

**Our
Venerable
King James
Bible**

By
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
The Occasion for the Preparation of the KJV.....	2
The Mechanics of Translation	2
The Rules Governing the Work.....	3
The Success of the Translation	4
Is the KJV too Archaic for Use?.....	5
The Timeless English of the KJV	7
Other Considerations	8
Selective Bibliography.....	10

Our Venerable King James Bible

Introduction

The last fifty years or so have seen a wide proliferation of new translations of the Bible. Some have hailed this proliferation as a blessing, which makes the study of Scripture easier and enriches one's understanding of the outdated English of the King James Version (henceforth the KJV). Others, however, see it as a curse on our modern era. I am much inclined to agree with the latter.

It is interesting and significant that the proliferation of translations has paralleled various weaknesses present in the church and in modern Bible studies.

The proliferation of Bible translations has, for example, paralleled the rise of higher Biblical criticism. The adoption of higher critical methods of Bible interpretation has affected Bible translations because higher criticism has demanded the use of the defective text of Westcott and Hort, while the KJV has followed the Majority Text, a more accurate text of Scripture; the result was that new translations were prepared more in keeping with the text adopted by higher critics. Further, the attacks of higher criticism on the verbal inspiration of Scripture eroded the respect and esteem in which the Scriptures were formerly held. This has had devastating effects on Bible translations, for it opened the door to the use of the principle of dynamic equivalence as an acceptable method of Bible translation.

A powerful incentive for new translations is the money which can be made. Commercial motives of big-name publishers fuel the trend towards new translations and bring about a situation in which an updated version of the Bible has to be produced every few decades or so to keep the money flowing into the coffers of those whose only interests are to enrich themselves. If one requirement is necessary in the work of successful Bible translation it is total loyalty to the church of Christ, a burning desire to see the church flourish, and a profound commitment to the truth of God's Word. Only the zeal of a Tyndale, a Luther, a Calvin will result in a successful translation.

All this has been a curse on our modern age and not been a blessing, as some allege. Many who take the time to compare various translations without having any standard for accuracy find the differences so great that they know not which one to accept. When people come together for Bible study, each comes with his own translation, and each presses for the meaning of the text as found in his particular version. The result is that no one knows anymore what the Bible really says.

Some translations are so inaccurate that they become a tool of falsehood rather than an instrument of growing in the knowledge of the truth. Satan has perhaps no better weapon to destroy the church than a poor and inaccurate translation of the Bible. By means of this subtle weapon, Satan succeeds in leaving people with the impression that they actually have the Word of God when, in fact, they do not. Satan's delusions are subtle and effective.

It is not my purpose in this pamphlet to debate the question of the relative worth of the KJV on the basis of a comparison with existing translations. This would necessarily involve a careful study and evaluation of such translations, something done adequately in other books and pamphlets. Nor is it my purpose to defend the KJV as a translation without fault or blemish, itself infallibly inspired. Some have defended that proposition, but, as a college professor used to warn us: "A bad argument for the truth does more harm than a good argument against it." The KJV has its faults. Conceivably there is room for improvement.

My purpose is more limited. I want the people of God to consider why the KJV has maintained itself as the translation of preference in countless churches, homes, and schools for over four hundred years. I suggest that there is good reason for this continuous popularity of the KJV; we ought not to ignore such a reason in our pressing quest for something better. In short, the KJV is still, without argument, the most accurate and the most readable translation that exists today. Further, it is the one translation that conveys better than any other the reverence and solemnity that one ought to have in his soul as he comes to the Bible to be instructed at the feet of Christ. Its weaknesses are few and minor in comparison with its strengths. The burning question is: Can any

translation, given the sad state of affairs in today's church world, genuinely improve on the KJV? It is my personal conviction that the answer is an emphatic No.

The Occasion for the Preparation of the KJV

A brief survey of the history of the translation of the KJV will give us some idea of why this translation is as accurate as it is.

The immediate occasion for a new translation of the Bible is part of the warp and woof of the history of the Reformation in the British Isles.

