptures into *Latin*, that Satan taking occasion by them, though they thought of no such matter, did strive what he could, out of so uncertain and manifold a variety of Translations, so to mingle all things, that nothing might seem to be left certain and firm in them, etc.? Nay, further, did not the same *Sixtus* ordain by an inviolable decree, and that with the counsel and consent of his Cardinals, that the *Latin* edition of the old and New Testament, which the Council of *Trent* would have to be authentic, is the same without controversy which he then set forth, being diligently corrected and printed in the Printing-house of *Vatican*? Thus *Sixtus* in his Preface before his Bible. And yet *Clement* the Eighth his immediate successor, published another edition of the Bible, containing in it infinite differences from that of *Sixtus*, (and many of them weighty and material) and yet this must be authentic by all means. What is to have the faith of our glorious Lord JESUS CHRIST with Yea or Nay, if this be not? Again, what is sweet harmony and consent, if this be? Therefore, as *Demaratus* of *Corinth* advised a great King, before he talked of the dissensions of the

necessary for the work? Surely, as the Apostle reasons to the *Hebrews* (7.11; 8.7), if the former Law and Testament had been sufficient, there would have been no need of another. Similarly, if the old Vulgate had been completely adequate, there would be little reason to go to the labor and expense of preparing a new version. If they argue that this was only one Pope's private opinion, and that he consulted only himself, then we can go further and demonstrate that many more of their leaders, including their own champions at the Council of *Trent*, *Paiva* and *Vega*, and their own Inquisitors, *Hieronymus ab Oleastro*, and their own Bishop *Isidorus Clarius*, and their own Cardinal *Thomas a Vio Cajetan*, either make new translations themselves, or follow new ones that others have made, or note defects in the Vulgate version, without any fear of dissenting from it or disagreeing with it. And do they claim to represent a consistency of text and of judgment about the text, when so many of their own worthies disclaim the currently accepted opinion? But let us be more explicit. Does their *Paris* edition not differ from the *Louvain* edition, and *Hentenius*'s edition differ from both, and yet all of them are sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority? And does *Sixtus V* not admit that some Catholics (he means some of his own persuasion) were so eagerly making translations of the Scriptures into *Latin*, that although they did not intend it, Satan could exploit the opportunity to show that such a variety of translations is confusing, and proves that nothing seems to be left certain and firm in them, etc.? And further, did the same *Sixtus* not ordain by an inviolable decree, with the counsel and consent of his Cardinals, that the *Latin* edition of the Old and New Testaments, which the Council of *Trent* pronounces to be authoritative, is precisely the one which he then published in a carefully corrected edition, printed by the *Vatican Press*? *Sixtus* states this in the Preface to his Bible. And yet *Clement VIII*, his immediate successor, publishes another edition of the Bible, containing innumerable differences from that of *Sixtus*, many of which are (weighty and substantial, and this edition is declared absolutely authoritative. If this is not an example of vacillating with the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, what is? What kind of sweet harmony and consistency is this? Therefore, as

<p><i>Grecians</i>, to compose his domestic broils (for at that time his Queen and his son and heir were at deadly feud with him) so all the while that our adversaries do make so many and so various editions themselves, and do jar so much about the worth and authority of them, they can with no show of equity challenge us for changing and correcting.</p>	<p>Demaratus of Corinth advised the great king Philip of Macedon, before criticizing the dissensions among the Greeks, he should settle his own domestic broils (for at that time his queen and his son and heir were in a deadly feud with him). So when our enemies are making so many different versions themselves and debating their value and authority, they cannot fairly challenge our right to revise and correct. (Rhodes & Lupas 78-81)</p>
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- Spanning two paragraphs (§13 & 14), subsection twelve, titled “an answer to the imputation of our adversaries”, is the longest portion of the Preface. In this subsection, Smith addresses the arguments of the translators’ Roman Catholic adversaries that he touched upon briefly in subsection ten, “the speeches and reasons of our brethren, and our Adversaries against the work.” Please recall from [Lesson 198](#) that Smith elected to answer to his Protestant/Puritan brethren first in subsection eleven, “a satisfaction to our brethren.”
- Having addressed his “brethren,” Smith opens subsection twelve with the following powerful statement against “the latter” i.e., the translators’ Roman Catholic opposition from subsection ten:
 - “Now to the latter we answer; that we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession, (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God.”
- Before commenting on the meat of the sentence we need to mention something regarding the parenthetical statement, “for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet.” When Smith penned that statement he was referring to the fact he had not yet seen a Catholic translation of the entire Bible. The Rheims New Testament was published by Gregory Martin in Rheims, France in 1582. Meanwhile the Old Testament was published in two volumes from Douai, France in 1609 (Genesis-Job) and 1610 (Psalms-2 Maccabees). Therefore, Smith statement about not having “seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet,” indicates that the Preface was written before Smith saw the second volume of the Douai, Old Testament published in 1610. This is potentially a clue as to when Smith wrote the Preface, possibly in late 1610 before the complete Doaiui, Old Testament was available to the translators to inspect.
- Returning now to the meat of the sentence, Smith affirms and avows that the translators believed “that the very **meanest** translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession, . . . containeth the word of God, nay, **is the word of God.**” According to Smith “the very meanest translation of the Bible in English” is still “the word of God.” What did Smith mean when he employed the word “meanest” in this context. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) provides some assistance in the form of the following entry for the adjective form of “mean.”
 - 3.c. “Undignified, low. Of literary style, etc.: lacking in elevation or adornment; unambitious (not always with depreciative connotations). *Now rare.*”

- In the context, I take Smith’s intended meaning to be this “now rare” reference to literally style. This is magnified by looking at the example Smith provides of the King’s speech in the next sentence.
 - “As the King’s speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into *French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin*, is still the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere.”
- Put another way, the “King’s speech” spoken in Parliament remains the “King’s speech” even when “meanly” translated i.e., “not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere.” Taken together, the first two sentences of this subsection convey the idea that even when lacking literary adornments and “grace” i.e., “meanly” done, a translation of the Bible “is the word of God” just as the “King’s speech” remains the “King’s speech.” This presents a high view of the results of the translation process in the mind of Myles Smith. The word of God remains the word of God in undiminished form though translated. And this despite the presence of “some imperfections and blemishes [that] may be noted in the setting forth of it.” Consider the next sentence:
 - “For it is confessed, that things are to take their denomination of the greater part; and a natural man could say, . . . A man may be counted a virtuous man, though he have made many slips in his life, (else, there were none virtuous, *for in many things we offend all*) [James 3:2] also a comely man and lovely, though he have some warts upon his hand, yea, not only freckles upon his face, but also scars. No cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be current, notwithstanding that some **imperfections** and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it.”
- In the above citation we encounter the fifth occurrence of a form of the word “perfect” in the Preface with the word “imperfections.” According to Smith, there is “no cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, . . . notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it.” The question is what did Smith mean by “imperfections” given the greater context of the paragraph. The OED provides many different definitions for the English word “imperfections.” Consider the following entries for the noun form of the word:
 - “1. The condition or quality of being imperfect (chiefly in sense 2 of the adjective); defectiveness, faultiness; incompleteness.”
 - “2. An instance or example of defectiveness, faultiness, or incompleteness; a defect, a fault, a flaw; an inadequacy.”
- Careful readers will not need the parenthesis in definition 1 to see sense 2 of the adjective form of the word in the OED. When one follows this promoting they encounter the following entry, “lacking some quality or attribute necessary to perfection; less than perfect in quality or condition; substandard, flawed; defective, faulty.” This is no doubt that meaning that Smith had

in mind. Just as a man with “some warts upon his hand, yea, not only freckles upon his face, but also scars” can be considered “comely” and “lovely” so too can the word of God still be the word of God with “some imperfections and blemishes.” Consequently, Smith’s use of “imperfections” answers to “warts,” “freckles,” and “scars” that do no more to mar the word of God any more than physical imperfections mar the physical features of comely/lovely man. Therefore, given the greater context of the paragraph Smith is not talking about “imperfections” in the sense of false or incorrect information but rather “mean” or ungraceful, unadorned language.

- Immediately following his discussion of “imperfections” Smith turns his attention to absolute or ultimate perfection in the next sentence (see our discussion of the different senses of “perfect” in [Lesson 195](#)). According to Smith, only those who are “endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit” are capable of infallibility and perfection in the ultimate or absolute sense.
 - “For whatever was **perfect** under the Sun, where Apostles or Apostolic men, that is, men endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hand?”
- In this sixth occurrence of “perfect” in the Preface, Smith has the ultimate/absolute sense of “perfect” in view. Specifically, he ties perfection to “infallibility” a quality that is only possessed by men who are “endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit.” When used in the absolute sense, “perfect” carries the meaning of adjective entry 1.b in the OED: “In a state of complete excellence; free from any imperfection or defect of quality; that cannot be improved upon; flawless, faultless.” According to Smith, only the “Apostles or Apostolic men” were capable of producing this level of perfection because they were “endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit,” i.e., they were inspired.
- Given the entirety of the Preface and Epistle Dedicatory, while it is clear that Smith did not view himself or his fellow translators as inspired and therefore producing “perfection” in the absolute sense, it is equally clear that he did view their work as “perfect” in various lesser senses.
 - First, according to Epistle Dedicatory, the translators viewed their work as being “**more exact**” than the prior English Bibles that they were “revising,” “rubbing,” and “polishing.” In [Lesson 191](#) we observed that the word “exact” meant “perfectly done,” according to Robert Cawdrey’s 1604 *Table Alphabetical*. Moreover, we observed that the OED presents the following “obsolete” meaning for the adjective form of “exact,” “perfected, consummate, ‘finished’.” Derived from the Latin *exactus*, the word carries meanings related to “consummate,” “complete,” and a bringing “to perfection.” The OED elaborates upon the meaning of the word “perfect” during the early 17th century with more detail than we can cover in this Lesson. It is instructive to note there is a connection between “exact” and “perfect” in definition 6.b., “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*).” The King James translators, according to their own testimony 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.” Their estimation of their work was that it was “exact” i.e., “perfectly done” in that it was “accurate,” “correct,” and “accurately reproducing or reflecting the original.” Put another way, they

viewed their work as perfectly representing the contents of the “original sacred tongues” in English.

- Second, in subsection eleven Smith stated the work of translators “perfected” the English Bible (See [Lesson 198](#)). 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 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 subsection eleven. 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.
- Third, “imperfections” in terms of “mean,” ungraceful, or unadorned language do not result in a translation not being the word of God.
- Lastly, Smith made all these statements within the framework of early 17th century understanding of the Reformation Text. Put another way, when the King James translators thought of the “original sacred tongues” they thought in terms of the Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Greek Received Text for the New Testament. These were the “golden pipes, or rather conduits, where-through the olive branches empty themselves into the gold,” that Smith spoke of in subsection thirteen. The prior English Bibles that the translators were surveying and polishing were based on the Reformation Era text. Consequently, when modern critics and commentators seek to leverage the Preface to advance the notion that the King James translators would have supported the modern Critical Text, modern text critical methodologies, and modern versions they are guilty of the historical error of “presentism” i.e., “the imposition of present-day values and assumptions on individuals and societies of the past.” (Wilson, 103) There is simply no evidence that the King James translators would have approved of modern text critical theory and practice and no amount of ahistorical leveraging of the Preface can alter this reality. Smith’s Preface and other primary source documents related to the AV need to be historically contextualized with an early 17th century framework. Myles Smith, speaking on behalf of the translators in the Preface, believed that their work “perfected” or completed the process of setting forth the Reformation Era text in English. The King James translators believed their work to be “more exact” i.e., “perfectly done” in the sense of OED definition 6.b., “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.” Their estimation of their work was that it was “accurate,” “correct,” and “accurately reproducing or reflecting the original.” Put another way, they viewed their work as perfectly representing the contents of the “original sacred tongues” in English. They believed they had fulfilled the King’s desire for “one uniform translation” (Barlow, 47) by the creation of “one principal good one” that “not justly to be excepted against.”

- Returning now to the text of the Preface, in the next sentence Myles Smith accuses the Roman Catholic Church of despising “the spirit of grace” by “daring to burn the Word translated.”
 - “The Romanists therefore in refusing to hear, and daring to burn the Word translated, did no less than despite the spirit of grace, from whom originally it proceeded, and whose sense and meaning, as well as man's weakness would enable, it did express.”
- Following this sentence, Smith provides two examples, one from secular history and another from scripture.
 - “Judge by an example or two. *Plutarch* writeth, that after that *Rome* had been burnt by the *Gauls*, they fell soon to build it again: but doing it in haste, they did not cast the streets, nor proportion the houses in such comely fashion, as had been most slightly and convenient; was *Catiline* therefore an honest man, or a good patriot, that sought to bring it to a combustion? Or *Nero* a good Prince, that did indeed set it on fire? So, by the story of *Ezra*, and the prophecy of *Haggai* it may be gathered, that the Temple built by *Zerubbabel* after the return from *Babylon*, was by no means to be compared to the former built by *Solomon* (for they that remembered the former, wept when they considered the latter) [Ezra 3:12] notwithstanding, might this latter either have been abhorred and forsaken by the *Jews*, or profaned by the *Greeks*?”
- I take the examples of Rome burning and being rebuilt and, likewise, for Israel’s Temple to be illustrating the point even though they were “meaner” i.e., not as splendid or ornate they were still revered and respected, nonetheless.
- In the next portion, Smith applies the reasoning set forth in the first half of paragraph thirteen to “translations” of the word of God.
 - “The like we are to think of Translations. The translation of the *Seventy* dissenteth from the Original in many places, neither doth it come near it, for perspicuity, gravity, majesty; yet which of the Apostles did condemn it? Condemn it? Nay, they used it, (as it is apparent, and as Saint *Jerome* and most learned men do confess) which they would not have done, nor by their example of using it, so grace and commend it to the Church, if it had been unworthy of the appellation and name of the word of God. And whereas they urge for their second defence of their vilifying and abusing of the *English* Bibles, or some pieces thereof, which they meet with, for that heretics (forsooth) were the Authors of the translations, (heretics they call us by the same right that they call themselves Catholics, both being wrong) we marvel what divinity taught them so.”
- According to Smith, the Apostles used the “translation of the seventy” (LXX) despite the fact that it “dissenteth from the Original in many places” and could not compare in terms of “perspicuity,” “gravity,” and “majesty;” i.e., it was “mean.” That Apostles would not have done this if the LXX “had been unworthy of the appellation and name of the word of God.” Smith’s overarching point here is that translations, even “mean” ones, are still the word of God despite any Catholic claims to the contrary.

- Next, Smith takes up a second defense offered by his Roman Catholic advisories for “vilifying and abusing of the *English Bibles*” namely “that heretics (forsooth) were the Authors of the translations.” Put another way, the Catholic Church justified burning the work of Tyndale, Coverdale, and Matthews because they were heretics according to the Church. Skipping the parenthesis for a movement, Smith “marvels” at what “divinity” taught the Catholics that the men in question were heretics. Within the parentheses Smith sarcastically questions by what “right” do the Catholics call those who translated the English Bible heretics or themselves Catholics, concluding that that they are “wrong” on both counts.
- Smith then contrasts the Catholic mind on these matters with those of Tertullian and Augustine.
 - “We are sure *Tertullian* was of another mind: *Ex personis probamus fidem, an ex fide personas?* Do we try men's faith by their persons? we should try their persons by their faith. Also *S. Augustine* was of another mind: for he lighting upon certain rules made by *Tychonius* a *Donatist*, for the better understanding of the word, was not ashamed to make use of them, yea, to insert them into his own book, with giving commendation to them so far forth as they were worthy to be commended, as is to be seen in *S. Augustine's* third book *De doctrina Christiana*.”
- From Tertullian, Smith draws out the principal that a man's person should be tried by their faith not the other way around. Meanwhile, Augustine was willing to incorporate a “commendation” unto, as far as he was able, “certain rules” of interpretation in his own book (*De doctrina Christiana*) even though they originated with heretical Donatist Tychonius. The Catholics by contrast were not willing to follow suit, according to Smith.
- Smith's final illustration in paragraph thirteen pertains to the actions of Origen and the “whole Church of God” towards the Ebionite translation of Aquila and Theodotion.
 - “To be short, *Origen*, and the whole Church of God for certain hundred years, were of another mind: for they were so far from treading under foot, (much more from burning) the Translation of *Aquila* a Proselyte, that is, one that had turned *Jew*; of *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*, both *Ebionites*, that is, most vile heretics, that they joined together with the *Hebrew* Original, and the Translation of the *Seventy* (as hath been before signified out of *Epiphanius*) and set them forth openly to be considered of and perused by all.”
- While Smith's exact point here regarding Origen is a little murky, I take him to be saying that neither Origen nor “the whole Church of God” treated the translational work of the Heretical Ebionites Aquila and Theodotion in the same manner that the Church of Rome treated Protestant English Bibles.
- Finally, Smith concludes the paragraph by stating,
 - “But we weary the unlearned, who need not know so much, and trouble the learned, who know it already.”
- In the next Lesson we will look at the remainder of subsection twelve by considering paragraph fourteen.

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Sunday, April 2, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*

Lesson 200 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Answer to Adversaries, Cont.)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 199](#) we began looking at subsection twelve of the Preface to the AV 1611 titled “An Answer To The Imputations of Our Adversaries”. Myles Smith answers the Roman Catholic opposition to King James’ project to create “one uniform translation” of the Bible into English. This took shape around a revision of the Bishops Bible by comparing it to the “original Sacred tongues” as well as prior English Bibles. Among Romanists, this engendered an objection that the Protestants are constantly revising their Bible. Answering these Roman Catholic imputations is the primary focus of subsection twelve.

An Answer To The Imputations of Our Adversaries

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶13) Now to the latter we answer; that we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession, (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God. As the King's speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into <i>French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin</i> , is still the King's speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere. For it is confessed, that things are to take their denomination of the greater part; and a natural man could say, <i>Verum ubi multa nitent in carmine, non ego paucis offendor maculis, etc.</i> A man may be counted a virtuous man, though he have made many slips in his life, (else, there were none virtuous, <i>for in many things we offend all</i>) also a comely man and lovely, though he have some warts upon his hand, yea, not only freckles upon his face, but also scars. No cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be current, notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it. For whatever was perfect under the Sun, where Apostles or Apostolic men, that is, men endued with an extraordinary measure of God's spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hand? The Romanists therefore in refusing to hear, and daring to burn the Word translated, did no less than despite the spirit of grace, from whom originally it proceeded, and whose sense and meaning, as well as man's	¶13) “Now to answer our enemies: we do not deny, rather we affirm and insist that the very worst translation of the Bible in English issued by Protestants (for we have seen no Catholic version of the whole Bible as yet) contains the word of God, or rather, is the word of God. In the same way, when the King’s speech delivered in Parliament is translated into French, German, Italian, and Latin, it is still the King’s speech, even if it is not interpreted by every translator with the same skill, or perhaps with as appropriate phrasing or always with as great clarity. For as everyone knows, things are classified by their major characteristics. Anyone will admit that a person may be regarded as virtuous even though he has made many slips during his life, otherwise no one could be called virtuous, because “all of us make many mistakes” (James 3.2). A person may be called handsome and charming, even though he may have some warts on his hand, and not only some freckles on his face, but also scars. So there is no reason why the word when it is translated should be denied to be the word, or should be declared inauthentic, simply because there may be some imperfections and blemishes in the way it is published. For has there been anything perfect under the sun in which Apostles or their colleagues, people endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, were not involved? Therefore when the Romanists refused to hear, and even dared to burn the word when it is translated, they were only showing contempt for the Spirit of grace from whom it came originally, and whose sense and meaning it expressed as well

weakness would enable, it did express. Judge by an example or two. *Plutarch* writeth, that after that *Rome* had been burnt by the *Gauls*, they fell soon to build it again: but doing it in haste, they did not cast the streets, nor proportion the houses in such comely fashion, as had been most slightly and convenient; was *Catiline* therefore an honest man, or a good patriot, that sought to bring it to a combustion? Or *Nero* a good Prince, that did indeed set it on fire? So, by the story of *Ezra*, and the prophecy of *Haggai* it may be gathered, that the Temple built by *Zerubbabel* after the return from *Babylon*, was by no means to be compared to the former built by *Solomon* (for they that remembered the former, wept when they considered the latter) notwithstanding, might this latter either have been abhorred and forsaken by the *Jews*, or profaned by the *Greeks*? The like we are to think of Translations. The translation of the *Seventy* dissenteth from the Original in many places, neither doth it come near it, for perspicuity, gravity, majesty; yet which of the Apostles did condemn it? Condemn it? Nay, they used it, (as it is apparent, and as Saint *Jerome* and most learned men do confess) which they would not have done, nor by their example of using it, so grace and commend it to the Church, if it had been unworthy of the appellation and name of the word of God. And whereas they urge for their second defence of their vilifying and abusing of the *English* Bibles, or some pieces thereof, which they meet with, for that heretics (forsooth) were the Authors of the translations, (heretics they call us by the same right that they call themselves Catholics, both being wrong) we marvel what divinity taught them so. We are sure *Tertullian* was of another mind: *Ex personis probamus fidem, an ex fide personas*? Do we try men's faith by their persons? we should try their persons by their faith. Also *S. Augustine* was of another mind: for he lighting upon certain rules made by *Tychonius* a *Donatist*, for the better understanding of the word, was not ashamed to make use of them, yea, to insert them into his own book, with giving commendation to them so far forth as they were worthy to be commended, as is to be seen in *S. Augustine's* third book *De doctrina Christiana*. To be short, *Origen*, and the whole Church of God for certain hundred years, were of another mind: for they were so far from treading under foot, (much more from burning) the Translation of

as humanly possible. Consider some parallels. *Plutarch* writes that after *Rome* had been burnt by the *Gauls*, they soon set about rebuilding it. But they did it in haste, and they did not plan the streets or design the houses in the most attractive or practical way. Was *Catiline* therefore an honorable man, or a good patriot, when he tried to destroy it? Or was *Nero* a good prince, when he actually set it on fire? From the account of *Ezra* (*Ezra* 3.12) and the prophecy of *Haggai* (*Haggai* 2.3) it may be inferred that the temple built by *Zerubbabel* after the return from *Babylon* was in no way comparable to the one built earlier by *Solomon*. People who remembered the earlier one wept when they saw it, and yet was the new temple either regarded with disgust and rejected by the *Jews*, or profaned by the *Greeks*? We should think in the same way about translations. The translation of the *Septuagint* departs from the original in many places, and it does not come near the Hebrew for clarity, gravity, and majesty. And yet did any of the Apostles condemn it? Condemn it? Obviously they used it (as *St. Jerome* and most scholars confess), and they would not have done this, nor by their example of using it so honor and commend it to the Church, if it had been unworthy of the dignity and name of the word of God. Then they argue as their second reason, for vilifying and abusing *English* Bibles, or the portions of it they have seen, that the translations were made by heretics (they call us heretics by the same right that they call themselves Catholics, and they are wrong on both counts). This logic makes us wonder. We are sure *Tertullian* disagrees: "Do we judge peoples' faith by who they are? We should judge who they are by their faith." *St. Augustine* also disagrees, for when he found certain rules made by *Tychonius*, a *Donatist*, for better understanding the Word, he was not ashamed to make use of them, and even to insert them into his own book, duly commending them to the extent they were worth being commended (see his *De Doctrina Christiana*, book 3). In short, *Origen* together with the whole Church of God for some hundred years disagreed: they were so far from rejecting, much less from burning the translations by *Aquila*, a proselyte (i.e., a Jew by conversion), by *Symmachus* and by *Theodotion*, both *Ebionites* (i.e., vile heretics), that they added them together with the Hebrew original and the *Septuagint* (as

Aquila a Proselyte, that is, one that had turned Jew; of *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*, both *Ebionites*, that is, most vile heretics, that they joined together with the *Hebrew* Original, and the Translation of the *Seventy* (as hath been before signified out of *Epiphanius*) and set them forth openly to be considered of and perused by all. But we weary the unlearned, who need not know so much, and trouble the learned, who know it already.

¶14) Yet before we end, we must answer a third cavil and objection of theirs against us, for altering and amending our Translations so oft; wherein truly they deal hardly, and strangely with us. For to whomever was it imputed for a fault (by such as were wise) to go over that which he had done, and to amend it where he saw cause? Saint *Augustine* was not afraid to exhort *S. Jerome* to a *Palinodia* or recantation; and doth even glory that he seeth his infirmities. If we be sons of the Truth, we must consider what it speaketh, and trample upon our own credit, yea, and upon other men's too, if either be any way an hindrance to it. This to the cause: then to the persons we say, that of all men they ought to be most silent in this case. For what varieties have they, and what alterations have they made, not only of their Service books, Portesses and Breviaries, but also of their *Latin* Translation? The Service book supposed to be made by *S. Ambrose* (*Officium Ambrosianum*) was a great while in special use and request; but Pope *Hadrian* calling a Council with the aid of Charles the Emperor, abolished it, yea, burnt it, and commanded the Service book of Saint *Gregory* universally to be used. Well, *Officium Gregorianum* gets by this means to be in credit, but doth it continue without change or altering? No, the very *Roman* Service was of two fashions, the New fashion, and the Old, (the one used in one Church, the other in another) as is to be seen in *Pamelius* a Romanist, his Preface, before *Micrologus*. the same *Pamelius* reporteth out *Radulphus de Rivo*, that about the year of our Lord, 1277, Pope *Nicolas* the Third removed out of the Churches of *Rome*, the more ancient books (of Service) and brought into use the Missals of the Friars Minorites, and commanded them to be observed there; insomuch that about an hundred years after, when the above name *Radulphus* happened to be at *Rome*, he found all the books to be new, (of the new stamp). Neither were there

noted by *Epiphanius* above), and published them openly to be considered and read by everyone. But this is tiresome for the general reader who is not interested, and boring for scholars, who know it already.

¶14) Yet before we finish, we must answer a third complaint and objection of theirs against us, of altering and amending our translations so often. This is truly a bold and odd accusation. For who was ever faulted (by anyone knowledgeable) for going over what they had done, and amending it where necessary? St. *Augustine* was not afraid to exhort St. *Jerome* to a *Palinodia* or reconsideration. The same St. *Augustine* was not ashamed to retract, we might say, revoke, many things he had written, and even boasts of seeing his own weaknesses. If we are to be loyal to the truth, we must be attentive to what it says, and disregard our own interests, and other men's too, if either stand in the way. So much for principles. Now to the accusers themselves we would say that of all people they have the least right to raise the charge. For how many different editions do they have, and how many alterations have they made, not only in their service books, manuals, and breviaries, but also in their Latin translation? The service book attributed to St. *Ambrose* (*Officium Ambrosianum*) had been in use and in great demand for a long while when Pope *Adrian* called a council with the aid of Charles the Emperor, and not only abolished it, but had it burnt, and commanded the service book of St. *Gregory* to be used universally. Then after the *Officium Gregorianum* is recognized as the authorized text, does it escape change or alteration? No, the Roman service itself was in two forms: the new form, and the old. The one was used in some churches, and the other in others, as the Romanist *Pamelius* notes in his preface to *Micrologus*. The same *Pamelius* cites *Radulphus de Rivo* to the effect that about A.D. 1277 Pope *Nicholas III* removed earlier service books from the churches of *Rome* and introduced the use of the Friars Minorites' missals, commanding them to be observed there, so that when *Radulphus* happened to be in *Rome* about a

this chopping and changing in the more ancient times only, but also of late: *Pius Quintus* himself confesseth, that every Bishopric almost had a peculiar kind of service, most unlike to that which others had: which moved him to abolish all other Breviaries, though never so ancient, and privileged and published by Bishops in their Dioceses, and to establish and ratify that only which was of his own setting forth, in the year 1568. Now when the father of their Church, who gladly would heal the sore of the daughter of his people softly and slightly, and make the best of it, findeth so great fault with them for their odds and jarring; we hope the children have no great cause to vaunt of their uniformity. But the difference that appeareth between our Translations, and our often correcting of them, is the thing that we are specially charged with; let us see therefore whether they themselves be without fault this way, (if it be to be counted a fault, to correct) and whether they be fit men to throw stones at us: *O tandem maior parcas insane minori*: they that are less sound themselves, out not to object infirmities to others. If we should tell them that *Valla*, *Stapulensis*, *Erasmus*, and *Vives* found fault with their vulgar Translation, and consequently wished the same to be mended, or a new one to be made, they would answer peradventure, that we produced their enemies for witnesses against them; albeit, they were in no other sort enemies, than as *S. Paul* was to the *Galatians*, for telling them the truth [Gal 4:16]: and it were to be wished, that they had dared to tell it them plainlier and oftener. But what will they say to this, that Pope *Leo* the Tenth allowed *Erasmus'* Translation of the New Testament, so much different from the vulgar, by his Apostolic Letter and Bull; that the same *Leo* exhorted *Pagnine* to translate the whole Bible, and bare whatsoever charges was necessary for the work? Surely, as the Apostle reasoneth to the *Hebrews*, that *if the former Law and Testament had been sufficient, there had been no need of the latter*: so we may say, that if the old vulgar had been at all points allowable, to small purpose had labour and charges been undergone, about framing of a new. 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

hundred years later, he found all the books to be new, of the new edition. Nor was this shifting back and forth done only in earlier times, but it has happened recently also. *Pius V* himself admits that almost every bishopric had its own kind of service, unlike the ones which others had. This moved him to abolish all the other breviaries, however ancient, privileged and published by Bishops in their Dioceses, and to establish and ratify only the one which he himself published in the year 1568. Now when the Father of their Church, who would gladly heal the sore of the daughter of his people gently and easily, and make the best of it, finds so much fault with them for their differences and inconsistencies, we hope the children have no great reason to boast of their uniformity. But the differences that appear among our translations, and our frequent corrections of them, is what we are charged with specifically. Let us see therefore whether they themselves are without fault in this respect (if it is a fault to make corrections), and whether they are qualified to throw stones at us: "they that are less healthy themselves ought not point out the infirmities of others" (Horace). If we should tell them that *Valla*, *Lefevre d'Etaples*, *Erasmus*, and *Vives* found fault with their Vulgate version, and consequently wished that either it should be corrected or a new version should be made, they would probably answer that we produced their enemies as witnesses against them. Yet they were no more enemies than *St. Paul* was to the *Galatians* for telling them the truth. If only they had dared tell them more plainly and oftener! But what will they say to the fact that Pope *Leo X*, by his Apostolic Letter and bull, sanctioned *Erasmus'* translation of the New Testament, which differs so much from the Vulgate? And that the same *Leo* encouraged *Pagninus* to translate the whole Bible, and provided all the expenses necessary for the work? Surely, as the Apostle reasons to the *Hebrews* (7.11; 8.7), if the former Law and Testament had been sufficient, there would have been no need of another. Similarly, if the old Vulgate had been completely adequate, there would be little reason to go to the labor and expense of preparing a new version. If they argue that this was only one Pope's private opinion, and that he consulted only himself, then we can go further and demonstrate that many more of their leaders, including their own champions at the

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. And call they this an uniform tenor of text and judgment about the text, so many of their Worthies disclaiming the now received conceit? Nay, we will yet come nearer the quick: doth not their *Paris* edition differ from the *Lovaine*, and *Hentenius* his from them both, and yet all of them allowed by authority? Nay, doth not *Sixtus Quintus* confess, that certain Catholics (he meaneth certain of his own side) were in such an humor of translating the Scriptures into *Latin*, that Satan taking occasion by them, though they thought of no such matter, did strive what he could, out of so uncertain and manifold a variety of Translations, so to mingle all things, that nothing might seem to be left certain and firm in them, etc.? Nay, further, did not the same *Sixtus* ordain by an inviolable decree, and that with the counsel and consent of his Cardinals, that the *Latin* edition of the old and New Testament, which the Council of *Trent* would have to be authentic, is the same without controversy which he then set forth, being diligently corrected and printed in the Printing-house of *Vatican*? Thus *Sixtus* in his Preface before his Bible. And yet *Clement* the Eighth his immediate successor, published another edition of the Bible, containing in it infinite differences from that of *Sixtus*, (and many of them weighty and material) and yet this must be authentic by all means. What is to have the faith of our glorious Lord JESUS CHRIST with Yea or Nay, if this be not? Again, what is sweet harmony and consent, if this be? Therefore, as *Demaratus* of *Corinth* advised a great King, before he talked of the dissensions of the *Grecians*, to compose his domestic broils (for at that time his Queen and his son and heir were at deadly feud with him) so all the while that our adversaries do make so many and so various editions themselves, and do jar so much about the worth and authority of them, they can with no show of equity challenge us for changing and correcting.

Council of *Trent*, *Paiva* and *Vega*, and their own Inquisitors, *Hieronymus ab Oleastro*, and their own Bishop *Isidorus Clarius*, and their own Cardinal *Thomas a Vio Cajetan*, either make new translations themselves, or follow new ones that others have made, or note defects in the *Vulgate* version, without any fear of dissenting from it or disagreeing with it. And do they claim to represent a consistency of text and of judgment about the text, when so many of their own worthies disclaim the currently accepted opinion? But let us be more explicit. Does their *Paris* edition not differ from the *Louvain* edition, and *Hentenius*'s edition differ from both, and yet all of them are sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority? And does *Sixtus V* not admit that some Catholics (he means some of his own persuasion) were so eagerly making translations of the Scriptures into *Latin*, that although they did not intend it, Satan could exploit the opportunity to show that such a variety of translations is confusing, and proves that nothing seems to be left certain and firm in them, etc.? And further, did the same *Sixtus* not ordain by an inviolable decree, with the counsel and consent of his Cardinals, that the *Latin* edition of the Old and New Testaments, which the Council of *Trent* pronounces to be authoritative, is precisely the one which he then published in a carefully corrected edition, printed by the *Vatican Press*? *Sixtus* states this in the Preface to his Bible. And yet *Clement VIII*, his immediate successor, publishes another edition of the Bible, containing innumerable differences from that of *Sixtus*, many of which are weighty and substantial, and this edition is declared absolutely authoritative. If this is not an example of vacillating with the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, what is? What kind of sweet harmony and consistency is this? Therefore, as *Demaratus* of *Corinth* advised the great king *Philip* of *Macedon*, before criticizing the dissensions among the *Greeks*, he should settle his own domestic broils (for at that time his queen and his son and heir were in a deadly feud with him). So when our enemies are making so many different versions themselves and debating their value and authority, they cannot fairly challenge our right to revise and correct. (Rhodes & Lupas 78-81)

- Please recall from [Lesson 199](#) that subsection twelve titled “An Answer To The Imputations of Our Adversaries” spans two dense paragraphs (§13 and 14) of information as Myles Smith seeks to answer the translators’ Roman Catholic “adversaries.” Having dealt with the contents of paragraph thirteen in the previous Lesson, we will now turn our attention to unpacking the contents of paragraph fourteen.
- Smith opens paragraph fourteen with the following statement:
 - “Yet before we end, we must answer a third cavil and objection of theirs against us, for altering and amending our Translations so oft; wherein truly they deal hardly, and strangely with us. For to whomever was it imputed for a fault (by such as were wise) to go over that which he had done, and to amend it where he saw cause?”
- Before moving on, Smith offers “a third cavil and objection of theirs against us.” The English noun “cavil” carries the following meanings according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED):
 - 1. A captious, quibbling, or frivolous objection.
 - 2. The raising of frivolous objections; cavilling.
- Thus a “cavil” is a frivolous complaint. Smith identifies that there is a third “cavil and objection” that he feels he is compelled to answer. Naturally, this ought to raise the question, “what were the first two complaints/objections that Smith answered. We must therefore look back to paragraph thirteen to remind ourselves of the cavilling that Smith has already addressed.
 - Romanists have despised the spirit of grace that gave men the word of God by opposing English translations.
 - “Now to the latter we answer, that we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession, (for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God.” Therefore, “the Romanists . . . in refusing to hear, and daring to burn the Word translated, did no less than despite the spirit of grace, from whom originally it proceeded, and whose sense and meaning, as well as man's weakness would enable, it did express.”
 - Romanists defended their burning of English translations by arguing they were produced by heretics.
 - “And whereas they urge for their second defense of their vilifying and abusing of the *English* Bibles, or some pieces thereof, which they meet with, for that heretics (forsooth) were the Authors of the translations, (heretics they call us by the same right that they call themselves Catholics, both being wrong) we marvel what divinity taught them so.”
- The “third cavil” that Smith addressed in paragraph fourteen is related to the Catholic complaint that the Protestants were often “altering and amending” their translations. Smith views this as

“hard” and “strange” treatment by their Catholic opposition. Why should going over and amending one’s work be “imputed for a fault,” Smith wonders? Smith offers Augustine’s exhortation to Jerome to recant as well as his acknowledgement of his own “infirmities” as evidence of our need to change our minds as men.

- “Saint *Augustine* was not afraid to exhort S. *Jerome* to a *Palinodia* or recantation; and doth even glory that he seeth his infirmities.”
- According to Smith, Augustine’s ability to admit his own infirmities/errors is a “glory” unto him. Smith would have all men behave in such a manner.
 - “If we be sons of the Truth, we must consider what it speaketh, and trample upon our own credit, yea, and upon other men’s too, if either be any way an hindrance to it. This to the cause: then to the persons we say, that of all men they ought to be most silent in this case.”
- Smith argues that in the cause of truth men must be willing to “trample upon” their own thoughts/ideas as well as those of other men that are deemed out of step with the truth.
- Next, Smith turns his attention to the fact that the translators’ Catholic adversaries have revised their own books and translations many times while at the same cause deriding their Protestant opposition for doing likewise.
 - “For what varieties have they, and what alterations have they made, not only of their Service books, Portesses and Breviaries, but also of their *Latin* Translation?”
- Smith provides many historical examples of how the Roman Church altered their Service books.
 - “The Service book supposed to be made by S. *Ambrose* (*Officium Ambrosianum*) was a great while in special use and request; but Pope *Hadrian* calling a Council with the aid of Charles the Emperor, abolished it, yea, burnt it, and commanded the Service book of Saint *Gregory* universally to be used. Well, *Officium Gregorianum* gets by this means to be in credit, but doth it continue without change or altering? No, the very *Roman* Service was of two fashions, the New fashion, and the Old, (the one used in one Church, the other in another) as is to be seen in *Pamelius* a Romanist, his Preface, before *Micrologus*. the same *Pamelius* reporteth out *Radulphus de Rivo*, that about the year of our Lord, 1277, Pope *Nicolas* the Third removed out of the Churches of *Rome*, the more ancient books (of Service) and brought into use the Missals of the Friars Minorites, and commanded them to be observed there; insomuch that about an hundred years after, when the above name *Radulphus* happened to be at *Rome*, he found all the books to be new, (of the new stamp). Neither were there this chopping and changing in the more ancient times only, but also of late: *Pius Quintus* himself confesseth, that every Bishopric almost had a peculiar kind of service, most unlike to that which others had: which moved him to abolish all other Breviaries, though never so ancient, and privileged and published by Bishops in their Dioceses, and to establish and ratify that only which was of his own setting forth, in the year 1568. Now when the father of their Church, who gladly would heal the sore of the daughter of his people softly and slightly, and make the best of it, findeth so great fault

with them for their odds and jarring; we hope the children have no great cause to vaunt of their uniformity.”

- Put another way, the Roman Church has a long history of revising its “Service book.” Therefore, Smith argues that “the children” of Rome “have no great cause to vaunt of their uniformity,” because there was none.
- In the next sentence Smith shifts his focus from the Catholics’ revised “Service book” to translations of the scriptures. Specifically, he takes up the charge of whether the Catholics are fair in their criticism that Protestants are “often correcting” their translations.
 - “But the difference that appeareth between our Translations, and our often correcting of them, is the thing that we are specially charged with; let us see therefore whether they themselves be without fault this way, (if it be to be counted a fault, to correct) and whether they be fit men to throw stones at us: *O tandem maior parcas insane minori*: they that are less sound themselves, out not to object infirmities to others.”
- Ultimately, Smith views that the Catholics are not above reproach themselves on the matter of “often correcting” their translation and therefore should not “throw stones” and not “object infirmities to others” that they themselves are guilty of. In the next section Smith provides historical evidence to buttress his position.
 - “If we should tell them that *Valla*, *Stapulensis*, *Erasmus*, and *Vives* found fault with their vulgar Translation, and consequently wished the same to be mended, or a new one to be made, they would answer peradventure, that we produced their enemies for witnesses against them; albeit, they were in no other sort enemies, than as *S. Paul* was to the *Galatians*, for telling them the truth [Gal 4:16]: and it were to be wished, that they had dared to tell it them plainlier and oftener.”
- Here Smith is reminding the Catholics of historical examples from within their own ranks (Lorenzo Valla, Stapulenis, Erasmus, and Vines) who “found fault with their vulgar Translation, and consequently wished the same to be mended, or a new one to be made.” Recall from [Lesson 100](#) that when Erasmus published his first edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516, it was accompanied by a revised Latin text. Smith heads off at the pass any Catholic argument that the four names mentioned were enemies of the Catholic Church by alluding to Galatians 4:16, “Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” If it is so that the Catholics viewed Erasmus and company as enemies of the Church, “it were to be wished, that they had dared to tell it them plainlier and oftener.”
- Next, Smith provides historical evidence of Papal desire to revise the “vulgar” Latin.
 - “But what will they say to this, that Pope *Leo* the Tenth allowed *Erasmus*’ Translation of the New Testament, so much different from the vulgar, by his Apostolic Letter and Bull; that the same *Leo* exhorted *Pagnine* to translate the whole Bible, and bare whatsoever charges was necessary for the work? Surely, as the Apostle reasoneth to the *Hebrews*, that *if the former Law and Testament had been sufficient, there had been no need of the latter*: [Heb 7:11, 8:7] so we may say, that if the old vulgar had been at all points

allowable, to small purpose had labour and charges been undergone, about framing of a new.”