The Reformation in England, because it was an attempt to change the existing Roman Catholic Church to a Protestant denomination, never was as complete a Reformation as took place, for example, in Geneva under John Calvin. The resulting church in England was known as the Church of England, or, more briefly, the Anglican Church in which reformation was never completed.

Within that denomination were two parties struggling for ascendancy. The one party avidly supported Anglicanism, even though, especially in church government and liturgy, it retained a great deal of Catholicism. The other party, called the Puritan party, wanted more extensive reformation in church government and liturgy, which would bring the church more into conformity with the Holy Scriptures.

With the death of Queen Elizabeth, fondly known as "Good Queen Bess," the house of Tudor came to an end. The one with the strongest claim to the English throne was James VI of Scotland, son of Mary queen of the Scots. He was a Stuart. Characteristic of the Stuart kings was the firm conviction that a king was answerable to God alone, and the way to maintain such a lofty position was to be the head of a national church. In fact, the Stuarts were convinced that to maintain themselves in power, not only was a national church necessary, but also a church structured after the pattern of the Church of England – that is, a church with the same clerical hierarchy as Rome minus the pope. "No bishop, no king," was the way James VI put it.

In Scotland James engaged in a long struggle with Presbyterianism, although he seemed, frequently for purposes of self-interest, to be sympathetic with Presbyterian ideals, which were fundamentally the same as the ideals of the Puritan party in England. In England James found an ecclesiastical situation more to his liking. However, on his way south to London to be crowned James I of England, he was besieged by embassies from the Puritan party and from the Church of England, each seeking his favor in the hopes that he would support their ecclesiastical position. He could not help but come to London with a sense of the deep divisions within the Church of England. These divisions he hoped to heal.

Soon after his coronation, James I called a meeting of Puritan representatives and Anglican prelates to discuss ways and means to bridge the chasm. In the course of the discussions, rather off-handedly and without much thought, one of the Puritan divines suggested a new translation of the Bible as a way to bring unity to the divided church.

Strangely, although James obviously favored the Anglican party, he adopted this proposal to prepare a new translation. His reasons, however, were his own. It was not as if there was a need for a translation of the English Bible, for there were many good translations. The work of translation had begun with Tyndale's superb translation. It had continued with Matthew's Bible, the Coverdale translation, the Bishops' Bible and the Genevan Bible. In fact, the Genevan Bible was widely used in England and was greatly loved.

But James hated the Genevan Bible. It had been prepared in Geneva under Calvin's influence, and it contained marginal notations to help in understanding the text. But it also included marginal notations that tended to deny the divine right of kings, something dear to the heart of James I. James saw a new translation as a way to supplant the Genevan Bible and get a new translation into common usage.

The Mechanics of Translation

James made preparations for a new translation by authorizing the formation of a translating committee, and he set down rules that he required the committee to follow.

The committee itself was composed of between fifty and fifty-four men almost all chosen from the professorial staff of Cambridge and Oxford Universities. Most of them were Anglicans; only three or four were Puritans. But they were men of vast learning, almost without exception of great skill in ancient languages. One of the translators, Launcelot Andrews, knew 15 modern languages as well as Latin, Hebrew, Greek, Semitic, Syriac, Chaldean, and Arabic. Another spent 16 hours a day studying Greek. And they were men dedicated to the welfare of the church.

The committee was divided into six sub-committees, two of which met in Cambridge, two in Oxford, and two in Westminster Abbey, London. Each was assigned a portion of Scripture and the Old Testament Apocrypha, and within the sub-committees each individual was assigned a smaller portion.

When an individual had completed his assignment, he gave his work to his sub-committee, which went over the work meticulously. When the sub-committee had completed a given section, the translation was sent to the members of the other sub-committees. These men in turn studied the translation for accuracy, felicity of expression, and readability. Their sub-committees also met to evaluate the work, and their conclusions were sent to the original committee.