- Anticipating the charge that such was “one Pope’s private opinion,” Smith cites an array of Jesuits and Inquisitors who made, used, or advocated for revised editions of the Latin Vulgate.
 - “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, *Hieronymus 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. And call they this an uniform tenor of text and judgment about the text, so many of their Worthies disclaiming the now received conceit?”
- The last sentence of the above quote is dripping with sarcasm. Having cited historical examples of Catholic officials using revised Vulgate editions, Smith derides them for calling their position “uniform” when compared to that of the Protestant, “And call they this an uniform tenor of text and judgment about the text, so many of their Worthies disclaiming the now received conceit?”
- In the final portion of the paragraph Smith cuts to the “quick” of the Roman Catholic opposition to revising the Bible by factually pointing out the utter hypocrisy of Rome’s position.
 - “Nay, further, did not the same *Sixtus* ordain by an inviolable decree, and that with the counsel and consent of his Cardinals, that the *Latin* edition of the old and New Testament, which the Council of *Trent* would have to be authentic, is the same without controversy which he then set forth, being diligently corrected and printed in the Printing-house of *Vatican*? Thus *Sixtus* in his Preface before his Bible. And yet *Clement* the Eighth his immediate successor, published another edition of the Bible, containing in it infinite differences from that of *Sixtus*, (and many of them weighty and material) and yet this must be authentic by all means. What is to have the faith of our glorious Lord JESUS CHRIST with Yea or Nay, if this be not? Again, what is sweet harmony and consent, if this be? Therefore, as *Demaratus* of *Corinth* advised a great King, before he talked of the dissensions of the *Grecians*, to compose his domestic broils (for at that time his Queen and his son and heir were at deadly feud with him) so all the while that our adversaries do make so many and so various editions themselves, and do jar so much about the worth and authority of them, they can with no show of equity challenge us for changing and correcting.”
- In response to the Protestant Reformation, the Council of Trent ruled that the Latin Vulgate was absolutely “authentic” and infallible. Yet, the two principal Reformation Era editions of the Vulgate by Sixtus and Clement VIII were not identical to each other. The Clementine Vulgate of 1592 differed from the Sixtine edition deemed “authentic” by the Council of Trent a few decades earlier. According to Smith, these two editions of the Vulgate contain “infinite differences” many of which are “weighty and material” and yet both are deemed “authentic” by Catholics.

- Smith concluded subsection twelve by calling out the duplicity of the Romanists on this point, “so all the while that our adversaries do make so many and so various editions themselves and do jar so much about the worth and authority of them, they can with no show of equity challenge us for changing and correcting.”
- In the end, the translators’ Catholic enemies were guilty of the same charge that they had been leveling at their Protestant opponents, “changing and correcting” their editions of the Bible.
- 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 imputation they were leveling against Protestant translators i.e., changing, correcting, and revising the Latin Vulgate.

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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 Sixtus 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. detriti 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 Calumny [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, *Hieronymus 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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Sunday, April 23, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*

Lesson 202 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Purpose, Number, Furniture, & Care)

Introduction

- In Lesson 201 we began looking at subsection thirteen to Myles Smith's famous Preface to the AV of 1611, "The Translators to the Reader." Titled "The Purpose of the Translators, With Their Number, Furniture, Care, Etc.", subsection thirteen sets forth four things regarding the translation from the point of view of the translators: 1) their purpose, 2) their number, 3) their furniture, and 4) their care.
- In the previous Lesson we covered the following two points:
 - What Does "Furniture" Mean In the Title to Subsection Thirteen?
 - Their Purpose
- In this Lesson our goal is to continue looking at subsection thirteen by considering the following three points:
 - Their Number
 - Their Furniture
 - Their Care

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 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. 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 saith) but <i>exercitati</i> , that is, learned, not to learn:	¶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 Sixtus 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 the chief overseer and supervisor under his

For the chief overseer and [NOTE: Greek letters omitted] 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 [NOTE: Greek letters omitted] 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. detriti 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 a 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 *Septuagint* did, if that be true which is

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 they finished it in seventy-two days. Nor were we

<p>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 <i>S. 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>restricted or hindered from going over it again, once we had done it, like <i>St. Jerome</i>, 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 <i>Origen</i>, 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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Their Number

- After having set forth the translator's purpose as follows, "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, . . . 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," Smith turns his attention to the translators "number" in the next line.
 - "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."
- Smith never states the exact number of the translators that were chosen. Rather he simply states that "there were many chosen" to the "purpose" identified in Lesson 201. Please recall from [Lesson 160](#) that the exact number of translators is debated by historians.

- “Though Bishop (soon to be Archbishop) Richard Bancroft circulated a letter from the King, sealed 22 July 1604, that states ‘we have appointed certain learned men, to the number of four and fifty,’ the surviving lists gives forty-seven names, divided into six companies, two each at Westminster, Oxford, and Cambridge.” (Norton, 54)
- Oxford scholar Gordon Campbell concurs with Dr. Norton that “the surviving lists of translators are not entirely consistent.” (Campbell, 47) That said, “we know a good deal about most of them, and a majority were of sufficient standing in their profession to have been included in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.” (Campbell, 47)
- Regarding the “many” that were “chosen” Smith states, “that were greater in other men's eyes than in their own, and that sought the truth rather than their own praise.” While this is a very humble comment on the part of Smith, I see no reason not to take it at face value. Those who were “chosen” to participate in the work were selected on account of their great learning.
 - “Again, they came or were thought to come to the work, not *exercendi causa* (as one saith) but *exercitati*, that is, **learned, not to learn**: For the chief overseer and [NOTE: Greek letters omitted] 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 [NOTE: Greek letters omitted] **to learn and practice together, is neither commendable for the workman, nor safe for the work.**”
- Put another way, the work of translation could only be achieved by those who had already learned “the original sacred tongues.” It was not “commendable for the workman” or “safe for the work” for those laboring on the project to “teach first and to learn after.” Therefore, they came to the work as “learned” and “not to learn.” Smith attributes this “wisdom” to Archbishop Richard Bancroft “the chief overseer” and “his Majesty” King James I.
- Many authors have chronicled the amazing academic credentials and achievements of the King James translators. Consider but one example from Helen Moore and Julian Reid from their book published by the Bodleian Library in commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible, *Manifold Greatness: The Making of the King James Bible*:
 - “Socially, the translators came from varied backgrounds, some the sons of urban tradesmen, others the offspring of country gentlemen, or provincial artisans. The origins of some are entirely obscure. While all were members of the Church of England, they represented widely differing opinions of the essentials of doctrine and church discipline—salvation, justification, the wearing of vestments, the use of ritual, and so on, reflecting the tensions that existed within the Jacobean church. Academically, however, the translators inhabited the same world. An early education in Latin, the international language of scholarship, was followed by admission to university in their early to mid-teens to study for a Bachelor’s then perhaps a Master’s degree, encompassing a broad curriculum of Latin and Greek authors (including prose, poetry, drama, history, and

philosophy), mathematics and astronomy. They were expected to be able to compose in Greek and Latin, to translate into and out of those languages with ease, and to teach, debate, and converse in those languages as if they were their native tongues. Educated in a wide range of literary genres, they were acutely attuned not only to the meaning but also to the harmony, rhythm and cadence of the written and spoken word. Several of the translators taught themselves the biblical languages of Hebrew, Syriac and Aramaic, although these were not officially part of the curriculum, and many went on to hold official teaching posts within the University and their individual colleges. For the ablest, election to a college fellowship provided the chance to study for higher degrees, culminating in the doctorate of divinity, the ultimate goal for an ambitious scholar.” (Helen & Reid, 66-67)

- His Majesty’s desire that the project create “one uniform translation” and be conducted by the most “learned” men in his realm was captured by William Barlow at Hampton Court in *The Sum And Substance*:
 - “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) **and this to be done by the best learned in both the Universities**, after them to be reviewed by the Bishops, and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the Privy Council; and lastly, to be ratified by his Royal authority; and so this whole Church to be bound unto it and none other: . . .” (Barlow, 47)
- Next, Smith offers the following in support of the “learned” nature of the translators selected by Bishop Bancroft and King James.
 - “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. detriti 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.”
- The “learned” nature of the translators in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin extended from the “very cradle.” This is how “such were thought upon,” according to Myles Smith. The universality of the attainments of these men in the “original sacred tongues” was unmatched.
- In the next line Smith addresses the nature of their assemblage.
 - “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.”

- According to Smith, the translators did not trust in their own “knowledge,” “wit,” or “judgment.” Rather they prayed to the Lord beseeching Him for guidance.
 - “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.*”
- It was in this “confidence” and “devotion” that the translators assembled to do the work.
 - “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.”
- Once again, Smith never gives an exact number as to how many translators participated in the project. I am curious if he even knew himself. Instead, he says that they had the prefect number “not too many, lest one should trouble another” while at the same time, “and yet many, lest many things haply might escape them.”
- Having touched upon the translator’s “purpose” in Lesson 201 and their “number” in the present Lesson in the next line, Smith turns his attention to the “furniture” they used to complete their task as well as their “care” in doing so. While the first half of subsection thirteen was very orderly in terms of speaking about the translator’s “purpose” and then their “number” the second half of the paragraph fifteen goes back and forth between talking about the translator’s “furniture” and “care.”

Their Furniture

- Please recall from Lesson 201 that we discussed Myles Smith’s intended meaning when he used the word “furniture” in the title to subsection thirteen. I take Smith to be talking about the resources the translators 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.”
- In the next couple of lines, Smith elaborates on the Hebrew and Greek texts being “the two golden pipes, or rather conduits” that they were furnished for the completion of their task by quoting Augustine and Jerome.
 - “*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 a 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.”

- The King James translators used the Reformation Era Hebrew and Greek texts as the source for their translation. Given the standards of their day, this would have been the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Greek Textus Receptus. Herein lies the reason why the doctrine of preservation is so important to the defense of the pro-King James position. The King James translators were using the preserved Hebrew and Greek text when doing their work. As we observed in Lesson 201, there is no evidence that the King’s translators would have approved of continued revision of their work based upon the modern Critical Text and/or modern text critical methodologies and practice. Modern attempts to leverage the Preface to advance such an argument are ahistorical and guilty of the historical error of presentism.
- Later, in addition to the Hebrew and Greek texts, Smith identifies additional resources, implements, or “furniture” 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*; . . .”
- Simply stated, as “learned” men, the King James translators used every piece of “furniture” at their disposal when conducting their work. They left no stone unturned in their “perusal and survey of the Bible.”

Their Care

- In terms of “care” there are two major points that Smith touches upon: 1) speed and 2) thoroughness.
- First, Smith deals with the matter of speed or how long the translation process took (roughly, seven years). On this point, he references that legendary story from the Letter of Aristeus for how long it took to translate the Septuagint (LXX).
 - “Neither did we run over the work with that posting haste that the *Septuagint* 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. *Jerome*, 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 *Origen*, 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.”

- Note that Smith states that the translators did not “run over the work with that posting haste that the *Septuagint* did . . . that they finished it in 72 days.” So, the King James translators took their time when compared with the “haste” exhibited by those who created the LXX. It is important to note that Smith questioned the legendary story associated with the creation of the LXX when he wrote, “if that be true which is reported of them.” In contrast, Smith reports that the King James translators were not “barred or hindered from going over it again, having once done it.” Unlike Jerome and Origen, the translators were not “the first that fell in hand with translating the Scripture into English” and therefore were not “destitute of former helps.”
- In the next line Smith elaborates on how long the process took.
 - “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.”
- According to Smith, the project “hath cost the workmen” in that it was not completed in a mere 72 days but “twice seven times seventy two days and more.” A simple math mathematical computation of Smith statement renders the following results:
 - $7 \times 72 \text{ days} = 504 \text{ days}$
 - $2 \times 504 \text{ days} = 1,008$
 - $1,008 \text{ days} / 365 \text{ days in a year} = 2.8 \text{ years}$
 - Plus “more”. How much more?
- The undefined “more” as in more time, could have included more than four years depending on the contribution of each individual translator. For example, translators who served on the Committee of Final Review at the General Meeting at Stationers Hall in addition to their individual and Company work no doubt served longer than those who were done after they completed their Company work. An argument could be made that this additional time applied to Myles Smith himself. In addition to penning the Preface, Smith served on the First Oxford Company that worked on the Old Testament Prophets as well as seeing the project through to the press with the assistance of Thomas Bilson. Perhaps, the number represents an average amount of time served on the project though there is no way to know for sure.
- Another option is that Smith is just being apologetic in this statement as a means of answering those who complained that the project to create the King James Bible took too long. Smith’s statement is very similar to Christ’s admonition to Peter in the Gospel of Matthew regarding forgiveness.

- Matthew 18:33— Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.
- This view understands Smith’s statement to be a play on the scriptural idiom or figure of speech in Matthew 18:33. Just as Christ was not literally telling Peter to forgive someone 490 times, Smith is saying their work took much longer than the legendary view of the seventy translators who created the LXX.
- Perhaps a case could be made for both. An average of 2.8 years on a nearly seven-year project seems like it could be a reasonable average of time served.
- After noting how long the process took, Smith stated that, “matters of such weight and consequence [i.e., translating the scriptures] are to be speeded with maturity.” The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) uses this line from Smith’s Preface as a word usage example for definition two of its noun entry for “maturity:”
 - “†2. Deliberateness of action; mature consideration, due deliberation. *Obsolete.*”
- Put another way, “matters of such weight and consequence” can only be “speeded” as fast as “mature consideration” and “due deliberation” will allow.
- The OED also uses the following phrase from the Preface as a word usage example for the noun “slackness:” “for in a business of movement a man feareth not the blame of convenient slackness.” Definition two records the following meaning for “slackness:”
 - “2. Slowness; tardiness.”
- Meanwhile the OED defines “convenient” as follows in definition four of its entry for the adjective/noun form of the word:
 - “†4. Suitable, appropriate.
 - a. to or for a purpose, etc. *Obsolete.*
 - b. †b. Suitable to the conditions or circumstances; befitting the case; appropriate, proper, due. *Obsolete.*
 - c. †c. Of time: Due, proper. *Obsolete.*
- So, what did Myles Smith mean when he spoke of “convenient slackness” in the Preface? He was referring to “suitable” or “appropriate” “slowness” or “tardiness” in the execution of the work. Therefore, “in a business of movement a man feareth not the blame of convenient slackness” or the translators ought not be blamed for moving with suitable slowness to make sure their work was accurate.

- There are two primary reasons why the work progressed with “convenient slackness.” First was the consultation of all the available “furniture.”
 - “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*,”
- The translators exhausted every available resource in a host of languages when conducting their work. Please recall from [Lesson 165](#) that translator John Bois corresponded with French scholar Isaac Casaubon over the smallest details of a handful of Apocryphal readings. All of the cushions of the “furniture” were searched for loose change by the King James translators in an effort to extract every bit of meaning possible out of the original language texts.
- The second reason that progress of the King James Bible was “speeded” with “convenient slackness” was that the work was constantly evaluated and revised on the “anvil” of truth.
 - “. . . 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.”
- It is difficult to say exactly how many times the translators “hammered” their work on the “anvil.” A strict accounting based on the letter of Bancroft’s Rules has led some to conclude that the text was revised fourteen times. (O’Steen, 93) While it is true that Bancroft’s Rules sought to govern the process, there is evidence that the “rules” were both followed and not followed at the same time. Recall that [Lesson 159](#) was devoted to a consideration of to what extent the “rules” were followed. After looking at many different items, we concluded Lesson 159 with the following take away - the Rules were not followed like a hard and fast checklist. In the end, they served more as guidelines than rules. As Dr. Gordon Campbell pointed out in his book *Bible: The Story of the King James Version*:
 - “Rules formulated in advance of a project are inevitably adjusted to accord with the practicalities of the job. In the case of the KJV, there is evidence both of shortcuts and of going the extra mile.” (Campbell, 43)
- Regardless of how many times the “work” passed over the “anvil”, it is clear that translators used all the available “furniture” and took as long as they deemed necessary to create “one principal good” English Bible that was “not justly to be excepted against.”

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Sunday, May 7, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*

Lesson 203 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Diversity of Senses in The Margin)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 202](#) we concluded our study of subsection thirteen of Myles Smith’s famous Preface titled “The Purpose of the Translators with Their Number, Furniture, and Care, Etc.” In doing so we considered the following points:
 - Their Number
 - Their Furniture
 - Their Care
- In this Lesson we want to consider subsection fourteen of the Preface which is devoted to a defense of the use of marginal notes in the AV to set forth a “diversity of senses.”

Reasons Moving Us To Set Diversity of Senses In the Margin, Where There Is Great Probability For Each

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶16) Some peradventure would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority of the Scriptures for deciding of controversies by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be shaken. But we hold their judgment not to be sound in this point. For though, " <i>whatsoever things are necessary are manifest</i> ," as S. Chrysostom saith, and as S. Augustine, " <i>In those things that are plainly set down in the Scriptures, all such matters are found that concern Faith, Hope, and Charity</i> ." Yet for all that it cannot be dissembled, that partly to exercise and whet our wits, partly to wean the curious from the loathing of them for their everywhere plainness, partly also to stir up our devotion to crave the assistance of God's spirit by prayer, and lastly, that we might be forward to seek aid of our brethren by conference, and never scorn those that be not in all respects so complete as they should be, being to seek in many things ourselves, it hath pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it hath been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better beseem us than	¶16) “Some persons perhaps would want to have no alternative readings or renderings placed in the margin, for fear that any appearance of uncertainty might undermine the authority of the Scriptures as definitive. But we do not consider their judgment to be prudent on this point. It is true that “everything that is necessary is obvious.” as St. Chrysostom says, and as St. Augustine says, “the things that are stated clearly in the Scriptures include everything having to do with faith, hope, and love.” And yet the fact cannot be disguised that partly in order to keep us alert and make us use our intelligence, partly to keep sophisticated people from looking down on the Scriptures as too simple for them, partly also to encourage us to pray for the assistance of God’s Spirit, and finally, to make us look actively to our brethren for help through discussion (not looking down on people who are not as educated as they might be, since we too are ignorant in many areas), God has been pleased in his divine Providence to scatter here and there words and sentences that are difficult and ambiguous. These do not touch on doctrinal points that have to do with salvation (because we know that in these the Scriptures are clear), but on matters of less importance. Therefore we should

confidence, and if we will resolve upon modesty with S. *Augustine*, (though not in this same case altogether, yet upon the same ground) *Melius est debitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis*, "it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, than to strive about those things that are uncertain." There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once, (having neither brother or neighbor, as the *Hebrews* speak) so that we cannot be holpen by conference of places. Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. concerning the *Hebrews* themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment, that they may seem to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, than because they were sure of that which they said, as S. *Jerome* somewhere saith of the *Septuagint*. Now in such a case, doth not a margin do well to admonish the Reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that peremptorily? For as it is a fault of incredulity, to doubt of those things that are evident: so to determine of such things as the Spirit of God hath left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable, can be no less than presumption. Therefore as S. *Augustine* saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is no so clear, must needs do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded. We know that *Sixtus Quintus* expressly forbiddeth, that any variety of readings of their vulgar edition, should be put in the margin, (which though it be not altogether the same thing to that we have in hand, yet it looketh that way) but we think he hath not all of his own side his favorers, for this conceit. They that are wise, had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other. If they were sure that their high Priest had all laws shut up in his breast, as *Paul* the Second bragged, and that he were as free from error by special privilege, as the Dictators of *Rome* were made by law inviolable, it were another matter; then his word were an Oracle, his opinion a decision. But the eyes of the world are now open, God be thanked, and have been a great while, they find that he is subject to the same affections and infirmities that others be, that his skin is

be diffident rather than confident, and if we must make a choice, to choose modesty as did St. *Augustine*, who said about a situation that was similar though not identical, "It is better to be reserved about things which are not revealed, than to fight about things that are uncertain." There are many words in the Scriptures which are found there only once (with neither brother nor neighbor, as the *Hebrews* say) so that help cannot be gained by comparing passages. Again, there are many rare names for birds, animals, and gems, etc which the *Hebrews* themselves are so uncertain about that they seem to have defined them one way or another, more because they wanted to say something, than because they were sure of what they said, as St. *Jerome* says somewhere about the *Septuagint*. In such cases a marginal note is useful to advise the Reader to seek further and not to draw inferences or dogmatize rashly about this or that. For if it is the fault of incredulity to doubt what is evident, it can be no less than presumption to be definite about things that the Spirit of God has left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable. Therefore as St. *Augustine* says that alternative translations are profitable for finding out the meaning of the Scriptures, so also we believe that alternative readings in a marginal note, where the text is not clear must not only be good but even necessary. We know that *Sixtus V* specifically forbids any alternative readings to be put in the margin of their Vulgate edition (and although this is not precisely what we are discussing here, it is close), yet not all of his colleagues are in agreement with him in this. The wise would prefer a freedom of choice where there are differences of readings, rather than be restricted to one when there is an alternative. It would be different if they were sure that their high priest had all laws in hand, as *Paul II* bragged, and that he was by special privilege free from error just as the dictators of *Rome* were made legally inviolate. Then his word would be an oracle, and his opinion a decision. But the eyes of the world are open now, God be thanked, and they have been a great while They find that he is subject to the same feelings and weaknesses that others are, that he is human. Therefore they will recognize and accept only what he proves, and not everything that he claims. (Rhodes & Lupas, 82-83)

penetrable, and therefore so much as he proveth, not as much as he claimeth, they grant and embrace.	
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- As the title suggests, subsection fourteen of the Preface touches upon the marginal notes found in the 1611 edition of the AV. Before unpacking what Smith says about the nature of these notes it is important to remember what we have already learned about marginal notes in the story of the King James Bible.
- First, recall that one of the reasons why King James strongly objected to the Geneva Bible was on account of its marginal notes. Once again, we turn our attention to William Barlow’s account of the Hampton Court Conference as set forth in the *Sum and Substance* in which King James is reported to have stated the following:
 - “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**) and this to be done by the best learned in both the Universities, after them to be reviewed by the Bishops, and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the Privy Council; and lastly, to be ratified by his Royal authority; and so this whole Church to be bound unto it and none other: Mary, withal, he gave this caveat (**upon a word cast out by my Lord of London that no marginal notes should be added, having found in them which are annexed to the Geneva translation (which he saw in a Bible given him by an English Lady) some notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and favouring too much of dangerous, and traitorous conceits**) as, for example, Exod. 1:19, where the marginal notes alloweth disobedience to Kings. And 2 Chron. 15:16, the note taxeth Asa for deposing his mother, only, and not killing her.” (Barlow, 47)
- It turns out that James also believed that there needed to be “one uniform translation” but he would never sanction or recognize the Geneva Bible on account of its marginal notes that he viewed as seditious and undermining the Divine Right of Kings.
- Given the King’s misgivings regarding the Geneva Bible’s marginal notes, it is not surprising to find Archbishop Richard Bancroft’s Rules addressing the issue of such notes. Bancroft set forth the following “Rules” to govern the use of marginal notes in the AV.
 - 6—No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot without some circumlocution so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.
 - 7—Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit reference of one scripture to another.
- Gordon Campbell, author of *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011* offers the following explanation of “Rules” 6 and 7.

- “[Rule 6] The interdiction against expository marginal notes may have originated in King James’s dislike of anti-monarchical notes in the Geneva Bible, but also reflected unease about the prospect that marginal notes might reflect a particular theological perspective.

[Rule 7] ‘Places’ are verses; this rule gave the authority for the revisers to produce a system of cross-references.” (Campbell, 37)

- So according to Bancroft’s Rules there were two allowable reasons for the use of marginal notes in the AV. First was to explain Hebrew and/or Greek words that could not “briefly” or “fitly be expressed in the text.” Second was to produce a system of Biblical cross-references to “serve for the fit reference of one scripture to another.”
- With this background information in mind regarding the stated purpose/function of marginal notes we will now turn our attention to what Myles Smith said about the marginal notes in subsection fourteen of the Preface to the 1611. Smith begins with the following statement:
 - “Some peradventure would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority of the Scriptures for deciding of controversies by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be shaken.”
- In this statement Smith is acknowledging that some people thought that there should be “no variety of senses to be set in the margin” because “the authority of the Scriptures” in deciding “controversies” in the church would be “shaken” and made “uncertain.” Put another way, if the Biblical text could plausibly read differently than how can the church have certainty in how the text does read. While on the surface I can understand this concern, our purpose is to understand the thinking of the translators as set forth by Myles Smith on the matter. In the next sentence Smith begins to address why the translators do not argue with this concern.
 - “But we hold their judgment not to be sound in this point.”
- In support of this statement Smith offers the opinions of Chrysostom and Augustine.
 - “For though, *“whatsoever things are necessary are manifest,”* as S. Chrysostom saith, and as S. Augustine, *“In those things that are plainly set down in the Scriptures, all such matters are found that concern Faith, Hope, and Charity.”* Yet for all that it cannot be dissembled, that partly to exercise and whet our wits, partly to wean the curious from the loathing of them for their everywhere plainness, partly also to stir up our devotion to crave the assistance of God's spirit by prayer, and lastly, that we might be forward to seek aid of our brethren by conference, and never scorn those that be not in all respects so complete as they should be, being to seek in many things ourselves, **it hath pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it hath been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better beseem us than confidence, and if we will resolve upon modesty** with S. Augustine, (though not in this same case altogether, yet

upon the same ground) *Melius est debitare de occultis, quam litigare de incertis*, “**it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, than to strive about those things that are uncertain.**”

- Essentially, Smith is arguing that while the vast majority of the word of God is plain and easy to understand, particularly in matters concerning salvation, there are scattered “words and sentences” where there is an element of “difficulty and doubtfulness” that require a bit of “modesty” rather than “confidence.” Put another way, there are places where God chose to inspire his word with an element of difficulty. In these places it is better for translators to err on the side of “modesty” by placing an explanatory marginal note rather than to engage in translational dogmatism, according to Smith.
- In the next section Smith provides some examples of where “difficulty and doubtfulness” reside in endeavoring to translate the Scriptures.
 - “There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once, (having neither brother or neighbor, as the *Hebrews* speak) so that we cannot be holpen by conference of places. Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. concerning the *Hebrews* themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment, that they may seem to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, than because they were sure of that which they said, as S. *Jerome* somewhere saith of the *Septuagint*.”
- The first example provided by Smith of when a marginal note might be appropriate is in cases where a given Hebrew or Greek word is found but “once” in the text and the translator cannot “be holpen [helped] by conference of places,” i.e., by comparing cross references.
- Secondly is in the case of “rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. concerning the *Hebrews* themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment.” In these two situations Smith views the “margin” as the appropriate place to convey a “variety of senses,” as the next portion of subsection fourteen makes plain.
 - Now in such a case, doth not a margin do well to admonish the Reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that peremptorily? For as it is a fault of incredulity, to doubt of those things that are evident: so to determine of such things as the Spirit of God hath left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable, can be no less than presumption. Therefore as S. *Augustine* saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must needs do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded.”
- Smith’s primary concern is that readers of the Biblical text not “dogmatize” upon things “peremptorily” i.e., “with strong or positive belief or assurance; confidently; emphatically; dogmatically,” according to OED definition 3 (*Obsolete*). He goes on to say that just as it is “incredulity” to doubt “those things that are evident” it is “presumption” to “determine of such things as the Spirit of God hath left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable.” As a

result, Smith purports that the translators were “persuaded” that “diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must needs do good, yea, is necessary.”

- In the next portion of subsection fourteen, Myles Smith contrasts the Protestant approach to textual ambiguities with those of Sixtus Quintus and the Roman Catholic Church.
 - “We know that *Sixtus Quintus* expressly forbiddeth, that any variety of readings of their vulgar edition, should be put in the margin, (which though it be not altogether the same thing to that we have in hand, yet it looketh that way) but we think he hath not all of his own side his favorers, for this conceit. They that are wise, had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other. If they were sure that their high Priest had all laws shut up in his breast, as *Paul* the Second bragged, and that he were as free from error by special privilege, as the Dictators of *Rome* were made by law inviolable, it were another matter; then his word were an Oracle, his opinion a decision. But the eyes of the world are now open, God be thanked, and have been a great while, they find that he is subject to the same affections and infirmities that others be, that his skin is penetrable, and therefore so much as he proveth, not as much as he claimeth, they grant and embrace.”
- Sixtus Quintus is a reference to Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590) who forbade “any variety of readings of their vulgar [Vulgate] edition.” This is not the first time that Myles Smith mentioned Sixtus in the Preface. In subsection twelve titled “An Answer to the Imputations of Our Adversaries” he cited the Sixtus edition of the Vulgate as an example of Roman Catholic revision of the Latin Vulgate. Now in subsection fourteen, Smith is noting that Sixtus forbade that “any variety of readings . . . should be put in the margin” of his edition of the Vulgate. Smith goes on to note that not all of his fellow Roman Catholics agreed with this decision on the part of Sixtus, “they that are wise, had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other.”
- Lastly, “the eyes of the world are now open” to the fact that Popes are not “free from error by special privilege,” for which Smith thanks God. Therefore, Popes such as Sixtus, are “subject to the same affections and infirmities that others be, that his skin is penetrable.” As a result, of the Pope’s lack of infallibility only what can be proved not merely claimed should be granted and embraced.
- Smith’s heavy focus on the Papacy/Rome in the second half of paragraph sixteen in a subsection devoted to discussing the use of the margin to place a “diversity of senses” in the margins of the AV is a major clue that it was primarily Catholics who objected to the practice. Herein we see the apologetic nature of Smith’s Preface. Much of what he says throughout the Preface is designed to answer the objections of the critics of the project from both the Roman Catholic as well as Protestant sides of the fence.
- While Smith’s Preface sets forth a rationale for why the translations included marginal notes in the AV of 1611, it does not comment further upon the nature of the notes or their number. According to the Preface the reasons for marginal notes are as follows:

- Difficult Words & Sentences—“. . . it hath pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it hath been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better beseech us than confidence, and if we will resolve upon modesty with S. Augustine . . . “it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, than to strive about those things that are uncertain.”
- Singular Word Occurrences & Rare Animals Etc.—“There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once, (having neither brother or neighbor, as the *Hebrews* speak) so that we cannot be holpen by conference of places. Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc.”
- According to F.H.A. Scrivener’s 1884 publication *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible* there are 8,422 total marginal notes in the AV of 1611. This total breaks down as follows:
 - Old Testament—6,637
 - Apocrypha—1,018
 - New Testament—767 (Scrivener, 56)
- Timothy Berg author of the article “[Five Types of Marginal Notes In The King James Bible](#)” on the *King James Bible History* blog offers some slightly different numbers via a computer calculation of the number of marginal notes. Please note that Berg’s statistics do not include the Apocrypha.
 - Old Testament—6,565
 - New Testament—777
 - Total—7,342 (Berg)
- There is a webpage on the *Literature Bautista* website titled “[An exhaustive listing of the marginal notes of the 1611 edition of the King James Bible](#)” that catalogues every marginal note from the 1611 in canonical order.
- The question of whether the thousands of marginal notes exclusively fit the framework laid out by Myles Smith in the Preface is beyond the scope of this Lesson. Put another way, were the marginal notes limited to the following two categories that Smith enunciated in the Preface: 1) Difficult Words & Sentences, and 2) Singular Word Occurrences & Rare Animals Etc.; or did they extend beyond these two general categories. This will be the focus of a future Lesson.
- Smith’s purpose in the Preface was not to expound upon or defend every individual marginal note. Rather, his focus was to address the general practice and principles for the translators’ use of marginal notes in the face of those who opposed the practice.

- The translators' use of marginal notes to set forth "a diversity of senses" as well as their stated principle in subsection fifteen to not "stand curiously upon an identity of phrasing" indicates that they did not believe in *verbatim identity of wording* as the standard for translation. We will look at the translators' statements regarding not tying themselves "to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words" in the next Lesson when we study subsection fifteen.

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Sunday, May 14, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 204 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Identity of Phrasing)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 203](#) we looked at subsection fourteen of Myles Smith’s famous Preface titled “Reasons Moving Us to Set Diversity of Senses In the Margin, Where There Is Great Probability For Each”
- In doing so we observed the thinking and rationale of the translators in terms of when it was appropriate to set forth differences of senses in the margin. Fundamentally Smith identified two different criteria for setting a “diversity of senses in the margin.”
 - Difficult Words & Sentences—“. . . it hath pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it hath been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better beseech us than confidence, and if we will resolve upon modesty with S. *Augustine* . . . “it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, than to strive about those things that are uncertain.”
 - Singular Word Occurrences & Rare Animals Etc.—“There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once, (having neither brother or neighbor, as the *Hebrews* speak) so that we cannot be holpen by conference of places. Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc.”
- In this current Lesson we will turn our attention to subsection fifteen, the final section of Smith’s Preface.

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

Modern Spelling Transcription	Modern Form Edited by Rhodes & Lupas
¶17) Another things 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 the same thing 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> ,	¶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

never *Ache*; if one where *Joy*, never *Gladness*, 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 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

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 *skimpus* instead of a *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

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 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. 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 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 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)

- At long last we have made it to subsection fifteen, the final subsection of the Preface. Comprising two paragraphs, subsection fifteen is titled “Reasons Inducing Us Not To Stand Curiously Upon An Identify of Phrasing.” In this subsection Myles Smith makes it clear that the translators did not use a principle of rigidity when conducting their work but rather utilized a variety of English words to capture the sense of the Hebrew and Greek in English.
- Consider the first sentence of paragraph seventeen:
 - “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.”
- Myles Smith found it necessary to “admonish” the readers of the AV that the translators did not tie themselves to a “uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words.” Simply stated, they did not use the same English word every time a given Hebrew or Greek word occurred in the text. They did this on purpose knowing that some “learned men” would seek to gainsay the product because it was not “as exact” as it could have been in this regard. I believe that this comment is directed to the chief Protestant critic of the work Hugh Broughton who complained about this exact issue i.e., that the AV did not employ a “uniformity of phrasing” or “an identity of words.”
- Despite their rejection of rigidity, the translators never strayed from the sense of a given passage.
 - “Truly, that we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified the same thing 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.”
- I find this to be a confusing statement on the part of Myles Smith. It seems to contradict what was stated in the preceding sentence as well as the sentences that follow. So how should we understand this statement? First, we need to apply the principle of clarity and seek to understand the unclear from the vantage point of the clear. Smith clearly states before and after the sentence in question that rigidity was not the overarching principle the translators sought to employ when doing their work. There were, however, times where they did choose to use the same English word when the sense of a word “signified the same” meaning as what they “had translated before.” They were “especially careful” and judicious according to their “conscience” and “duty” in when they chose to do this, but it was not their main mode of operation. It is possible that they acted in this manner when they thought it important for the establishment of cross references.
- The next sentence expounds upon the first. The translators did not tie themselves “to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words,” in the following manner.
 - “But, that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the *Hebrew* or *Greek* word once by *Purpose*, never to call it *Intent*; if one

where *Journeying*, never *Traveling*; if one where *Think*, never *Suppose*; if one where *Pain*, never *Ache*; if one where *Joy*, never *Gladness*, etc.”

- In my opinion, this is one of the most important parts of the entire Preface. In this sentence Myles Smith clearly explains that the translators did not use a principle of rigidity when rendering Hebrew and Greek words in English. If a given English word accurately captured and expressed the sense of the original language texts, they utilized English synonyms. For example, the Greek word *typos* is translated as both “examples” and “ensamples” in the same context in I Corinthians 10.
 - I Corinthians 10:6—Now these things were our **examples** [*typos*], to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.
 - I Corinthians 10:11—Now all these things happened unto them for **ensamples** [*typos*]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.
- The *Oxford English Dictionary* reports that “example” and “ensample” are “are ultimately the same word.”

From the second edition (1989):

example, n.

(eg 'zɑ:mp(ə)l, -æ-) Forms: 4-6 **example**, **exsaumple**, 5-6 **exaumple**, **-awmple**, (5 **axampil**, **exsawmple**, 6 **exampul**(l), 5-6 **Sc. exaimple**, **exampill**, **-empill**, 5-**example**. [a. OF. *exemple*, *exemple*, a refashioning (after Lat.) of earlier *essample* (see **ASAUMPLE**):—L. *exemplum*, f. *exem-*, *eximēre* to take out: see **EXEMPT**. The primary sense is thus 'something taken out, a **SAMPLE**, specimen'. The main Eng. senses are derived from Lat. through Fr. In the arrangement below the presumed logical order has been adopted in preference to the order in which the senses are recorded in Eng. See also **ASAUMPLE**, **ENSAMPLE**, **SAMPLE**, which are ultimately **the same word**.]

- Likewise with the Hebrew word *kûn* in contexts related to the Davidic Covenant. In II Samuel 7 the King James translators use “establish” and “stablish” interchangeably when speaking of the Davidic Covenant.
 - II Samuel 7:12—And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will **establish** [*kûn*] his kingdom.
 - II Samuel 7:13—He shall build an house for my name, and I will **stablish** [*kûn*] the throne of his kingdom for ever.
 - II Samuel 7:16—And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be **established** [*kûn*] for ever.
- Notice that “stablish” and “established” are used interchangeably in the same context to speak about the throne of David. Moreover, they are both translations of the same Hebrew word. In addition, I Chronicles 17:11 and 12 the same phenomenon occurs when speaking about aspects of the Davidic Covenant. It is commonly asserted by some defenders of the AV that the word “establish” refers to the initial founding or setting up of something and that “stablish” means to stabilize something that already exists or that was previously “established.” These alleged discriminated meanings break down when considering the use of the two words in relation to the

David Covenant in II Samuel 7. First note that in verse 13 that God will “stablish” David’s throne before it is said to be “established” in verse 16. This progression does not match what is commonly stated about “establish” preceding “stablish” in the order of operations. Furthermore, if God almighty will “establish” David’s Kingdom (v. 12) and throne (v. 16) will He do so in such a manner that He will later need to “stablish” i.e., stabilize that which He previously founded or set up? More directly, when God founds or initially sets something up (establish) does He do so in an insufficient manner that requires Him to come back later and stabilize (stablish) it? Some latch onto visual differences in words and assume that there must be a different meaning. While this is sometimes the case, it is not always true. Tools like dictionaries and more importantly Biblical context should be considered when ascertaining the meaning of words. I take Myles Smith’s admonition to the “gentle reader” as a statement of caution against dogmatizing upon words given the translational principles utilized by the translators.

- The purpose of the last quote from the pen of Myles Smith is not to set forth an exhaustive list of English words to which the principle applies but to establish the principle as a governing feature of the translator’s work and practice. There are many more pairs of English synonyms to which the principle applies than can be covered in this Lesson.
- Smith’s next two sentences make it clear that the King James translators rejected what we have called in this class *verbatim identity of wording*.
 - “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 commodiously?”
- Put another way, rigidity in translation i.e., woodenly using the same English word every time would “breed scorn in the Atheist” rather than “bring profit to the godly Reader,” by causing them to “savour more of curiosity.” Smith rhetorically questions, “is the kingdom of God to become words or syllables?” To which he answers, “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 commodiously?” Put another way, Smith represents the translators as rejecting *verbatim identity of wording* as the standard. As long as a given word accurately captured the sense and force of the original language texts, the translators viewed themselves as “free” to employ English synonyms. The King James translators approved of *substantive doctrinal equivalence* without demanding *verbatim identity of wording*.
- Smith defends the translator’s principle and practice by appealing to the fact that the scriptures themselves use “divers words” to talk about the same thing.
 - “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.”

- Any ambiguity in the portion cited above can be cleared up by looking at the Modern Form set forth by Drs. Rhodes and Lupas above. The bottom line is this, according to Rhodes and Lupas:
 - “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.” (Rhodes & Lupas, 84)
- According to Myles Smith, the translators did not tie themselves “to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words” i.e., they did not require *verbatim identity of wording* by using a principle of rigidity. Rather they followed God’s “pattern for elocution” and used “divers words” to refer to the same thing just as God Himself did when inspiring the “holy writ.” Smith’s argument is essentially, “we sought to mirror the way the scriptures were inspired. If you have a problem with it, take up with the Almighty.”
- On this point, before moving on, the thoughts of Dr. David Norton on this first half of paragraph seventeen are interesting to consider. In his 2011 publication for Cambridge University Press titled *The King James Bible: A Short History From Tyndale to Today* Dr. Norton states the following:
 - “Identity of phrasing is a particularly difficult issue in translating the Bible. Unvaried translation would have the advantage of allowing the reader to perceive identities in the original languages, but, ever setting aside the huge problem of different meanings in different contexts, there was also the very practical problem of achieving consistency across different groups of translators. Even when it would seem to be a straightforward matter, as when two Gospels have the identical Greek phrase, the KJB often varies its translation. The same Greek that is translated in Matthew as ‘they toil not, neither do they spin’ (6:28) is ‘they toil not, they spin not’ in Luke 12:27. Both are good, the Matthew producing a pleasing cadence, while the Luke follows the Greek literally. Sometimes the translators go the other way, and use a single English word for different Greek words (in English the statements just quoted from both begin ‘consider’, but the Greek has different verbs).” (Norton, 114-115)

- “This is at once serious and witty, playing with the idea that the words of the English language are an abundance (‘copy’ means copiousness) given by God in the same way that he created the original words of Scripture. As God’s creations, all have equal title to be in the Bible. As well as seriously invoking the precedent or varied vocabulary and phrasing in the Bible, this ingeniously justifies variety in the English. But, if one fit word is as good as another, there is a strong sense that truth is not tied to the particular words. Earlier, Smith argued that the ‘the King’s speech which he uttered in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian and Latin, is till the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor expressly for sense, everywhere’ (p. xxviii): essence is separate from verbal form. Now the drift of his argument is to downplay the particular words the translators have chosen: they are not the truth but way to the truth. There is a paradox here. The translators examined the words of the original with immense subtlety, they chose their words with fidelity, precision and sensitivity, but they caution against taking them too absolutely. ‘Niceness in words,’ too pedantic an attention to the letter, Smith warns, ‘was always accounted the next step to trifling’. In effect he is saying, we have done our best, but do not make too much of it.” (Norton, 116)

Avoiding Extremes

- In the next sentence of paragraph seventeen Smith explains that the translators have sought to avoid the ditches or extremes along both sides of the translational road as it were. According to Olga S. Opfell, Smith “delights in the middle way between Puritan (Geneva) and papist (Rheims) versions.” (Opfell, 110)
 - “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.”

Puritan Extreme

- According to Smith, the first ditch the translators sought to avoid was that 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*.” Recall that the Puritans were the faction of the English Church that desired further reforms beyond those exhibited by the Anglican Church. Generally, Puritans desired to rid the Church of England of practices and vocabulary that they thought smacked of Roman Catholicism.
- Please recall from [Lesson 158](#) that one of Archbishop Bancroft’s fourteen Rules addressed the issue of “old Ecclesiastical words” in the AV. Rule 3 stated the following:
 - “The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, *viz.*: the word ‘Church’ not to be translated ‘Congregation’ etc.”

- Dr. Gordon Campbell of Oxford University offered the following commentary on Rule 3 in his book *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011*.
 - “The implementation of this rule was to be a persistent source of puritan objections to the KJV, as puritans, appropriating Tyndale’s argument preferred ‘congregation’ to ‘church’, ‘wash’ to ‘baptize,’ ‘elder’ or ‘senior’ to bishop,’ and ‘minister’ to ‘priest.’” (Campbell, 36)
- Smith’s comment about “old Ecclesiastical words” in subsection fifteen of the Preface indicates that Rule 3 was followed by the translators with a high degree of fidelity.