When the whole translation was completed, twelve men, two from each group, were chosen to go over the whole translation to make the translation uniform, accurate, and readable. And when they had finished the work, two men were assigned to go over the whole translation once more to make final corrections and to polish the finished product. In these last meetings, one of the men would read aloud to test the translation for readability.

Finally, after all this, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest cleric in the Church of England, made twelve or fourteen additional changes.

The work was carefully and meticulously done to assure, by cross-checking, the best translation possible.

The Rules Governing the Work

The rules by which the committees labored are interesting and important. The king himself had a hand in drawing them up and he approved the final list. There were many such rules; we mention here a few of the most important.

The first rule was that the new translation might not be a new translation in the sense that the translators were to start from scratch as it were. The men were instructed to retain the older translations insofar as it was in keeping with accuracy. This was made easier by the fact that the preceding translations had, in general, been built upon preceding translations: Matthew's Bible on Tyndale; Coverdale's Bible on Matthew's; The Bishops' Bible on Coverdale, etc. Each translation was, for the most part, an improvement of the one preceding, and each one was more accurate.

We have an indication in this of the almost unbelievable accuracy of William Tyndale's work. His labors both as translator and as theologian have not been properly recognized. The magnificence of his work is only enhanced by a consideration of the fact that he did most of his work as a fugitive from Roman Catholic persecution as he fled from place to place on the continent of Europe. His work was smuggled into England in bales of cotton. He died a martyr's death, the victim of Roman Catholic perfidy. Some have estimated that the KJV is more than half that of Tyndale.

Such a rule as the king insisted on necessarily guaranteed an accuracy that is difficult to surpass. It is, in fact, so accurate that God's people may be sure that when they hold the KJV in their hands and turn to it in their devotions, they have fully *the Word of God*. No doubt need enter their minds.

Two other characteristics of the new translation that the king commanded the translators to incorporate into the translation were readability and understandability. We cannot appreciate fully the significance of these qualifications.

The translation was prepared at a time when books were still very costly. Some homes could afford only one book, and that book would be the Bible. From it many would be educated, and in it many would learn, haltingly and painfully, to read. Further, James wanted the Bible to replace the Genevan translation, and that required that it be a Bible read in the churches every Lord's Day and, in fact, in many instances, every day. It was the only "literature" many people ever heard. It was for the uneducated and illiterate (of which there were many) their

only contact with the printed word. James, and rightly so, wanted a Bible which was easy to read, easy to listen to, easy to memorize, and easy to understand. These demands of the king were primarily responsible for the rhythm, the cadence, the simplicity, and the beauty of the KJV.

Miles Smith, one of the translators, put it this way: Our task was “to deliver God’s book to God’s people in a tongue which they could understand.” Bruce Metzger, himself inclined to higher criticism, has said of the KJV, “It cut through verbiage and said what is meant with force and in the fewest possible words.”

The Success of the Translation

The KJV was a startling success. It had the “wisdom, grace and beauty of previous translations, and possessed an eloquence which even unbelievers are forced to acknowledge.” H. L. Mencken has said this about the KJV:

It is the most beautiful of all the translations of the Bible, indeed, it is probably the most beautiful piece of writing in all the literature of the world. ...Many learned but misguided men have sought to produce translations that should be mathematically accurate and in the plain speech of every day. But the AV (Authorized Version, another name for the KJV) has never yielded to any of them, for it is palpably and overwhelmingly better than they are. ...Its English is extraordinarily simple, pure, eloquent and lovely. It is a mine of lordly and incomparable poetry at once the most stirring and the most touching ever heard of.

In speaking of the requirements laid down by James, Alistair McGrath says, in what is almost an oxymoron: “It attained literary elegance by choosing to avoid it.” And Gustavus S. Paine, in speaking of the readability of the KJV, says,

Rhythm in the days of King James was important not merely as a source of pleasure to the ear, but as an aid to the mind. Generations to come would learn to read by puzzling out vss. in the Bible that for many families would be the whole library. But at the time of translation, a Bible ‘appointed to be read in the churches’ was made to be listened to and remembered. Its rhythms were important as a prompting to the memory.