Roman Catholic Extreme

- The second ditch on the other side of the road the translators sought to avoid was the Roman Catholic ditch. Regarding this ditch Smith stated, “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.”
- This statement is interesting in that it demonstrates that the Douay Old Testament, along with some of its unique readings, were known to Myles Smith when he wrote the Preface. The words *azimes*, *tunike* (tunic), *rational* (breastplate), *holocausts*, *praepuce*, and *pasche* mentioned in Smith’s Preface are all found in the Douay-Rheims Bible with “*tunike*” and “*rational*” only occurring in the Douay Old Testament which was published in two volumes in 1609 and 1610. (Vance, 319)
- Smith’s statement here in subsection fifteen regarding the Catholic Bible is interesting for a couple of reasons. First, it seems to contradict an earlier statement made by Smith in subsection twelve titled “An answer to the imputations of our adversaries.”
 - “Now to the latter we answer; that we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession, (**for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet**) containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God.”
- In this statement from subsection twelve Smith seems to be saying that the translators, i.e., “we”, had not yet seen a Roman Catholic copy of “the whole Bible as yet.” Yet in subsection fifteen Smith cites word usage choices from both the Old (1609 and 1610) and New (1582) Testaments of the Douay-Rheims Bible. How are we to reconcile these seemingly contrary statements from the pen of Myles Smith. In my mind, the most charitable interpretation is to view Smith as speaking on behalf of all the translators in subsection twelve who indeed had not seen “the whole bible as yet” put forth by their Roman Catholic adversaries since the Old Testament was not yet available when the bulk of the Company work took place between 1604 and 1609. Whereas, in subsection fifteen of the Preface, it is arguably written in late 1610 or early 1611 as the final

preparations for the press were underway. Therefore, Smith in his person would have had the liberty to inspect the Douay Old Testament in its entirety before authoring the Preface.

- The above point alludes to a second matter of interest centered around Myles Smith's mention of Catholic readings in subsection fifteen. Namely, the timing of when the Douay Old Testament was published within the chronology in production of the AV. My friend and fellow researcher Christopher Yetzer states the following in a yet unpublished essay on this topic.
 - "The Rheims New Testament was printed in 1582 and was clearly available and used by the translators.⁶⁰ The Old Testament was printed at Douai, France in two volumes in 1609 and 1610. According to the 1609 preface, these were made to complete the work of the 1582 Rheims New Testament and create a whole Catholic translation of the Scriptures. The approbation for both Douai volumes is dated November 8, 1609. The first volume surely would have been available at least to the general committee which met in London. Bois' letters to Isaac Casaubon near the end of 1610 and the past tense reference to Bancroft in the preface who died in November 1610, both demonstrate that most likely the second volume would have been available as well. . . In a previous section of this study I made reference to Smith replying primarily to the 1582 Rheims preface. While that is true, it also seems that he may have made use of the 1609 preface which itself often borrows from the information found in the Rheims preface." (Yetzer, 7-8)
- In support of this statement, Brother Yetzer goes on to compare Smith's Preface from 1611 with the earlier Prefaces of Gregory Martin from the 1582 Rheims New Testament and the first volume of the Douay Old Testament from 1609.
 - Smith's 1611 KJV preface: "on the other side we have shunned the obscurity of the Papists, in their *Azimes*, *Tunike*, *Rational*, *Holocausts*, *Præpuce*, *Pasche*, and a number of such like,"
 - 1609 Douai preface: "And why then may we not say *Prepuce*, *Phase* or *Pasch*, *Azimes*, *Breades of Proposition*, *Holocaust*, and the like? Rather than as Protestants translate them: *Foreskinne*, *Passeover*, *The feast of swete breades*, *Shew breades*, *Burnt offerings*: &c."
 - 1582 Rheims preface: "*The Pasche. The feaste of Azymes. The bread of Proposition.* Which they translate *The Passeover, The feast of swete bread, The shew bread.*" (Yetzer, 8)
- Elaborating on a point cited by Lawrence Vance, Brother Yetzer states the following after quoting the three prefaces:
 - "Besides the words which Smith used that are also found in the 1609 preface, another reason this may more clearly represent the 1609 text is that the 1582 Rheims used breast-plate in Ephesians 6:14 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8 instead of rational which was only used in the Douai Old Testament. Also the New Testament never used tunic as the Old Testament did." (Yetzer, 8)

- Footnote 194 from *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface to the King James Version of 1611 Revisited* by Rhodes and Lupas is also extremely helpful in bringing clarity to this difficult topic. Therefore, we have included it below in its entirety.
 - “This phrase may be an answer to a remark in the Preface of the Douay Old Testament of 1609, leaf +5 recto: “And why then may we not say *prepuce*, *phase* or *pasch*, *azimes*, *bread of proposition*, *holocaust*, and the like, rather than as protestants translate them: *foreskin*, *passover*, *the feast of sweet breads*, *shewbreads*, *burnt offerings*, etc.”

Azyme (see *OED* and Lat. *azymus*, Gk. ἄζυμος,) is first used in print in the Rheims New Testament of 1582, where it is the only rendering of Gk. ἄζυμος (see Matthew 26.17; Mark 14.1; Luke 22.1; 1 Corinthians 5.7, etc.). It also occurs in the Douay Old Testament (Exodus 8.15; 13.6-7; Joshua 5.11, etc.), where phrases such as *unleavened bread* or *bread without leaven* are used as well (Genesis 19.3; Exodus 12.8, 20, 39; Leviticus 2.4, etc.). *Unleavened bread* is the translation used in the KJV following the Geneva Bible. The Bishops’ Bible has sweet bread, following Tyndale and Coverdale (which also has *sweet cakes* in the Old Testament).

***Tunic* does not occur in the Rheims New Testament**, where Greek χιτὼν is rendered by *coat* (see Matthew 5.40; 10.10; Mark 14.63; Luke 6.29; John 19.23; Jude 23, etc.). **It is used, however, in the Douay Old Testament of 1609** (see, for instance, Exodus 28.39; 29.5,8; Leviticus 8.7). The KJV has coat and clothes.

Rational (see *OED* and Lat. *rationale*) is the breastplate worn by the Jewish high-priest. It first occurs in Wycliffe’s translation of the Bible, which dates from the 1380s and was first printed in 1850. **The word does not occur in the Rheims New Testament but is used frequently in the Douay Old Testament, often in the phrase *rationale of judgement*** (see Exodus 28.15-26; 29.5; 39.8, 15-18, etc.). In the KJV, this word is rendered as *breastplate*.

Holocaust (see *OED* and Lat. *holocaustum*) is already used in Tyndale’s New Testament of 1526 (Mark 12.33; Hebrews 10.6, 8). It occurs in both the Rheims New Testament and the Douay Old Testament (see, besides the examples from Mark and Hebrews quoted above, Exodus 18.12; 20.24; Leviticus 1.3, etc.). The KJV prefers the phrases *burnt offerings* or *burnt sacrifice*.

Prepuce (see *OED* *prepucy* and Lat. *præputium*) is first attested in Wycliffe’s translation of the Bible. The Rheims-Douay version uses it often (Genesis 17.11; Exodus 4.25; Deuteronomy 10.16; Romans 2.25, etc.), but the KJV has only foreskin in the Old Testament and *uncircumcision* in the New Testament.

Pasche is adapted from Lat. *pascha* and is used under different variant forms since about 1200 (see *OED* *pasch*). In Wycliffe’s translation it appears as *phask* (Exodus 12.43), in the Rheims New Testament, as *pasche* (Matthew 26.2; Mark 14.1), in the Douay Old Testament as *phase* (Exodus 12.21; Leviticus 23.5; Numbers 9.2). The translation passage is used in the Douay version of Exodus 12.27, while *passover* is the only term used in the KJV.” (Rhodes & Lupas, 61)

- Lastly, Myles Smith seems to be suggesting that the Papists chose these obscure English words to intentionally “darken the sense.” Furthermore, this purposeful choice made by Catholic translators was made to be “kept from being understood” since the Catholics could not avoid making an English translation. Therefore, the Papists sought to bind up the word of God in English so that the Catholic laity could not understand, according to Myles Smith.
- After contrasting the views of the Puritans and Papists when it comes to word choices, Smith ends paragraph seventeen with the following statement:
 - “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.”
- The translators desired that the scriptures speak like they do in Hebrew i.e., “the language of *Canaan*.” Put another way, they should speak and sound like themselves without any needless ambiguity so they can be “understood” by the most uneducated commoner i.e., “the very vulgar.” That is without the excessive rigidity of Puritan preferences or the intentional difficulty of the Papists.
- We will look at the last paragraph of the Preface in the next Lesson.

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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

<p>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. 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 <i>Gergesites</i>, Depart out of our coast [Matt 8:34]; neither yet with <i>Esau</i> 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 <i>Nazianzene</i>, <i>It is a grievous thing</i> (or dangerous) <i>to neglect a great fair, and to seek to make markets afterwards</i>: also the encouragement of <i>S. Chrysostom</i>, <i>It is altogether impossible, that he that is sober</i>" (and watchful) <i>should at any time be neglected</i>: Lastly, the admonition and menacing of <i>S. Augustine</i>, <i>They that despise God's will inviting them, shall feel God's will taking vengeance of them</i>. 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.</p>	<p>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 <i>Gergesites</i> did, "Get out of our land!" Nor like <i>Esau</i> 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)</p>
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- 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

- Originally one of our goals was to track Biblical quotations/allusions that Myles Smith used in the Preface. Since we began teaching these Lessons 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.

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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.

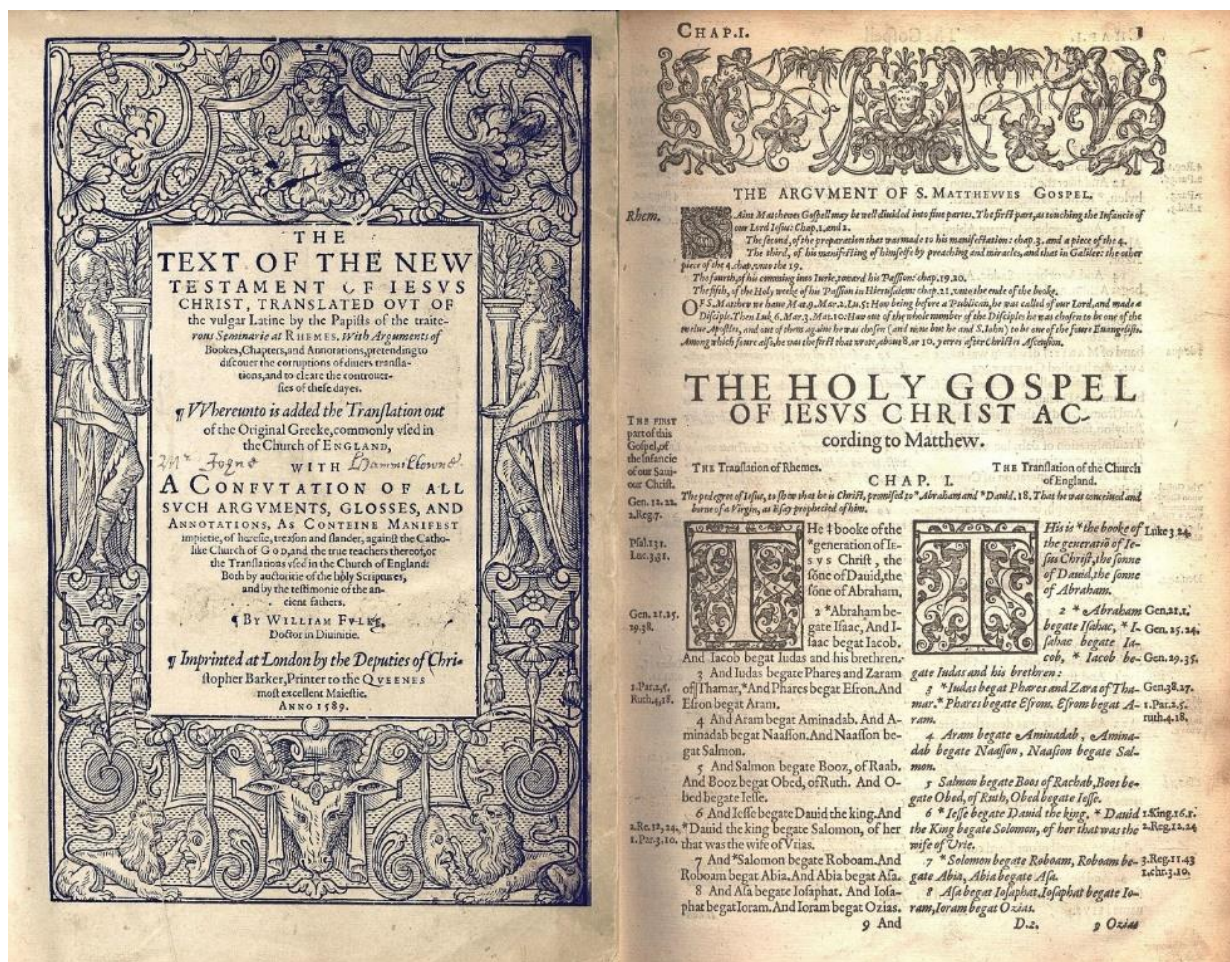
As might be expected, Fulke was ready to respond. He shot back equally inflammatory accusations about the Rhemes translators: “They [translations, glosses, and annotations] contain manifest impieties, heresies, idolatries, superstitions, profaneness, treasons, slanders, absurdities, falsehoods, and other 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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Sunday, June 4, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 207 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Apologetic Analysis)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 206](#) we began an apologetic analysis of Myles Smith’s famous Preface from 1611. In order to ascertain the historical context and the apologetic value of Smith’s Preface, we laid out the following points and subpoints for consideration.
 - Arguments for Apologetic Application
 - Smith’s Preface: An Extension of the Martin-Fulke Controversy
 - Work of Christopher Yetzer
 - Work of Katrin Ettenhuber
 - Conclusion
- We only had enough time in Lesson 206 to cover the first point and half of the second. Therefore, in this Lesson we will pick up our look at the Preface as “an extension of the Martin-Fulke Controversy” by looking at the work of Katrin Ettenhuber before offering some summative remarks by way of conclusion.

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

Work of Katrin Ettenhuber

- Brother Yetzer is not alone in viewing the Martin-Fulke controversy as the proper historical context from which to understand Smith’s famous Preface to the AV. In 2015, Oxford University Press published an anthology titled *The Oxford Handbook of The Bible In Early Modern England, c. 1530-1700*. In this anthology there is an essay titled “ ‘A Comely Gate to So Rich And Glorious A Citie’: The Paratextual Architecture of the Rheims New Testament and the King James Bible” authored by Katrin Ettenhuber which advances a similar line of argumentation as Brother Yetzer.
- Ettenhuber explains the concept of “paratextual architecture” in the essay’s introduction as follows:
 - “. . . Gerard Genette’s concept of the paratext, or ‘threshold’ of interpretation: the idea that the production of meaning depends to a significant degree on the framing or material packaging of a text, through features like prefaces, notes, and indexes. The preface, more particularly, is described in Genette’s *Paratexts* as “vestibule” that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back. It is an “undefined zone” between the inside and outside [of the text]. The key movements outlined by Genette ‘stepping inside’ and ‘turning back’, acquired heightened significance in the textual aspects of the Rheims New Testament and the King James Bible: maps, genealogical

charts, indexes, chapter summaries, and various types of annotation provided multiple points of entry into the scriptures, as do the various interests embedded in the preface and the margins. But the structure of these textual edifices is also built on pivotal movement of historical recuperation; their different visions of how readers can return to the Christian past to determine the shape of the scriptures in the present. The 1611 translation emphasizes the primacy of context—of ‘*Person, Time, and Place*’—in the production and communication of the biblical message, and with it the possibilities and limitation offered by specific moments in history: the Septuagint, for instance, was ‘fittest to contain the Scriptures’ in an age when the Greek language held the greatest promise of spreading God’s word, but ‘not so sound and so perfect, but that it needs in many places correction’. In the Rheims Bible, by contrast, change and revision are associated with the ‘windings and turning of divers errors’; it follows a different model of history, tracing a direct and continuous ‘line of Prophetical and Apostolical interpretation’ of the ‘most ancient’ text, whose lessons are ‘delivered unto us as it were from the hand to hand’. In both cases, I will suggest, the method and rationale of translation, the treatment of sources and intertexts, and the combination and arrangement of paratextual material, are deeply inflected by constructions of the cultural, ecclesiological, and philological past.” (Ettenhuber, 55-56)

- Section I of Ettenhuber’s essay is titled “As Neere As Is Possible, To Our Text: Construction of Continuity In The Rheims Translation,” It expounds upon the paratextual view of the Rheims New Testament set forth by Gregory Martin in the Preface.
 - “In Gregory Martin’s Preface to the Rheims translation, the process of textual transmission is depicted as transparent, continuous, and largely unproblematic: the Vulgate text—‘most ancient’ and authoritative, in the translator’s estimation—is passed down ‘from hand to hand’, as we have seen; where the minor issues have ‘crept in’, through ‘evident corruptions made by the copyists’ [*sic*] or ‘faults now a days committed by the Printer’, they are easily spotted and rectified. The timeless truth of scriptures is guaranteed by uninterrupted institution and spiritual continuity, as Martin’s constant appeals to ‘the ancient fathers, General Councils, and the Churches of all the west part’ attest: ‘let us in the name of God follow them, speak as they spake, translate as they translated, interpret as they interpreted, because we believe as they believed’ (c2^v). The paratextual architecture of the Rheims translation reinforces the primacy of ‘universal’ and ‘uniform’ consent at every turn (b1’). . . What the reader is asked to ‘behold’ here is not a specific moment in history, but a timeless tableau which unites scripture past, present liturgical practice, and future narratives of conversion and triumph. As we move from text to margin to end note, guided by asterism, and daggers (stars and crosses of sorts), the Rheims translators encouraged us to draw a direct line from the manger at Bethlehem to the sixteenth-century Catholic Church.” (Ettenhuber, 57)
- Ettenhuber’s essay covers paratextual issues beyond the Preface to the Rheims New Testament. For example, Ettenhuber mentions that a “four-page section consists of a list of books held to be authentic by the church, and a five-point program that established its principles or canonicity.”

(58) As one might expect, Martin’s “paratextual architecture” is thoroughly Roman Catholic and designed to support the tradition and magisterium of the Church. Regarding the interplay between text, margin, and endnotes in Martin’s Bible, Ettenhuber writes,

- “This has the obvious effect of turning the margin into a tool of marginalization, and other faiths into ‘heretics’ and ‘usurpers’ of the promised scriptural land . . . This desire to establish proximity of time and place between contemporary Catholic practice and collective judgment of the early church consistently informs the translators’ interpretive and linguistic choices: ecclesiology frequently merges with philology [“the branch of knowledge that deals with the historical, linguistic, interpretative, and critical aspects of literature” *Oxford English Dictionary* 1.].” (Ettenhuber, 58)
- In the final paragraph of Section I, Ettenhuber draws the reader’s attention to the Rheims Preface. In the paragraph Ettenhuber draws attention to Martin’s use of Augustine to support the Roman Catholic view of history.
 - “Throughout the Preface, individual judgment is pushed into the ‘private’ sphere of ‘Sectaries’ and fringe opinion, where it cannot threaten to relativize or subvert authority; virtuous lay readers of the early church, Martin notes with evident approval, ‘referred them selves in all hard places, to the judgment of the ancient fathers and their master in religion, never presuming to contest, control, teach or talk of their own sense and phantasy, in deep questions of divinity’ (a3^v). By the same token, however, the ‘Universal Church’ must deliver to ‘the good and simple’ universal rules of doctrine and religious conduct, as the following exposition of a passage from Augustine’s *Contra Cresconium* demonstrates (b2^v-b3^r). In doubtful points of doctrine

that in deed are not decided by Scripture, he [Augustine] gives us the goodly rule to be followed in all, as he exemplifieth in one. *Then do we hold (said he) the variety of the Scriptures, when wee doe that which now hath seemed good to the Universal Church, which the authority of the Scriptures themselves doth commend; so that, forasmuch as the holy Scripture can not deceive, whosoever is afraid to be deceived with the obscurity of questions, let him therein ask counsel of the same Church, which the Holy Scriptures most certainly and evidently sheweth and pointeth unto.* Aug. Ii. I. Cont. Crecson. C. 13. (b3^r)

Martin’s Augustine is elevated and canonized through the process of citation; he is made to pronounce globally on the relationship between scripture and authority, called not simply to speak for his own time, but adjudicating past practice and laying down laws for future conduct.” (Ettenhuber, 59-60)

- It is my opinion that Martin’s leveraging of Augustine to support the Roman Catholic view of scripture is what prompted Myles Smith to cite the church fathers so often in his Preface to the 1611. Smith was trying to demonstrate that the Catholic Church did not have the market cornered

in terms of use of the Church Fathers. The final sentence of Section I alludes to the fact that the Protestants took exception with Martin's Preface and responded in kind.