From every viewpoint, the KJV is a masterpiece of translation. It is very accurate. Its “readability” is superb. It is understandable by the people in the pew, young and old alike. It is sublime and creates a sense of reverence conducive to worship. It is written in beautiful cadences and rhythms that made it nearly singable and easy to memorize. It is ideally suited to use in the church and in the home. It evokes emotions in keeping with the nature of the text. It is still difficult (after having read it uncountable times) to read the story of Joseph’s reconciliation with his brethren without tears blinding one’s eyes. And who can read Isaiah 53 with a deadpan face and indifferent heart?

Two examples of the power and beauty of the KJV in comparison with earlier translations used by the KJV translators will illustrate the point that the KJV is a masterpiece.

In the Bishops’ Bible, the Twenty-third Psalm began: “God is my shepherd, therefore I can lose nothing; he will cause me to repose myself in pastures full of grass, and he will lead me unto calm waters.” In the hands of the King James men, this became: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.”

The Geneva Bible translated the last verse as, “Doubtless kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall remain a long season in the house of the Lord.” How much more gripping are the words of the KJV: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The unforgettable seventh verse of the thirty-eighth chapter of Job had already gone through a remarkably subtle evolution. In Coverdale it read: "When the morning stars gave me praise, and when all the angels of God rejoiced." Matthew's Bible (and after it, the Bishops' Bible) had: "When the morning stars praised me together, all the children of God rejoiced triumphantly." In the Geneva Bible, the language was heightened: "When the stars of the morning praised me together, and all the children of God rejoiced." But the rapturous phrasing of the King James Version surpassed them all. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

Is the KJV too Archaic for Use?

One of the chief objections to our continued use of the KJV is its archaic language. It is filled with words, so it is said, that could be understood when it was prepared, but are no longer used in contemporary English. This is a barrier to its use among us, especially in teaching children and doing the important work of evangelism. The result of so many archaisms is that the Bible has largely become a mysterious book, the contents of which are hidden from today's readers by outdated and obscure language.

All the arguments for new translations finally come down to that one argument. Is that objection valid?

If the objection is valid, this would indeed be serious, for if the Bible can no longer be understood, its purpose has come to an end. The result of such a development would be that the Word of God, which the saints need for their spiritual life, would be beyond their reach, placed on an inaccessible shelf too high to be reached.

We must take this objection seriously, for the Bible is necessary for the life of the people of God, the work of the church, and the instruction of future generations. God accomplishes His work of salvation sovereignly by the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of the elect. But the Spirit never works apart from the Word of the Scriptures. If those Scriptures are inaccessible to God's people, because of archaisms which make the Word difficult, if not impossible, to understand, that would be a barrier to the salvation of the saints.

The argument has a certain force and carries a measure of validity. Everyone with any knowledge of the KJV knows that there are indeed words that are no longer used in contemporary English, and that some words have taken a meaning quite different from what they had in the days when the KJV was prepared. We may not ignore the argument.

Nevertheless, two questions must be asked and answered. Are the archaisms in the KJV a serious barrier to the understandability of the KJV? And do these archaisms warrant a new translation? These two questions are related to each other.

Before one gives a yes or no answer to those questions, one must consider some crucial characteristics of Scripture.

Scripture itself testifies of the fact that there are passages in God's Word that are difficult to understand. Peter tells those to whom he writes that in Paul's writings there "are some things hard to be understood" (II Peter 3:16). Everyone knows that the prophets contain many difficult passages, which require much study if one is to penetrate into their meaning. Frequently passages of Scripture are distorted by the efforts of misguided translators to make these passages "understandable" to the modern 21st century man; but in doing so their meaning is distorted beyond recognition.