- "The attitude towards citation and interpretation, and the view of history that underpins it, comes to be questioned by Protestant controversialists in response to the publication of the Rheims New Testament, in defense of their church, and of their own translations." (Ettenhuber, 60)
- Section II of Ettenhuber's essay is titled "This Is Your Usual Kinde of Reasoning, Of A Particular To Inferre An Universal: The Particularity of History In the King James Bible." In this Section Ettenhuber endeavors to demonstrate how Protestants sought to counter the argumentation of Gregory Martin set forth in the Preface to the Rheims New Testament. This took shape initially around William Fulke's 1582 publication *A Defense of the Sincere and True Translation of the Holie Scriptures into the English Tongue Against the Cavils of Gregory Martin* and later around Myles Smith's famous Preface to the AV from 1611, which Ettenhuber views as an extension of Fulke's argumentation. Ettenhuber states the following regarding the connection between Fulke's book and Smith's Preface.
 - "As we will see, this text [Fulke's] provides the best point of entry for understanding the rationale behind Smith's Preface to the King James Bible." (Ettenhuber, 60)
- Regarding Fulke's answer to Martin, Ettenhuber states the following:
 - "In order to gauge the difference between the Roman and Protestant approaches to ecclesiology and translation, we must first attend to Fulke's attempt to redefine the meaning of the terms 'universal' and 'particular'. In the quotation that introduced this section Fulke uses both terms to describe a form of argument, but they are ultimately inseparable from his broader perspective on church history and doctrine:

the Popish Church . . . is not Catholike, but particular and heretical, yea Antichristian, and hath no succession in doctrine, for the Apostles and the Bishops of the Primitive Church, whose doctrine it hateth and persecuteth. For it is continuance in the same doctrine, that S. Augustine commendeth, and not sitting in the same place, where the Apostles and ancient Bishops sat. (c6^v)

Once again, the rhetoric gravitates relentlessly towards topographical and chronological discourse, but the positions are now inverted. 'Continuance' and 'succession' appear not as seamless lines of descent—and ideally the meeting of present and past 'in the same place'—but as more complexly particularized moments of dialogue between different cultures. For Fulke, the desire to rejoin 'the Apostles and ancient Bishops' and sit in their seat only signifies arrogant presumptions; past and present, though connected by 'the same doctrine', have distinct identities and require particular forms of analysis and understanding. Thus paradoxically, it is in the insistence of extrapolating timeless, global meaning from individual cases that the Catholic Church reveals itself as the 'particular

and heretical' Church of Rome, rather than the true, universal embodiment of Christianity. Throughout his response to Martin's Preface, Fulke thinks about the process of doctrinal and philological transmission in terms of 'place'—their spatial, cultural, and textual situation—and maintains that we cannot determine our relationship with authentic apostolic doctrine without first attending to the local and specific context of beliefs and practices." (Ettenhuber, 60-61)

- Later Ettenhuber discusses how Smith's Preface from 1611 is best viewed as an extension of Fulke's response to Martin.
 - "The project of claiming doctrinal 'continuance' and 'succession' for the Protestant cause continues in Miles Smith's Preface to the King James Bible, 'The Translators to the Reader'. But where Fulke's argument is limited by the parameters of refutation, Smith returns to first principles, and instead of engaging in controversy aims to make a positive case for specifically Protestant forms of historiography and philology. Throughout his introduction to the 1611 Bible, Smith picks up on the connections between doctrine and translation that characterize the Rheims Preface. Furthermore, like their Rheims counterparts, the King James translators arrange the paratextual furniture in a way that reflects the place of their church in history." (Ettenhuber, 61-62)
- After digressing for a moment to talk about the "genealogical charts" and other paratextual furniture found in 1611, Ettenhuber resumes her discussion of the Preface by discussing the apologetic framework of Smith's argument against Martin.
 - "This dual precondition of full existence, 'one blood. . .divided' and 'language. . .divided', is the starting point for Smith's defense of Protestant ecclesiology and philology. Babel and the Flood (in another paradoxical spin on Christian chronology) divided us from the apostolic past and 'what ever was perfect' then: 'Apostle or Apoltolike men' were able to make themselves understood to all because they were 'privileged with the privilege of infallibility' (A6^v). Instead of 'uniform' and constant and transhistorical communion, Smith offers a vision of the past as radically plural and particular. Those who followed in the tradition of the Apostles, he asserts were 'men and not God,' 'Interpreters, . . . and not prophets', and 'as men they stumbled and fell' (A5^r). One might be tempted to conclude that the past is a different country, but that would be missing the point: the absence of topographical and territorial metaphors in Smith's Preface is itself one way of measuring the distance between Protestant and Catholic models of language and history.

But if the apostolic mission cannot be replicated exactly, if we cannot travel back to 'the same place', in what sense can Smith's church—and its new translation of the scriptures—claim 'continuance' with early Christianity? The answer lies in a continual process of development, change, and accommodation. In order for eternal truth to be communicated as the living word, Smith contends, it must remain responsive to cultural change, 'notwithstanding that some imperfection and blemishes may be noted in the

setting forth of it' (A6^v). At a time when Greek was the 'fittest' means of conversation, for instance, the Septuagint had the effect of a 'candle set upon a candlestick, which giveth light to all that are in the house', but in contrast to the Roman desire to revert to the 'authentic' text, translation forms a pragmatic point of departure rather than an inviolable point of origin: 'that Translation was not so good and so perfect, but that in need in many place correction' (A5^r). For Smith, translation has a forward momentum and takes account of institutional and linguistic evolution: 'blessed be they and most honored by their name, that break the ice, and giveth onset upon that which helpeth forward of the saving of souls' (A6^r). The 1611 translation sees itself emphatically as part of this ongoing process of reinvention and renewal: 'we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, . . . but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principle good one' (B1^v).

In their attempt to improve Previous English versions of the Bible, the King James translators returned to Hebrew and Greek, 'the two golden pipes, or rather conduits, . . . the fountains, . . . [the] the precedent, or original tongues' (B1^v). This means that the Vulgate is regarded as ultimately instrumental, a pragmatic medium of communication, rather than the absolute 'authentic' standard of perfection invoked by the Rheims Preface. Latin translations were necessary, Smith argues, because 'within a few hundred years after CHRIST, . . . very many Countries of the West, yea of the South, East and North, spake or understood Latin, being made Provinces to the *Romans*' (A5^r). But even at this point in the history of scripture, the movement is towards textual revision and linguistic evolution: Smith notes, with reference to Augustine, that 'the *Latin* translations [of the Old Testament] were too many to be all good, for they were infinite' and that they derived from a 'muddie' '*Greek* stream'; this is why Jerome, the 'best linguist without controversy, of his age, or of any that went before him' was charged with the task of surveying extant translations and eventually undertook 'the translating of the Old Testament, out of the very fountains themselves'. And it is Jerome who articulates the philological and historiographical principles that led Smith to assert that 'to have the Scriptures in the mother-tongue is not a quaint conceit lately taken up . . . but hath been thought upon, and put in practice of old' (A5^v); in his Preface to the translation of the Pentateuch, Jerome insists that 'we condemn the ancient . . . [*i*]n no case; but after the endeavours of them that were before us, we take the best pains we can in the house of God'. In order to consolidate his case, and simultaneously counter the Rheims translators' emphasis on the timeless authority of the fathers, Smith highlights the constant patristic drive towards revision and self-correction; 'Saint *Augustine* was not ashamed to exhort S. *Jerome* to a *Palinodia* or recantation; the same S. *Augustine* was not ashamed to retract, we might say revoke, many things that had passed him, and down even glory that he seeth his infirmities' (B1^v).

If textual development and change are the working principles of the earliest Christian scholars, Smith suggests, Roman theologians have little justification for objecting to 'the difference that appeareth between our Translations, and our often correcting of them' (B1^v). By way of adding controversial braces to the belt of principle, however he also

claims that the Catholic Church fails to live up to its own demands of ‘uniformity’ (another word that resonates richly with the rhetoric of Rheim’s Preface): did not Pope Sixtus V ‘ordain by inviolable decree’ that the Bible produced under his reign was the last word, when a mere two years later, Clement VII, ‘his immediate successor, publisheth another edition of the Bible, containing in it infinite differences from that of *Sixtus*, (and many of them weighty and material) and yet this must be authentic by all means’? And in a final rhetorical question he asks, ‘what is sweet harmony and consent, if this be?’ (B1^v).” (Ettenhuber, 64-66)

- Next, Ettenhuber discusses Smith’s comments on the linguistic choices of the King James translators and explains how they feed back into a historical disagreement between Catholics and Protestants.
 - “The project of philological re-evaluation is inseparable from the prime goal of effective communication. Smith’s continuing connection with those ‘that break the ice’ is ‘to deliver God’s book unto God’s people in a tongue which they understand’ (or, in a more bracing quotation from Augustine’s *City of God*, ‘A man had rather be with his dog then with a stranger (whose tongue is strange unto him)’ (A6^r). ‘[W]e desire that the Scripture may speak like it self, as in the language of Canaan, that it may be understood even of the very vulgar’ (B2^v); by contrast, the Rheims approach merely creates stylistic ‘obscurities, . . . in their *Azimes*, *Tunike*, *Rational*, *Holocausts*, *Praepuce*, *Pasche*, and any number of such like, whereof their late Translation [i.e., Rheims] is full’ (B2^v). In order to achieve this aim, Smiths argues, the King James translators have committed themselves not to ‘the very words’, but to a more idiomatic approach that reflects the ‘sense and meaning’ of ‘the, spirit’, ‘[f]or it is confessed, that things are to take their denomination of the great part’ (A6^v). However, Fulke’s discussion of the same issues makes clear, the argument about archaic diction and literal translation inevitably feeds back into one about history:

That in translation of the scriptures, the very words must be kept, as near as it is possible, and phrase of the tongue into which we translate will bear, we do acknowledge. . . That the ancient doctors refused not the Barbarisms and the solecisms of the vulgar Latin translation, which they had, it was because they did write in Latin, to be understood of the common people, to who the Latin tongue was vulgar, and that translation familiar: not that those Barbarisms and solecisms by long use became venerable, or that it is any example for you, to bring in Latin and Greek words into the English text, neither used before, nor understood now of the English people.

. . . Fulke’s ally Smith notes (once again in deliberate reply to Martin’s Preface), the translation must reflect the linguistic diversity of lived discourse: ‘we have not tied our selves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identity of words, as some peradventure would wish’ (B2^v). The translation did ‘not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified the same thing in both places’; at the same time,

however, ‘that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, . . . Journeying, never Traveling, . . . we thought to savor more curiosity then wisdom’ (B2^v).

Smith insists throughout that the word of God must and will withstand some accommodation to linguistic context and cultural change: ‘the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession. . . containeth the word of God, nay is the word of God’ (A6^v); in fact, Smith claims, the King James translators’ approach finds its ‘pattern for elocution’ in ‘God’ himself, ‘using divers words, in his holy writ, and indifferently for one thing in nature’ (B2^v). The marginal notes to the Preface constantly rearticulate the ‘wisdom’ of the translators’ method: in addition to citations from scripture and from patristic, classical, medieval, and early modern proof texts, Smith’s margins are populated by Greek words.” (Ettenhuber, 67-68)

- Ettenhuber also addresses Smith’s use of citations from the church fathers and how it compares to Martin’s usage in his Preface to the Rheims New Testament.
 - “The Preface continues its process of linguistic reinvention in its treatment of patristic quotation: Smith notes, as we have seen, that ‘S. Augustine was not ashamed to retract, we might say revoke, many things that had passed him’ (B1r). Rhetorical strategies such as this one—changing the verb ‘retractate’ to ‘revoke’, in order to usher it into the seventeenth century—reaffirm the crucial link between translation and ecclesiology, doctrinal and linguistic choices. To the Rheims translators, the literal reading of ‘retractate’ preserves the spirit of Augustine’s authority, for the King James translators, Augustine becomes an icon of renewal; were he alive in 1611, the first order of business would be to ‘retractate’ his allegiance to a ‘heretical and particular’ Catholic church and its outdated adherence to contrived Latinity. In Smith’s Preface, as we have seen, it is the ancient fathers themselves who reject the idea of dogmatic conservatism and instead insist throughout on the contextual contingency of their work. True ‘continuance’ with the early church, then, depends on an acknowledgement of cultural and linguistic discontinuities (in the same way that scriptural opacity paradoxically facilitates a more profound understanding of its message); the Protestant identity of the King James Bible emerges not simply through a break with the Catholic past, but by emphasizing the tears and seams in the fabric of human history.” (Ettenhuber, 68)
- In the next paragraph Ettenhuber draws attention to “the most commonly noted distinction between Protestant and Catholic approaches to the Bible,” during the early 17th century.
 - “In this remark, Smith also affirms what was perceived as the most commonly noted distinction between Protestant and Catholic approaches to the Bible in the early modern period (at least in theory); he reifies the judgment of the individual reader, over and above that of collective authority:

They that are wise, had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other. If they were sure that their high Priest had all laws shut up in his breast, as Paul the Second bragged, [Plat. in Paulo secundo.] and that he were as free from error by special privilege, as the Dictators of Rome were made by law inviolable, it were another matter; then his word were an Oracle, his opinion a decision. But the eyes of the world are now open, God be thanked, and have been a great while, they find that he is subject to the same affections and infirmities that others be, that his skin is penetrable. (B2^r)

Smith's analogy between textual 'uniformity' and papal infallibility paves the way for another class trope: the liberation of the Protestant reader from the 'bondage' of the Roman magisterium (B2^v). And once again, this is a topical argument in more senses than one: Smith insists that judgment cannot reside absolutely in a single place—the Pope's breast', Rome—and thus replaces the notion of Petrine succession with a more historically supple and particularized notion of doctrinal continuity." (Ettenhuber, 68-69)

- Ettenhuber concludes her essay with the following paragraph:
 - "It is worth restating that, in their fundamental positions on scripture reading, Smith's and Martin's prefaces offer few surprises. The chief interest and importance of both pieces resides in the systematic connection they make between doctrinal and textual decisions, and between hermeneutic and historical method. The Rheims and King James Bibles do not simply promulgate ideas about the reader's relationship with scripture in discursive prefaces, but manipulate the book as material object to encourage desire in the reader. Through their approach to citation and annotation, and in their use of maps, genealogical charts, and indices, these two Bibles embody two radically different views of scripture truth and church history. In practice, readers doubtless deviated from the path set out by their guides. But it will be easier to understand the nature and significance of readerly choices—including moments of overt resistance or compliance—if we have a better understanding of the concepts and strategies authors used to the textual movements of their audience. The pressure to succeed in this project was nowhere more intense than in a culture that read topography as a way into the kingdom of heaven." (Ettenhuber, 69)

Conclusion

- After considering the work of Brother Christopher Yetzer and Katrin Ettenhuber, I am convinced that one of the primary functions of Myles Smith's famous Preface was apologetic in nature. One of Smith's main goals was to positively set forth a Protestant case for their view of church history, the scriptures in general, and English Bible translations specifically. As such, it was intentionally designed to defend the Protestant view considering Gregory Martin's Preface to the Rheims New Testament.

- Therefore, the King James Preface needs to be understood in its proper historical context. It was written at a definitive point in time to address a circumscribed set of then contemporary factors. Consequently, modern attempts to leverage the Preface to support 21st century views of text and translation are ahistorical and guilty of the historical error of Presentism i.e., “the imposition of present-day values and assumptions on individuals and societies of the past.” (Wilson, 103)
- In the next Lessons we will conclude this term by looking at this very subject. Namely, ways in which the Preface is leveraged and how many of these attempts are guilty of Presentism.

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Sunday, June 11, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 208 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Leveraging, Misuse & Presentism)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 207](#) we concluded our Apologetic Analysis of Myles Smith's Preface to the Authorized Version. After considering the work of Brother Christopher Yetzer and Katrin Ettenhuber, I am convinced that the primary function of Smith's famous Preface was apologetic in nature. One of his main goals was to positively set forth a Protestant case for their view of church history, the scriptures in general, and English Bible translations specifically. As such, it was intentionally designed to defend the Protestant view considering Gregory Martin's Preface to the Rheims New Testament as a historical backdrop. Therefore, the King James Preface needs to be understood in its proper historical context. It was written at a definitive point in time to address a circumscribed set of then contemporary factors. Consequently, modern attempts to leverage the Preface to support 21st century views of text and translation are ahistorical and guilty of the historical error of Presentism i.e., "the imposition of present-day values and assumptions on individuals and societies of the past." (Wilson, 103)
- The goal of this Lesson is to shift our focus to the subject of contemporary use of the Preface in terms of leveraging, misuse, and the historical error of Presentism. In doing so, we will address the following in this Lesson.
 - Leveraging & Misuse: Personal Thoughts & Observations
 - Further Thoughts from Brother Yetzer
 - The Error of Historical Presentism

Leveraging & Misuse: Personal Thoughts & Observations

- In preparation for this Lesson, I asked a handful of people the following question, "What do you believe are the biggest misuses of Myles Smith's Preface by those on both sides of the Text & Translation debate?" Please note that I intentionally asked a cross section of people who take a variety of positions related to text and translation, some are Modern Version advocates, some are not. I wanted to get a diversity of opinions lest I be accused of stacking the deck in favor of my own viewpoint. Moreover, I asked more people than responded. The following is a list of the responses I received to the question.
 - [Timothy Berg](#)— "In my experience the single biggest abuse, by far, is misusing this passage: "...we have at the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass that you see..."

It is sometimes used to claim that the Translators thought some kind of supernatural influence was upon them and, through them, upon the KJB in some unique way. Usually with the conclusion that they thought their work was error free or inspired in some sense unique from other Bibles.

I have seen extremely intelligent men who I deeply respect make this mistake. It's not just wrong. It's absurd. It's so obviously an attempt to read one's own modern theology into the words of the preface in unhistorical ways. Of course, there is no way this is what Smith meant. Certainly not in any sense in which God's hand was upon the KJB but not on other translations, or on the KJB more than other translations.

Not only is this to blatantly misread the preface itself (where Smith makes extremely clear, in relation to the LXX, that he thinks translators are not prophets, and never produce error free or perfect work), and to blatantly misread the bibliology of the day (where no one ever thought this about an English translation!), it is also to be astoundingly ignorant of British history.

The English had an incredibly high view of God's Providence, and of his working among them in particular. One only need look at the speech and sermons surrounding destruction of the English armada a few decades before the KJB, or the gunpowder plot during the KJB period, to see the extremely high view of providence at work in the age. More than one massive monograph has traced out the English theology of providence at length.

Every positive thing that happened in England was "the good hand of our God upon us." He providentially saved them from the Spanish and the Catholics and brought them money and gave them lands (yes, they saw colonial expansion and the stealing of land from the world as God's gift of providence to them) and so on. The KJB of course, as well, was produced, in Smith's mind (and surely all the others) under this same guiding hand of providence.

However, this has nothing to do with the claim that their work is perfect, or inspired, or somehow has a greater move of the Spirit on it, or any such thing. Such claims are silly, but I see them all the time. In its most subtle form, people just quote Smith without explaining the historical background, and hope readers will draw the conclusion of an inspired or almost inspired translation from it on their own. In more insidious examples, they explicitly claim this and then cite Smith as supporting evidence. Both are misguided approaches which misread the preface.

There are other examples of abuses of the preface, to be sure. Including some which try too hard to make Smith sound like a modern translator or critic. However, in my experience this particular slip, from this side, is the most common and most egregious."

- Dwayne Green—"In a very general sense, I think people often use the preface to either say the translators "Expected their Bible to be the standard English text" or that it decried the idea of KJV Onlyism.
- Steven Hayes—"On the MTC side of the house, two things come to mind. First, it is common that they use the Preface to teach that the KJV translators never believed their translation was "perfect". Second, overused and misapplied is the quote, "the very meanest translation of the Bible in English... is the word of God," which they use as evidence that the KJV translators would have approved of the many English translations we have today; this one might be their most common/egregious error. On the TR/KJV

side, “we” have too often used it to say that since they believed their translation was to be the “principal one”, and that it was “perfect”, that meant they believed it could never be updated; I think your recent studies have shown that was not the case.”

- Nick Sayers—“Definitely #1 “the meanest translation” relates to modern versions. Saying that a variety of senses meaning “alternative readings” like the NKJV footnotes, when it just means like “love” or “charity” not something totally left field. Also, not every marginal note is an “alternative reading.”
- David W. Reid—“1) Misunderstanding of the “perfect” and “better” and “one principal good one” language. 2) Failure to understand choice not to use identity of phrasing.”
- Christopher Yetzer— “I suppose I would say that no matter the quote pulled from it and who is using it, I think the biggest misuse on both sides are two things. 1) Not understanding the nature of the preface and its purpose in 1600s England and in book culture in general. 2) Acting as if all the translators are speaking in unison. I'm not saying that they would have all agreed, but I think there should be some effort made to consider whether they would have or not.”

Further Thoughts From Brother Yetzer

- Brother Yetzer elaborates on his second point extensively in his currently unpublished essay “The Very Vulgar.” Yetzer addresses this point in “Part 3: The Preface Constrained” in which he discusses the extent to which Myles Smith represented the views/thinking of the other fifty plus translators.
 - “Because the preface is the words of just one translator, it is not always known how well it represents all the translators or the historical truth in general. . . In order for one to claim “the translators believed” in reference to words in the preface, there should be some effort made in analyzing if the words might reasonably have been believed by all the translators or if there is any external evidence to support the claim being made. Some of Smith’s statements are upheld by separate witnesses and others seem to be refuted by them (or at least show a toned-down version of them). here” (Yetzer, 6, 10)
- Diodati’s English Annotations (a translation of the footnotes from his Italian Bible) and the English Annotations written by a group of Englishmen (first printed in 1645) are used by Brother Yetzer as a historical case in point. Yetzer demonstrates by citing the Prefaces to these different editions of annotations that one or more of them is not accurate in how they represent the nature of the work. Yetzer’s main point in tracing this history in a paper about the King James Bible is as follows:
 - “The point here is only to demonstrate that in the 17th century the preface was a commercial product of publicity and secondarily that the authors of them often had agendas and at points were errant or dishonest.” (Yetzer, 7)

- Therefore, Brother Yetzer cautions against viewing Myles Smith as speaking for all the translators, in total. He offers the following statement from subsection twelve “An Answer To The Imputations of Our Adversaries” as a case in point, “for we have seen none of theirs of the whole Bible as yet.” This statement seems to conflict with latter statements made in subsection fifteen regarding the Catholics use of words like *azimes*, *tunike* (tunic), *rational* (breastplate), *holocausts*, *praepuce*, and *pasche* with “*tunike*” and “*rational*” only occurring in the Douay Old Testament which was published in two volumes in 1609 and 1610. (Vance, 319) How can Smith say in one place that the translators had never seen a “whole Bible” produced by Roman Catholics and at the same time quote from the Preface to the Douay Old Testament? We offered the following possible explanation in [Lesson 204](#).
 - “In this statement from subsection twelve Smith seems to be saying that the translators, i.e., “we”, had not yet seen a Roman Catholic copy of “the whole Bible as yet.” Yet in subsection fifteen Smith cites word usage choices from both the Old (1609 and 1610) and New (1582) Testaments of the Douay-Rheims Bible. How are we to reconcile these seemingly contrary statements from the pen of Myles Smith? In my mind, the most charitable interpretation is to view Smith as speaking on behalf of all the translators in subsection twelve who indeed had not seen “the whole bible as yet” put forth by their Roman Catholic adversaries since the Old Testament was not yet available when the bulk of the Company work took place between 1604 and 1609. Whereas, in subsection fifteen of the Preface, it is arguably written in late 1610 or early 1611 as the final preparations for the press were underway. Therefore, Smith in his person would have had the liberty to inspect the Douay Old Testament in its entirety before authoring the Preface.”
- With this example in mind, Brother Yetzer’s caution regarding not taking every statement made by Smith at face value appears to have merit. Brother Yetzer provides examples of how historical corroboration helps sustain some of Smith’s claims in the Preface. Please consider the following examples.