Furthermore, in an important sense, the meaning of the Scriptures is not accessible to everyone. The Scriptures are God's Word, written to the church, and intended to be God's revelation to His covenant people of the mysteries of God's eternal purpose in Christ. Although from a certain formal point of view everyone who reads the Scriptures can understand what he reads, Luther was right when he said that the Scriptures are a closed book to anyone who comes to them without the Spirit who works faith in God's people. Luther understood what many today seem not to understand. Only one who comes to Scripture in a Spirit-worked humility, saying in his heart: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," is capable of understanding what the Scriptures say.

The point is important. When one possesses the Spirit of Christ and comes to learn the will of God, the Scriptures are open to him. When one lacks faith, the Scriptures are closed to him. To attempt to "open" the Scriptures to the unbeliever by a different translation is an exercise in futility.

The church has confessed, since the time of the Reformation, that one attribute of Scripture is its perspicuity. By this the church has meant that anyone who comes in faith to God's Word can understand what the Scriptures mean. Neither age nor education makes a difference; the Scriptures are open to the little child on his mother's knee as well as to the Ph.D in theology.

But the perspicuity of Scripture has never been understood to imply that Scripture is shallow. Scripture is not like a shallow pool on a concrete parking lot after a brief shower, in which one can see the pavement beneath the pool. Scripture is like a deep pool, utterly clear, into which one looks, but can never see the bottom.

The point is worth emphasizing.

The Scriptures do not cater to modern man with his ten-second attention span, his inability to think clearly about almost everything, his need to have any knowledge given in TV-size bits, and his easy slide into boredom and ennui if any prolonged concentration is required.

In his book, *What is Faith?* J. Gresham Machen makes the following point:

Many persons...seem to have a notion that modern Christians must be addressed always in words of one syllable, and that in religion we must abandon the scientific precision of language. ...In pursuance of this tendency we have had presented to us recently various translations of the Bible which reduce the Word of God more or less thoroughly to the language of the modern street, or which, as the matter was put recently in my hearing by an intelligent layman, "take all the religion out of the New Testament." But the whole tendency, we for our part think, ought to be resisted. Back of it all seems to lie the strange assumption that modern men, particularly modern university men, can never by any chance learn anything; they do not understand the theological terminology which appears in such richness in the Bible, and that is regarded as the end of the matter; apparently it does not occur to anyone that possibly they might with profit acquire the knowledge of Biblical terminology which now they lack. But I for my part am by no means ready to acquiesce. I am perfectly ready, indeed, to agree that the Bible and the modern man ought to be brought together. But what is not always observed is that there are two ways of attaining that end. *One way is to bring the Bible down to the level of the modern man; but the other way is to bring the modern man up to the level of the Bible* (emphasis mine). I am inclined to advocate the latter way.

Scripture is meant to be studied. One comes to its meaning through pondering its truths, meditating on its words and sentences, and concentrating on the wealth of its thought.

It is not true that little children, still unable to read, are incapable of understanding Scripture in the measure of their own intellectual development. What child who understands the basics of the English language cannot understand Genesis 1 – and usually better than those who try to twist it to include heretical evolutionary teachings? And what child cannot understand the sober and simple, yet totally profound story of the birth of God in Christ in a manger in Bethlehem?

But the more one studies and meditates upon Scripture, the more one understands its riches and truths. The more accustomed one's eyes become in peering into Scripture's depths, the more deeply one can see into it. And yet, after a lifetime of study, even learning all that the church in earlier millennia have said about God's Word, one only penetrates about two inches into the great depths of God's revelation of Himself in all His wonderful works and ways.

If these things are not remembered and we come to Scripture as we do to a first grade reading book, we have no right to blame our inability to understand it on the use of some archaisms. The fault lies with us.

The archaisms of Scripture are relatively few in number. They are easily explainable or understandable to one who is willing to take the time to look them up in a good dictionary. And parents can easily teach the meaning of them to their children when the family is together for family devotions, or when the children are memorizing parts of Scripture.

When a small child lisps the words of Psalm 23, usually one of the first chapters parents teach their children, is it so difficult to tell these children the meaning of verse 1? "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." "The Lord cares for me as a shepherd cares for his sheep. I will never lack anything in all my life, cared for by Jehovah God."