Example 1

- “Miles Smith in the KJV preface: “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;”

KJV dedication to King James: “For when your Highnesse had once out of deepe judgment apprehended, how convenient it was, That out of the Originall sacred tongues, together with comparing of the labours, both in our owne and other forreigne Languages, of many worthy men who went before us, there should be one more exact Translation of the holy Scriptures into the English tongue;”

Oxford company translator George Abbot in *The Reasons Which Doctor Hill Hath Brought for the Upholding of Papistry* 1604: “There is not in the world, any fit meanes to come to the right sence of Scripture, which our men doe not frequent. They seeke into the Original tongues, wherein the booke of God was written. They conferre translations of all sortes: they lay one text with another, & expound the harder by that which is lesse difficult: they compare circumstances of Antecedents and Consquents: they looke to the Analogy of faith prescribed in the Creede of the

Apostles, They search what the first Councils did establish: they seeke what was the opinions of the Fathers concerning textes in question, and refuse not therein to cope with you about the highest points...”

Westminster company translator Roger Fenton, “...we doe with all diligence embrace those meanes which God hath provided for the interpretation thereof: not onely the rules of reason, and humane arts sanctified by God’s grace, in his faithfull servants, but adding thereto also the record of antiquitie: consent of fathers: testimony of learned men: conferring places, waighing circumstances, examining translations, with such like: not singling any one meanes from the rest (as you fondly imagine) but joyning them together...”

Second Cambridge Company translator John Bois: In his notes taken during the general meeting in London he cites the Rheims New Testament at Colossians 2:18, Latin at Romans 9:6 and 1 Corinthians 9:5, “old Interpreters” at 1 Corinthians 11:10, Septuagint at 2 Timothy 2:19, Italian at Revelation 7:15, “major number of translators” at Hebrews 10:12 and “others” is mentioned throughout.

Secondhand testimony: John Selden who was a friend of several translators said, “The Translation in King *James’s* time took an excellent way. That Part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a Tongue, (as the *Apocrypha* to *Andrew Downs*); and then they met together, and one read the Translation, the rest holding in their Hands some Bible, either of the learned Tongues, or *French, Spanish, Italian, &c.* if they found any Fault they spoke, if not, he read on.”

Textual analysis: Comparing the text itself is difficult because of the number of possible sources consulted and the fact that those sources commonly agree with one another. Here are some possible examples: Genesis 23:6 most translations have something like “Prince of God”, but the KJV translates it as “mighty prince” similar to the 1588 Pastors and Professors of Geneva French Bible which read “Prince excellent”; Genesis 37:36 most of the previous English translations have “chief steward” or something similar, but the KJV has “captain of the guard” similar to the Reina’s 1569 Spanish Bible which read “capitan de los de la guarda”; Hebrews 11:28 most English translations had “effusion” but the KJV uses “sprinkling” similar to Diodati’s 1607 Italian Bible which read “spruzzamento”⁸⁶; Matthew 9:4 most English translations had “seeing” but the KJV uses “knowing” possibly following the quote by Chrysostom; 2 Corinthians 2:10 most English translations had “in the sight” but the KJV uses “in the person” like the 1582 Rheims; 1 Corinthians 7:35 most English Bibles had “separation”, but the KJV uses “distractio” like Beza’s Latin translation which read “distractio”.

Through these varied witnesses we can see that in this case Smith seems to have accurately represented at least some of the translators and portions of the translation process.” (Yetzer, 10-11)

Example 2

- “Another example from the preface that has some outside agreement is the following statement.

Miles Smith in the KJV preface: “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...”

KJV translator Daniel Featley⁸⁸ in *Transubstantiation Exploded* in 1638: “The same word in divers places of Scripture may be diversly taken, according to the diversity of the matter and circumstances of the Text.”⁸⁹

Textual analysis: “*dabhar* (word or thing) is translated by eighty-four English words, *panim* (face) by thirty-four, *sim* (to set or place) by fifty-nine, *shubh* (to turn back) by sixty, *nasah* (to lift up) by fortysix, *abhar* (to passover) by forty-eight, and *rabh* (much) by forty-four.”” (Yetzer, 11-12)

- After providing the above examples, Brother Yetzer states the following:
 - “So while some of the preface is substantiated by other sources, it is not true that every word of the preface accurately and universally represented the opinions of all the translators, even though Smith’s intention was certainly to do so, as much as his agenda would permit. KJV researcher Timothy Berg, in talking about the section of the KJV preface titled *A satisfaction to our brethren*, has noted that Smith’s, “rebuttal of Puritan objections to the project for example could hardly be said to reflect the thinking of, say, John Rainolds.” Newman and Houser pointed out that their co-author’s work made clear that, “King James knew why he wanted another translation, though his motivations may not have exactly paralleled those articulated by the translators[sic] in the Preface”

Clearly not all the translators could have ratified the final draft of the preface given that a few of them had died before Smith began the first draft. Besides that, there seems to be some evidence that at least a few of the translators might have disagreed with some of the wording in the preface or at least in their writings they worded things with less embellishment.

... KJV researcher Timothy Berg has summarized, “I think it is wise to speak of the preface as having a “sole author” (Miles Smith) who was commanded to write “in the name of all the translators” (to quote from the editor of his 1632 collection of sermons). This can help us most fruitfully dialogue without the - to my mind unwarranted - claims that “all the translators” either agreed perfectly with Smith at every point, or disagreed in unison with him at any point.”” (Yetzer, 12, 14)

The Error of Historical Presentism

- Douglas L. Wilson is the author of an essay titled “Thomas Jefferson and the Meaning of Liberty.” The piece originally appeared in the November 1992 issue of *The Atlantic*. Among other things, the piece covers the historical error of “presentism” i.e., “the imposition of present-day values and assumptions on individuals and societies of the past.” (Wilson, 103) In the following excerpt Wilson applies the error “presentism” to Thomas Jefferson and the era of America’s founding.

- “In this selection, a distinguished Jefferson scholar reflects on this “many-sided and multi-talented man,” especially on his contradictions concerning slavery and race. In doing so, Douglas Wilson raises a crucial point about the perils of presentism — that is, of intruding today’s values and attitudes upon the past. To do that, he warns, is distorting history. What annoys him is that too many Americans today seem unable to discuss the past in its own terms, unable “to make appropriate allowances for prevailing historical conditions.” (Wilson, 102)
- “Presentism” is the term that historians use for applying contemporary or ‘otherwise inappropriate standards, to the past. An awkward term at best, it nevertheless names a malaise that currently plagues American discussions of anything and everything concerning the past: the widespread inability to make appropriate allowances for prevailing historical conditions. The issue of presentism is hardly new, but it has perhaps been amplified of late by the debunking and revisionist spirit of the times and the effect this has had on public perceptions. As the uncritically positive and unabashedly patriotic approach that for so long characterized the teaching of American history in the public schools has abated, the emphasis has steadily shifted to the problems and failures of the past. The saga of the glories of the old West has thus given way to a saga of exploitation and greed. Pride in conquering the wilderness has yielded to the shame of despoiling the land and dispossessing the indigenous peoples. What seems to have happened is that a laudably corrective trend has predominated to such an extent that the emphasis seems somehow reversed, and parents complain that they scarcely recognize the history their children are taught.” (Wilson, 106)
- It is my contention that “presentism” clouds modern readers from properly contextualizing the Preface to the King James Bible. As a result, modern standards and praxis regarding Textual Criticism, and Modern Version advocacy are imposed upon the Preface in an ahistorical manner. This is done by contemporary interlocutors who seek to rhetorically leverage the Preface and advance the argument that the King James translators would have agreed with them. I think parties on both sides of text and translation debate do this to varying degrees.
- In the next Lesson we will consider Brother Joshua Barzon’s 2022 book *The Forgotten Preface* as an example of “Presentism” when it comes to the Preface.

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Sunday, June 18, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 209 The AV 1611: Producing A Proper Perspective on the Preface (Leveraging, Misuse & Presentism)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 208](#) after considering personal testimonials from a variety of people regarding how the Preface is misused by those on both sides of the text and translation debate, we consider the historical error of “presentism.”
- In doing so, we used Douglas L. Wilson’s essay “Thomas Jefferson and the Meaning of Liberty,” to frame the discussion. Originally published in the November 1992 issue of *The Atlantic*, Wilson defines “presentism” as follows, “the imposition of present-day values and assumptions on individuals and societies of the past.” (Wilson, 103)
 - “In this selection, a distinguished Jefferson scholar reflects on this "many-sided and multi-talented man," especially on his contradictions concerning slavery and race. In doing so, Douglas Wilson raises a crucial point about the perils of presentism — that is, of intruding today's values and attitudes upon the past. To do that, he warns, is distorting history. What annoys him is that too many Americans today seem unable to discuss the past in its own terms, unable "to make appropriate allowances for prevailing historical conditions.” (Wilson, 102)
- After citing one more passage from Wilson’s essay, I concluded Lesson 208 by stating the following:
 - “It is my contention that “presentism” clouds modern readers from properly contextualizing the Preface to the King James Bible. As a result, modern standards and praxis regarding Textual Criticism, and Modern Version advocacy are imposed upon the Preface in an ahistorical manner. This is done by contemporary interlocutors who seek to rhetorically leverage the Preface and advance the argument that the King James translators would have agreed with them. I think parties on both sides of text and translation debate do this to varying degrees.” (7)
- I further stated that in the next Lesson we would consider Brother Joshua Barzon’s 2022 book *The Forgotten Preface* as an example of “presentism” when it comes to the Preface. It is to this endeavor that we will now turn our attention.

Presentism: *The Forgotten Preface* by Joshua Barzon

- Joshua Barzon’s 2022 publication *The Forgotten Preface: Surprising Insight On the Translation Philosophy of the King James Translators* stands out as a prime example of “presentism” when it comes to the King James Preface. In the Introduction Brother Barzon states the following regarding the goal of his book.
 - “. . . And even today, more than four centuries after its original publication, the KJV remains the most famous Bible translation in history, and one of the most-printed books in English.

However, there is an important portion of the King James Bible that is absent from the majority of KJV editions. It is not a lost book of the Bible, nor a newly discovered Greek manuscript. No, it is what I have deemed “The Forgotten Preface.” Upon its completion, the King James Translators included a letter “from the translators to the reader,” as the Preface to this new English translation. Its purpose was to defend their work against the fierce criticism that they felt it would receive from readers.

In the nineteenth century, for one reason or another, this preface ceased to be included in the majority of printed Bibles.

This book aims to exposit the preface to the King James Version and to show the reader what it is that the King James translators believed about inspiration, preservation, translation, and even modern translations. You might be surprised by what you find.” (Barzon, v-vi)

- Before moving on, there are a couple of points we should note. First, Barzon agrees with what we saw from the pen of Edgar J. Goodspeed in [Lesson 193](#) regarding the Preface being “practically out of print.” (Goodspeed, 25) Second, this is because, in the 19th century, publishers ceased printing it. Third, Barzon endeavors to “exposit” the Preface to explain what the King James translators believed about the following four categories: 1) inspiration, 2) preservation, 3) translation, and 4) modern translations. This enterprise is the focus of Chapter 1 which is titled “What the King James Translators Believed.” In this Chapter, Barzon sets forth the following ten theses regarding the beliefs of the King James translators.
 - Thesis #1: The King James translators believed that any attempt to produce a modern translation of the Bible would be met with resistance and suspicion.
 - Thesis #2: The King James translators believed that the Bible should be available in the common English of the then-present age.
 - Thesis #3: The King James translators believed that God used and blessed faulty Bible translations in the past.
 - Thesis #4: The King James translators believed that differing and even faulty translations are still the Word of God.
 - Thesis #5: The King James translators did not believe their translation was perfect.
 - Thesis #6: The King James translators did not believe that only the most educated scholars were capable of translating the Scriptures.
 - Thesis #7: The King James translators believed that those opposed to modern translations would use the age of previous translations to argue against new translations.
 - Thesis #8: The King James translators believed that manuscripts and translations should not be judged solely by the character of the men that compiled them, even if those men held erroneous beliefs and heretical doctrines.

- Thesis #9: The King James translators did not believe in an absolute “word-for-word” translation; they sometimes used dynamic equivalence.
- Thesis #10: The King James translators believed that God was blessing their endeavor regardless of what the established church and religious crowd thought.
- Before we unpack some of the specific claims made by Brother Barzon in the above theses, it is important to understand the direction in which his argumentation is advancing. Chapter 2 of Barzon’s book is aptly titled “An Endorsement” which seeks to funnel the conclusions gleaned from his expository theses in Chapter 1 into an endorsement for the New King James Bible. Please consider the opening paragraphs from Chapter 2.
 - “For this author to present an exposition of the preface in order to demonstrate the need for continual modern English translations—and then to not recommend a modern English translation would be disingenuous. It is the intent of this chapter to give a deliberate endorsement of a modern English translation to the modern English believer. But what translation to recommend? With numerous translations used by many faithful and evangelical churches, pastors, and theologians, it can be a daunting task to recommend one modern English translation. This book risks becoming a multi-volume series if it were to delve into the areas of textual traditions and manuscript differences. It is not the intent of this book to do so. Rather, the endorsement will be to the least controversial modern English translation (in my opinion). It is a translation that is from the same textual tradition as the King James Version, yet is masterfully brought into the modern and readable English. That particular translation that will be endorsed is the New King James Version (NKJV).

Before we move forward, it must be acknowledged that the aim of this endorsement is not to take the spirit of the “KJVO” movement and create a “NKJVO” movement. Far be it from that. Rather, this is an attempt to appeal to the consciences of brothers and sisters in Christ who hold educated preferences, yet desire to read God’s Word in clear, common English. This chapter is for those who love, respect, and cherish the KJV, just as I do. But this chapter is also for the person who desires to “hear the Scriptures speak as it did in the language of Canaan; that it may be understood even by the very vulgar [common] person,” as some wise English Bible translators once said!” (Barzon, 23-24)

- So, all Barzon’s theses regarding the Preface in Chapter 1 are designed to support his “endorsement” of the New King James Version in Chapter 2 and, ultimately, his defense of it in Chapter 3. Simply stated, Barzon is leveraging Smith’s Preface to endorse and defend the New King James Version as a modern replacement for the AV. This is done to create the perception that the King James translators would have supported/endorsed the NKJV.
- Before moving on, it is also important to note that Barzon presents the King James Preface in a modern and heavily edited form. On the Acknowledgements page (53), Barzon thanks James Snapp for, “allowing me to use his modern English translation of the Preface to the KJV.” Barzon is unclear if his use of Snapp’s translation applies only to Appendix B located in the back of the book, in which the entirety to Smith’s Preface is provided or also to the text of the Preface

presented in the main portion of the book. My reason for raising this question is that the citations of the Preface found in the main section of the work do not match the form of the Preface provided in Appendix B. Put another way, when Barzon cites the Preface in the main portion of the book, it contains further editing beyond what is found in Appendix B. After listening to hours of online interviews that Brother Barzon has given on YouTube, I must conclude that the text of the Preface presented in the main portion of the book is an edited version of Snapp's translation that has received further revision. It is my conclusion that these additional revisions performed on Snapp's work were conducted by Brother Barzon himself (with possible assistance from another party). Therefore, readers of *The Forgotten Preface* need to realize that the theses found therein are derived from Barzon's revisions of Snapp's modern translation of the Preface. Consequently, the derived theses presented in the book have been sifted through the interoperative grid of both Snapp and Barzon, thereby making claims to merely be exposing the translators in their own words questionable.

- In my view, Brother Barzon's book is a prime example of the historical error of "presentism." Time and space will not permit an exhaustive exploration/refutation of all of Barzon's theses that are guilty of "presentism," so a few of the more egregious examples will have to suffice.

Thesis #1

- Thesis #1: The King James translators believed that any attempt to produce a modern translation of the Bible would be met with resistance and suspicion. Brother Barzon states the following in support of Thesis 1:
 - "It is important to understand that the King James Bible was considered a modern translation in its day. Just as today's modern translations are often seen as an attack upon venerable antiquated translations, so too was the King James seen as an affront to established English Bibles such as the Geneva Bible, the Bishops' Bible, and the Coverdale Bible. The translators describe this opposition against their work with the following words:

[Modern Bible translations] are welcomed with suspicion instead of love, and with envy instead of thanks. If anything can be misunderstood, some critic will ensure that it will be misunderstood and thus be in danger of being condemned. Everyone who has gone through the experience of promoting new things will affirm this. Was there ever any project that involved something new, or renewal, that did not endure many a storm of protest and opposition?

It is hard to please everyone, even when we please God best, and seek to commend ourselves to everyone's conscience.

The translators clearly understood that their endeavor to make a new translation of the Bible (actually a revision of the Bishops' Bible of 1568) would cause the translation to be set upon a stage to be mocked, nit-picked, and criticized by the religious crowd of their day. . .[quotes modern form of the Preface]

The translators asserted that a particular Bible translation can become a golden calf (“man’s Religion”) [Where in the Preface do the translators ever use the term “golden calf” to refer to “a particular Bible translation.”] among the church at large. They imagined that their critics would see their modern translation as equivalent to claiming that the church has been deceived by previous translations. [quotes modern form of the Preface]” (Barzon, 2-3)

- In terms of analysis, Barzon’s insertion of “Modern Bible translations” in brackets into the quote from the Preface is extremely misleading. This is a prime example of “presentism” because it inserts present thinking and parlance into a historical document that was not originally there. This is also a prime example of the difference between the form of the Preface presented in the main body of the book and the one found in Appendix B. The insertion of “Modern Bible translations” in brackets is not found in Appendix B. So the commentary offered by Barzon in support of Thesis #1 is based on his own edited form of the Preface.
- First, the King James translators did not view themselves as making a “new translation” much less a “modern translation.” “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 . . . 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.” Therefore, to state that the KJB “was considered a modern translation in its day,” is misleading and ahistorical because that is not what the translators said they did. They sought to make “one principal good one” out of “many” preexisting “good ones.” The following statement from the pen of Brother Barzon directly contradicts what Myles Smith stated in the Preface, “The translators clearly understood that their endeavor to make a new translation of the Bible. . .” The testimony of Myles Smith is that they were not endeavoring “to make a new translation” much less a “modern translation.”
- Second, Barzon’s use of language is unclear. Was the KJB an “affront to established English Bibles” such as the Geneva, Bishops, and Coverdale as asserted in paragraph one, or a revision of those Bibles as argued in paragraph two? The author of the Epistle Dedicatory states the following:
 - “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; . . .”
- This statement from the Epistle Dedicatory along with the one quoted above from subsection thirteen (“The Purpose of the Translators, With Their Number, Furniture, Care, Etc.”) coupled with Rules 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.”) and 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, Geneva.”) make it clear that the KJB was a revision of the Bishops Bible compared against the original Greek as well as previous English Bibles. Therefore, the KJB is “new” in the sense of it being a unique collection of readings, but it was

certainly not “modern” since in the places where the Bishops text was revised by the translators it was done so using readings from the Tyndale, Coverdale, Great, Geneva, and Rheims Bibles.

- Third, since the King James was a “revision” based on prior English versions there are places where the text remained unchanged since the Great Bible of 1539. Consider Romans 1:2 as a case in point. The wording found in the King James is identical with the 1602 Bishops, “Which he had promised afore by his Prophets in the holy Scriptures.” The only differences are that the KJB places the verse in parenthesis and adds a comma at the end. Given the fact that Bishop Bible was a revision of the Great Bible, one should not be surprised to find that the Great Bible reads exactly as do the Bishops and the King James in Romans 1:2, “whych he had promysed afore by hys Prophetes in the holy scriptures.” Therefore, it seems hardly accurate to call the KJB a “modern translation” as does Brother Barzon when it uses readings that were unchanged from nearly one hundred years earlier. This is but one example of this phenomenon.
- Fourth, it is widely recognized that the KJB did not use “modern” or contemporary methods of speaking when it was first produced in the early 17th century. Alister McGrath states the following in his 2001 publication *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture*:
 - “One of the most interesting aspects of the King James Bible is its use of ways of speaking that were already become archaic in the Standard English of the seventeenth century. By adopting these older forms, the King James Bible had the unintended effect of perpetuating ways of speaking, that strictly speaking, were dying out in everyday English speech. In what follows, we shall look at three broad areas in which archaic forms are used, and consider their significance. . . [quotes Rule 1] The King’s translators were thus forbidden to depart to any significant extent from the text of the Bishops Bible of 1568. Yet what were the instructions given to those who prepared the Bishops Bible? To use the Great Bible of 1539 except where it did not accurately represent the original texts. The directions given to the translators over the years 1539-1604 were thus virtually guarded to ensure continuity of language over a period in which the English language itself underwent considerable change and development.” (McGrath, 265)
- How can the KJB rightly be called a “modern translation” when it was not even translated into the contemporary English of its day? For all these reasons Thesis #1 from Brother Barzon’s book stands out as a prime case of “presentism” and an attempt to leverage the Preface.

Thesis #2

- Thesis #2: The King James translators believed that the Bible should be available in the common English of the then-present age.
 - “The comparison is made by the translators that “the Scripture should speak as it did in the language of Canaan” meaning that, just as the book of Genesis sounded like the common language of Canaan at the time of Moses, so too should Genesis sound like the contemporary English of each present era.

The implication of this philosophy is that English translations of God's word need to be continually measured against the common language of the land, and revised in agreement with it—because all languages change over time. . . [quotes modern form of the Preface]

While this book aims to be objective by strictly expositing the translators' preface in light of the historical context of their translation work, it is fitting to close this point with an analogy." (Barzon, 4-6)

- My problem here is that this is not what the translators did. As we have already seen, the KJB uses ways and manners of speaking that were archaic and falling out of use when the translation was made in the early 17th century. Smith statements about the "language of Canaan" are arguably about endeavoring to follow the word order and literary forms of the Hebrew and not the "contemporary English of each present era." Interested parties are encouraged to read Dr. Leland Ryken's excellent book *The Legacy of the King James Bible: Celebrating 400 Years Of The Most Influential English Translation*. In this book Dr. Ryken argues that the reason the KJB reads as it does is because of the translator's desire to translate literally and retain the word order of the Hebrew and Greek to the greatest extent possible. Once again, as we saw above with Alister McGrath this results in a text that is inherently foreign in many respects from the "contemporary English" of early 17th century England. Brother Barzon claims to be "objective by strictly expositing the translators' preface in light of the historical context of their translation work" while reading modern assumptions back into the Preface. Consequently, Barzon's statement regarding this stated manner of "expositing" the Preface rings hollow. His entire goal is to leverage Smith's Preface to argue that the King James translators would have approved of modern versions like the NKJV on the grounds of "contemporary English" usage. While I do not dispute that the translators did not lock themselves into "an uniformity of phrasing, or identify words" Barzon has no grounds for asserting that the King James translators would have approved of the text critical decisions and wording changes of the New King James translators. This based upon the assumption that all the NKJV translators did was update the archaicism of the KJB into "contemporary English" which is a major assumption that many take exception with, including this author. A close examination of the NKJV reveals that there were more changes made to the text than simply updating archaic language.

Theses #3 & 4

- Thesis #3: The King James translators believed that God used and blessed faulty Bible translations in the past.
 - "The King James translators were honest about the limitation of Bible translation. They acknowledged that while the Word of God is perfect, translations carry with them human error and obscurity. The best example of this, they said, is the Septuagint. . . The translators acknowledge that even with some clumsy translation choices that deviate from the original Hebrew, the Septuagint can be claimed to be the "Word of God," which is validated by historical and apostolic use." (Barzon, 7)
- Thesis #4: The King James translators believed that differing and even faulty translations are still the Word of God.

- “The King James translators acknowledged that no translators have possessed infallibility in their translation work. Yet the KJV translators believed that even an imperfect translation is still the word of God.” (Barzon, 9)
- In a YouTube video titled “[A Forgotten History of Unbelief: Review of The Forgotten Preface by Joshua Barzon](#)” Brian Snider states the following regarding Thesis #3 & 4:
 - “[4:13] I guess it really depends on what he means by “faulty.” “Faulty,” is his word, it is not used in the Preface to the King James Version. And so he’s interpreted them to have said that. But nevertheless, faulty as in not optimum but still accurate, that is one thing. But if you mean faulty as in modified or mistranslated or edited in some way, that is not okay. So again, we must define what Barzon means by faulty as that is his word [4:38].” (Snider)
 - We cannot help but agree with Snider on this point. Barzon must define what he means here by “faulty” in order for Thesis #4 to have any purchase as an argument in this discussion. I would submit that Barzan is assuming the faulty standard of *verbatim identically* of wording in Theses #3 & 4 that was not embraced or endorsed by the King James translators. See our discussion of “uniformity of phrasing” in [Lesson 204](#).
- In a general sense, I do not dispute that these were the sentiments expressed in the Preface by Myles Smith, The King’s speech remained the King’s speech when translated into different languages even when ungracefully or inelegantly done (This does not mean that Smith would have accepted substantively inaccurate translations as the word of God.). Likewise, the scriptures remain the word of God and retain their inspired status even when translated into vernacular languages. Just like the King’s speech does not cease to be the King’s speech when rendered in French, the scriptures do not cease to be the word of God when translated into English (See our discussion of “the King’s Speech” analogy in [Lesson 199](#)). Smith’s is an argument for a high Protestant view of the inspiration and infallibility of God’s word not a back door ahistorical justification for the NKJV. Consider the following from the *Westminster Confession of Faith* regarding vulgar language translations.
 - Chapter I Article VIII— The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. **But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated in to the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.**
- This is a strong appeal for the accurate and proper translation of the pure Hebrew and Greek words into the vernacular languages of all peoples. It is also important to note that the drafters of

the Confession were ascribing these statements to the Masoretic Hebrew Text and the Greek *Textus Recptus*, the only Greek text they had available to them. It was the act of translating the *Textus Receptus* into the vernacular languages of Europe that drove the Reformation and touched off the greatest era of Christian mission work the world has ever seen. These are historical facts that cannot be disputed. The word of God translated dwells “plentifully in all” languages into which it is rendered and remains undiminished.

- Herein lies my problem with Theses #3 & 4 as set forth by Brother Barzon, they decry an inherent inconsistency in his expositional framework. He wants to use them to leverage the Preface to support the notion that the King James translators would have supported “contemporary language” translations while failing to acknowledge 17th century Protestant views on vernacular language translations. Therefore, Barzon’s claim to be “expositing the preface in light of the historical context of their translation work” (6) misses the mark and commits the error of “presentism.”

Thesis #5

- Thesis #5: The King James translators did not believe their translation was perfect.
 - “This statement will very likely be the most controversial among what the translators believed. The King James translators believed that their own translation was not a perfect translation—because they, too, were limited by the same human limitations that accompanied every previous translation.

... The KJV translators, based on this reasoning, gave three particular warnings to their readers. First, they implored their readers to utilize the marginal notes which offer alternative reading in place of doubtfulness and ambiguity. Second, they advocated for the use of multiple translations for “finding the full sense” of the Scriptures. And lastly, they warned their readers not to dogmatize about one particular translation (even their own King James translation) but rather to hold all faithful translations in high regard.

... Presently, there are those within Christendom who claim that the King James translators produced a “perfect, error-free, and final” translation that is the ultimate standard for all Bible translations (sometimes even foreign ones). If the King James translators were alive today, they would be opposed to this erroneous view.

... It is evident from this close examination of the preface that a “King James Only” position was not only foreign to the King James translators, but that they would be adamantly opposed to such a doctrine if they were alive today.” (Barzon, 10-13)

- Brother Barzon has correctly identified that the King James translators opposed the false assumption that preservation, transmission, and translation require *verbatim identity* of wording. The King James translators clearly recognized a difference between 1) a different way of saying the same thing, and 2) a substantive difference in meaning. Yet, Brother Barzon asserts that the King James translators would argue for holding “all faithful translation in high regard” as a way of suggesting that they would have supported modern versions.

- My second objection to Thesis #5 centers around Barzon’s use of “perfect.” As we have argued in this series of studies on the Preface, the word “perfect” is a “false friend.” There are various ways that the King James translators did view their work as “perfect.” I find this to be interesting given the fact that Mark Ward, author of *Authorized: The Use and Misuse of the King James Bible* and the chief purveyor of the “false friends” concept, consulted with Brother Barzon on his book (see the Acknowledgements page). In his “endorsement” for the NKJV in Chapter 2 Barzon stated the following regarding “false friends” and the KJV:
 - “But even more problematic are the countless “false friends” littered throughout the King James. The difference between an archaic word and a false friend is that an archaic word is one readers know they’re puzzled by. They encounter collops, daysman, murrain and they know they need to look these words up in the dictionary in order to understand them. But a false friend is a word that is still in use but has a modern connotation that is very different from the seventeenth-century meaning. That means that readers think they understand these words, but they don’t. Common words like remove, commend, and halt—words we still use today—may have meant very different things in the English of 1611. It is projected that there are more than fifty different “false friends” in the KJV that appear over 1,300 times. This comes out to be about 4.3% of all verses (and this is conservative estimate based on the occurrence of only 50 or so false friends) in the KJV.” (Barzon, 25)
 - Why does discussion of “false friends” never impact conversations of the King James Preface? If the presence of “false friends” is so detrimental to one’s understanding of the Biblical text in the AV why are they never discussed in relation to proper understanding of the Preface? How can a book that purports to “exposit” the King James Preface in its proper historical context fail to address the very phenomena (“false friends”) that drive one of the main arguments for replacement of the AV by the book’s author?
- According to Smith, only those who are “endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit” are capable of infallibility and perfection in the ultimate or absolute sense.
 - “For whatever was **perfect** under the Sun, were Apostles or Apostolic men, that is, men endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hand?”
- In this sixth occurrence of “perfect” in the Preface, Smith has the ultimate/absolute sense of “perfect” in view. Specifically, he ties perfection to “infallibility,” a quality that is only possessed by men who are “endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit.” When used in the absolute sense, “perfect” carries the meaning of adjective entry 1.b in the OED: “In a state of complete excellence; free from any imperfection or defect of quality; that cannot be improved upon; flawless, faultless.” According to Smith, only the “Apostles or Apostolic men” were capable of producing this level of perfection because they were “endued with an extraordinary measure of God’s Spirit,” i.e., they were inspired.

- Given the entirety of the Preface and Epistle Dedicatory, while it is clear that Smith did not view himself or his fellow translators as inspired and therefore producing “perfection” in the absolute sense, it is equally clear that he did view their work as “perfect” in various lesser senses.
 - First, according to Epistle Dedicatory, the translators viewed their work as being “**more exact**” than the prior English Bibles that they were “revising,” “rubbing,” and “polishing.” In [Lesson 191](#) we observed that the word “exact” meant “perfectly done,” according to Robert Cawdrey’s 1604 *Table Alphabetical*. Moreover, we observed that the OED presents the following “obsolete” meaning for the adjective form of “exact,” “perfected, consummate, ‘finished’.” Derived from the Latin *exactus*, the word carries meanings related to “consummate,” “complete,” and a bringing “to perfection.” The OED elaborates upon the meaning of the word “perfect” during the early 17th century with more detail than we can cover in this Lesson. It is instructive to note there is a connection between “exact” and “perfect” in definition 6.b., “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*).” The King James translators, according to their own testimony 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.” Their estimation of their work was that it was “exact” i.e., “perfectly done” in that it was “accurate,” “correct,” and “accurately reproducing or reflecting the original.” Put another way, they viewed their work as perfectly representing the contents of the “original sacred tongues” in English.
 - Second, in subsection eleven Smith stated that the work of translators “perfected” the English Bible (See [Lesson 198](#)). 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 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 subsection eleven. 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.
 - Third, “imperfections” in terms of “mean,” ungraceful, or “unadorned” language do not result in a translation not being the word of God.
 - Lastly, Smith made all these statements within the framework of early 17th century understanding of the Reformation Text. Put another way, when the King James translators thought of the “original sacred tongues” they thought in terms of the Hebrew *Masoretic Text* for the Old Testament and the Greek *Received Text* for the New Testament. These were the “golden pipes, or rather conduits, where-through the olive branches empty themselves into the gold,” that Smith spoke of in subsection thirteen.

The prior English Bibles that the translators were surveying and polishing were based on the Reformation Era text. Consequently, when modern critics and commentators seek to leverage the Preface to advance the notion that the King James translators would have supported the modern Critical Text, modern text critical methodologies, and modern versions they are guilty of the historical error of “presentism” i.e., “the imposition of present-day values and assumptions on individuals and societies of the past.” (Wilson, 103) There is simply no evidence that the King James translators would have approved of modern text critical theory and practice and no amount of ahistorical leveraging of the Preface can alter this reality. Smith’s Preface and other primary source documents related to the AV need to be historically contextualized with an early 17th century framework. Myles Smith, speaking on behalf of the translators in the Preface, believed that their work “perfected” or completed the process of setting forth the Reformation Era text in English. The King James translators believed their work to be “more exact” i.e., “perfectly done” in the sense of OED definition 6.b., “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.” Their estimation of their work was that it was “accurate,” “correct,” and “accurately reproducing or reflecting the original.” Put another way, they viewed their work as perfectly representing the contents of the “original sacred tongues” in English. They believed they had fulfilled the King’s desire for “one uniform translation” (Barlow, 47) by the creation of “one principal good one” that was “not justly to be excepted against” (See [Lesson 201](#) for a detailed discussion of this clause.)”

- 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 to 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 simply 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 the 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.”

- Brother Barzon’s Thesis fails to acknowledge the various “false friend” uses of “perfect” in the Preface and, therefore, fails to accurately “exposit” the document “in light of the historical context of their translational work.” (Barzon, 6)

Thesis #8

- Thesis #8: The King James translators believed that manuscripts and translations should not be judged solely by the character of the men that compiled them, even if those men held erroneous beliefs and heretical doctrines.
 - “A common reason for the rejection of modern translations in the present age is due to the men involved in modern translation work or the transmission of manuscripts. Faithful modern translations are often marginalized as erroneous based upon the character, associations, and orthodoxy of the men who worked on them—or that of the ancient who passed the manuscripts along through history. . . A simple survey of church history will reveal that the Donatists and Ebionites, mentioned by the KJV translators, held highly unorthodox doctrinal views. . . Yet God was able to use the Donatists and Ebionites to do good for Christ’s body.” (Barzon, 18-19)
- Myles Smith mentioned one Donatist (Tychonius) and two Ebionites (Aquila & Theodotion) in the Preface. Donatists and Ebionites are actually very different groups. While Smith does explicitly label the Ebionites as “most vile heretics,” he never calls the Donatists heretics in the Preface. Donatists were fairly orthodox, mostly disputing over how to handle believers who denied Christ under threat of persecution (like the Apostle Peter); there is nothing in the Preface to suggest that the KJV translators viewed them as unorthodox, so Barzon’s comment regarding them is questionable.
- The main point of Thesis #8 is to address the attempts made by King James Only advocates to gainsay the Modern Critical Text and Modern Versions on account of the beliefs and actions of Westcott and Hort. Brother Barzon made this clear in a recent interview with Mark Ward on his [YouTube Channel](#). Barzon is trying to set as moral equivalents the Donatists and Ebionites over against Wescott and Hort. This does not work. These prior groups were used by God to preserve His words only in the sense that they guarded and copied the scriptures. In this regard they are not unlike the Masoretes, unbelieving Jews that God used to preserve the Hebrew Scriptures; they were not editing the Scriptures, and certainly not practicing textual criticism like Wescott and Hort. Barzon’s implicit attempt to equate them is classic of those in the modern camp, like James White who constantly harps that “Erasmus did textual criticism, and if he were alive today he would agree with modern text critical theory and practice.” This is essentially the error of “presentism,” although more subtle.

Thesis #9

- Thesis #9: The King James translators did not believe in an absolute “word-for-word” translation; they sometimes used dynamic equivalence.

- “No translation of the Bible in common usages is a completely word-for-word translation. Many people believe that an undeviating word-for-word translation is the most faithful way to translate the scriptures. . .

A translation that is truly understandable requires a careful balance between dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence. The formal equivalence approach tends to emphasize commitment to the form and grammatical structure of the original language, whereas dynamic equivalence tends to employ a more natural rendering but with less literal exactness.

While it is true that the King James Version predominately uses formal equivalence, there are cases in which the translators used dynamic equivalence and deviated from the original language’s intended meaning. A prime example of this would be Romans 6:1-2 which says, [quotes the verse, “God forbid”]

The phrase “God forbid” is an extremely dynamic translational choice. The Greek form of that phrase means, literally, “let it never be.” The translators chose to use the idiomatic English phrase—“God forbid”—to convey a very strong sense of an emphatic negative with a verb of being, even though neither “God” nor “forbid” occurs in the Greek.” (Barzon, 19-20)

- Brian Snider takes exception to Thesis #9 in his YouTube video titled “[A Forgotten History of Unbelief: Review of The Forgotten Preface by Joshua Barzon.](#)”
 - “[4:47] I would absolutely reject to the way he has framed this point. He misrepresents what the Preface said and what the translators believed. And on top of that he inserts a statement about dynamic equivalence which is misleading. In the preface, the King James translators defended their use of translation words differently depending on the context. They said we have not tied ourselves to uniform phrasing or to the use of identical words. Why use one exclusively when we may use another that is no less appropriate. And this is considerably different than saying that King James translators did not believe in a word-for-word translation, which they clearly did believe in. In as far as his statement about dynamic equivalence all translations are going to use dynamic equivalence on a sparing and incidental basis to carry a translation over into another language. That’s dynamic equivalence lowercase. The translators knew nothing about dynamic equivalence as a method of translation or a philosophy, that is a modern thing. And, therefore, they made no comment on that whatsoever. They did not use thought-for-thought translation they used word-for-word translation principles. And it’s a major deception to suggest that they would approve of dynamic equivalency as a method of translation. When I am talking about dynamic equivalence lower case, I’m talking about the fact that languages are idiomatic and what you say in one language may not translate to another language [6:18].”
- After watching Snider’s video, I also was struck by the “presentism” in Barzon’s use of “dynamic equivalence” to speak about what the King James translations did. While I do not dispute that there are places where the King James translators were more dynamic than literal as in the case of Romans 6:1-2, calling them instances of “dynamic equivalency” seems anachronistic. To argue

as Barzon does that his theses are derived from an exposition of the Preface alone is a bit much when the document does not even remotely address “dynamic equivalence.” This was read into the Preface by Barzon and therefore constitutes an example of “Presentism” at its finest.

Thesis #10

- Thesis #10: The King James translators believed that God was blessing their endeavor regardless of what the established church and religious crowd thought.
 - “The final words of the King James preface emanate a humble yet unwavering boldness in what the KJV translation had set out to accomplish; to bring the Word of God into the common tongue of the Englishman. They did this against every kind of opposition, whether it was from strangers or brothers. Their ultimatum reverberates with a lasting impact even centuries later. Some of their last words in their now venerable preface are, [Quotes the first few lines of the final paragraph of the Preface.]” (Barzon, 22)
- Barzon’s statement that KJV translators had set out to “bring the Word of God into the common tongue of the Englishman,” should not be accepted at face value. We have already seen above from the pen of Alister McGrath that the KJV utilized forms and manners of speaking that were already archaic by the standards of the early 17th century. Yes, they wanted the Bible available to the common English speaker, but by saying “common tongue” Barzon is trying to sneak in some notion of “contemporary English of the 17th century.” The KJV translators followed Tyndale in the use of archaic pronouns and verb inflections for the purpose of precision in translation, but both practices had long since fallen out of usage among the “common” speakers of English by the early 17th century.
- Once again, Brian Snider takes exception with Thesis #10 in his video “[A Forgotten History of Unbelief: Review of The Forgotten Preface by Joshua Barzon.](#)”
 - “[6:47] Again the translators said nothing like this. He’s taken their closing remarks and reframed them and then adds his own bias statement into the mix. Here’s what they said, “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 this statement the translators say nothing about God blessing them or the contention of the religious crowd. Those are simply inserted by the author and to this he adds an incredibly biased summary or overview of the prayer. And reframes things in his own words. Here is what he says to close his book, “May God continue to remove the scales from men’s eyes to behold His Word in their common tongue. May God continue to remove the veil of ignorance from the hearts of men bent on idolizing a particular translation. And may God open the mind, enlarge the heart, and correct our inclinations in order to love His Word more than earthly wealth or status. May God continue to honor the final words of the King James translators.” [Barzon, 22] His reference to a “veil of ignorance” and “idolizing a particular translation” are noted. And he mischaracterizes what the preface said. At the end of the preface, he prayed that we would love God’s

word above gold and silver which is clearly a reference to Psalm 119:72 but somehow that becomes “wealth and status” in Barzon’s interpretation which certainly the image presented. But in the tenth point he refers condescendingly to what he calls the religious crowd. And this is the second time that he has inserted that phrase into his summary of the preface. And clearly those who defend the King James are the religious crowd in his mind. [8:56]”

- The legitimacy of Barzon’s attempted paraphrase to close off his exposition of Thesis #10 is questionable at best and appalling at worst, it is certainly not an accurate recasting of the closing of the Preface.
- For all the reasons enunciated in these notes, I believe that Brother Barzon’s book is guilty of “presentism” in its attempt to leverage the Preface and cast King James translators as being supportive of modern text critical theory and practice. No attempt is made to unpack the Preface from within the late 16th and early 17th century historical context of the Martin-Fulke Controversy in which it was written (See Lessons [206](#) & [207](#)). While Brother Barzon’s work has garnered much attention on YouTube and social media I believe there are considerable analytical flaws to the argumentation presented therein.

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