The Timeless English of the KJV

While Scripture does have in it archaisms, the real question is not: How difficult is the KJV to understand? The real question is: Why is the KJV so easy to understand seeing it was prepared almost four hundred years ago? If one would compare the plays of Shakespeare, written only a few decades earlier, with the KJV, one will be astounded at the difference in the English. It is extremely difficult to read *Macbeth* without the help of some translation aids.

God, in His providence, brought into being the KJV at a propitious time in England's history. Up to this time England had no real English language. Anglo-Saxon invaders from Germany and the Lowlands had affected the early language of the Celts. Scandinavian Norsemen had invaded England, settled in it, and brought their own peculiar language to the country. William the Conqueror had imported French and all but made French the language of diplomacy and commerce. The English spoken in the fields and cottages was different in different parts of the country, and was not that of the nobility. It was hard for one Englishman to understand another from a different part of the country.

But at the time of King James, England was emerging as a world power in its own right. It was coming to a national consciousness, which tended to unify the country. It was becoming a force to be reckoned with in commerce. Its navy ruled the seas. The sun never set on its many colonies. A language spoken nationwide was needed. A uniform English language, which was slowly developing, became, because of the unique development of the English language, the most expressive and influential language in all Europe. It had a depth and range that no other language possessed.

The KJV played a major role in attaining a countrywide and standard English. The translators not only prepared a translation that helped standardize the language, but the translators molded and shaped a standard language, and thus became, in part, the creators of modern English. Luther did much the same with his German translation of the Bible, and the *Statenvertaling* of the Synod of Dordt had the same effect on Dutch.

In addition to the shaping of modern English by the new translation, the translators made the Bible understandable by all in England because they used English words instead of Latin words about 92% of the time. Latin words are still and cold, rigid and feelingless. English words, of Anglo-Saxon origin, are homey and earthy, expressive and forceful, the language of the people rather than the university.

It is because of these providential workings of God that a version was prepared that can rightly be said to be in "timeless English." Undoubtedly this is the reason why so many words and expressions of the KJV have entered our everyday language. One need only think of such expressions as "to lick the dust" (Psalm 72:9), "sour grapes" (Ezekiel 18:2), "the skin of my teeth" (Job 19:20), "from time to time" (Ezekiel 4:10).

One scholar wrote about the Hebrew:

The [KJV] is an almost literal translation of the Masoretic text, and is thus on every page replete with Hebrew idioms. The fact that Bible English has to a marvelous extent shaped our speech, giving peculiar connotations to many words and sanctioning strange constructions, is not any less patent. The [KJV] has been – it can be said without any fear of being charged with exaggeration– the most powerful factor in the history of English literature. Though the constructions encountered in the [KJV] are oftentimes so harsh that they seem almost barbarous, we should certainly have been the poorer without it.

It is forgotten that if the church needs a translation of the Bible in contemporary English idiom, the church will have to re-translate the Bible every generation or so. The English of today is not the English of tomorrow – surely not in our polyglot society. The timeless English of the KJV in a new contemporary translation is cast into the mold of the ever-changing English of today's marketplace. No wonder that a major publisher of the Bible, aware that a relatively recent translation of Scripture is no longer contemporary, now is on the verge of publishing a "contemporary translation" that is "gender neutral." It makes one ponder whether contemporary English is not a destruction of Scripture.

The simple fact of the matter is that the KJV is not difficult to understand. Nor is it a deterrent in the work of evangelism. Anyone who has worked in any evangelistic labors knows that the problem is not inability to understand. Even when Muslims are the objects of evangelism, no real problem exists. As one expounds the Scriptures and sets forth the great truths of redemption in Christ, explanation of words is always a necessary part of the work. Is it any more difficult to explain to people, unacquainted with the Bible, the meaning of “want” in Psalm 23:1 than the meaning of justification in Romans 5:1? It is obvious that it is not.

Other Considerations

Ideally, to prepare a good translation in English, the whole church of Christ in our land ought to be involved. The whole church of the British Isles was involved in and benefited by a new translation, for the Church of England was the only denomination in existence at the time the translation was done. Whatever we may think of a national church, in God’s providence the whole of the nation was a part of the work of the preparation of the KJV.

That brings up the question of whether the church today is spiritually and doctrinally capable of preparing such a translation. Translators are biased. They cannot help but be biased. They must be biased – for the truth of God’s Word. Their own doctrinal commitment will enter into and influence the work. Witness the doctrinal weakness (if not doctrinal heresy) of modern translations. It is necessary for the production of a good translation that the church as a whole be committed to the doctrines of Scripture and of the traditions of the true church. And it is necessary that translators be men wholly committed to the welfare of the church and the truth of God’s Word.

This was true in England. The whole Church of England, a national church embracing all the citizens, was united on the basis of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, a basically Calvinistic creed. This gave a uniformity to doctrine throughout the entire country that is no longer characteristic of our own land or the British Isles. Today the proliferation of denominations and splinter groups would make such a translation impossible, and any cooperative effort would be stymied by the differing biases of the translators.

In other words, the church of today is simply not strong enough to produce a translation that is accurate and useful.

The proliferation of translations in our day has added to the great confusion that exists in the churches concerning what Scripture teaches. When, for example, at a Bible Study, people come with four or five translations, only confusion results. One says, “My NIV translates the verse this way.” Another chimes in: “My NEB translates the verse this way.” And yet another, “But the KJV reads differently.” No one knows anymore what the Bible teaches. No one can decide. Is it not far preferable in the church, in the home, and in the school to use one translation, which has been recognized as accurate for over four hundred years? God’s people ought to know that when they turn to the KJV they may be assured they will discover in it the Word of God. No one would dare to say that for all the years the church has used the KJV the church has possessed a faulty Word of God.

The KJV has become so much a part of our heritage that its language is imbedded in the creeds, the liturgy, and the tradition of the church. A new translation of the Bible would require new translations of our creeds, our Psalter, and our liturgical forms. The 1912 Presbyterian Psalter is so permeated with the language of the KJV that a revision would almost be necessary.

Worship (whether in the school, the home or the church) must have a uniformity of language about it. This uniformity ought to be the language of the Bible which forms the heart of all the liturgy of the church. It is an anomaly when the language of Scripture differs from the language of the liturgy – an anomaly that will not long be tolerated. A new translation will almost inevitably spawn a desire for revisions in the whole liturgy of the church. In fact, one wonders sometimes if the clamor for a new translation is not deliberately raised to do away with our present creeds and liturgy. The fact is that in churches where new translations have been adopted, frequently new liturgical forms are next on the agenda, new hymns are introduced into the song books, and new creeds are written. It seems as if the argument for a contemporary translation soon results in a plea for contemporary ways of worship and confessing the faith of the church.

The church possesses a long tradition of sacred music that goes back to the Reformation. While much of this is not and cannot be used in the corporate worship of the church, it is an important part of the heritage of the church. But it has woven into its warp and woof the KJV. One need only think of Handel's *Messiah*, to realize what would happen to this rich and beautiful musical tradition, if the KJV were abandoned.

It is but a short time before the Lord returns. For four centuries the KJV has served the church well. Would it not be to the church's advantage to retain such a precious tradition in the little time that remains? One thing we know. When persecution comes, our Bibles will be taken from us and the only Word of God we shall retain is that which we have memorized and hid in our hearts. What easier translation is there to memorize than the rolling cadences of our KJV? It is the Bible for us and our children.

Selective Bibliography

An abundance of literature is available to those who wish to read more widely in this entire area of Bible translations. Much of this literature also is devoted to a defense of the KJV by way of comparison with other available translations.

I have, however, limited this short list to a few of those books which have been the most helpful in the preparation of this pamphlet, which pamphlet is limited to a discussion of the characteristics of the KJV which still make the KJV the translation of choice.

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