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A Neglected Exposition of *The Translators to the Readers.*

Introduction

In 1609, in the final stage of the revision of the Bishop's Bible that became the 1611 Authorized Version, Miles Smith, one of the two final revisers of the text, penned the prefatory, *The Translators to the Reader*. The preface is in itself a work of art, and a monument to good translational principles, coming from the translators who produced one of the most exceptional translations ever made into English, and deserving of being read by every translator of Scripture. Speaking both as a final reviser, and as a representative voice for the translators as a whole,[1] the preface anticipates slander against the new work, builds a case for its validity, answers some objections already being raised to the creation of the AV, and gives some brief notes about translation principles and procedures. It is one of the unfortunate tragedies of history that this preface did not continue to be printed with every edition of the AV. No less lamentable is the fact that the preface has rarely if ever been treated at length in the literature. It is referred to with regularity, quoted piecemeal often, and reprinted occasionally. Yet one would be hard pressed to find a full exposition of the work in print.[2] Many quote portions from it, but rarely has it been understood in its historical context. It is hoped that a brief exposition might remedy this all too common problem.

The original preface is eleven pages long, and contains some 127 marginal notes. One of the best reprints is now found in, "*The Translators to the Readers: the Original Preface to the King James Version of 1611 Revisited*" by Rhodes and Lupas. They include three forms of the preface. They provide a photographic facsimile of the original work from a 1611 first edition, they reprint the exact text but with modern spelling, and they provide a third form in modernized English vernacular. They also provide multiple footnotes

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[1] Note over one hundred uses of "we," as well as similar plurals, throughout the Preface.

[2] Some advancements have been made by Norton in his section *The Holy Scriptures and 'the translators to the reader'* pg. 111-117 in "*The King James Bible: A Short History*," as well as the longer section, *The Preface*, in his "*History of the English Bible as literature*" (pg. 63-70), which is mostly concerned only with its literary style; or the single page in Daniell, "*The Bible in English*," pg. 446-447. Of course there is the excellent work by Rhodes and Lupas mentioned above, which, while providing valuable information on the literary and cultural references contained in the preface, still falls far short of an exposition of the preface. There are also brief, partial treatments by Newman/Houser in "*Translation that Openeth the Window*" (ed. Burke, pg. 73-86), and the article by Combs, "*The Preface to the King James Version*," and, much more helpfully, by McGrath in, "*In The Beginning*" pg. 188-196, and by Burridge, in "priorities, Principles, and Prefaces," pg. 195-226 in "The King James Version at 400" (Burke, Kutsko, and Towner, eds.). But all of these likewise fall far short of a full exposition, and most focus only on the final two headings. It is hoped that this appendix may remedy this lacunae in the literature.

explaining the more obscure references found in the preface and its marginal notes, providing references to each of the patristic quotations throughout the work, as well as translating the Latin and Greek phrases scattered throughout the work for the English reader. We will typically employ the modern spelling they provide as we deal with the work, with the one exception that we have retained the archaic verbal endings.[3] The reader is encouraged to obtain one of the facsimiles, and to use the following brief exposition as a guide to reading the original preface in its historical context, according to its author's intent.

It is important to note two preliminary things in order to read the preface in its context. First, note again what we have shown in the essay above. There is a dual nature to the production of the King James Bible. The AV must be understood both as a new translation, and as a composite revision of previous translations, primarily the Bishop's Bible of 1602. Further, it was initially envisioned only as a revision of the Bishop's Bible, and only later would be thought of as an all-new translation, because the translators had somewhat exceeded their instructions. The preface will regularly make this assumption, and it comes as something of a surprise to many, so it must be noted before one examines it. However true it might be that the AV is a new translation, it is even more true that the AV is actually a composite revision of several previous English translations, primarily, the Bishop's Bible.[4] As we noted previously in the essay, on the title page, they titled their work, "newly translated" but also noted in the same title that their work was the product of "the former translations diligently compared and revised." In their preface, they occasionally refer (even in one of the headings) to King James' determination for the work, not of translation, but of, "the perusal of [previous] English translations." At one point in their preface, they mention their work as "the Translation so long in hand," but then immediately qualify, "or rather, perusals of Translations made before." They freely admit that their work is simply, "building upon their foundation that went before us." They refer to the King's commission as being, "to have the translations of the Bible maturely considered of and examined." They note that ultimately their task was to take previous work and make it, "rubbed and polished." In their report to the Synod of Dort in 1618, several of the translators (notably, Samuel Ward) explained that the first rule had constrained them to produce only a revision of the Bishop's Bible rather than a new translation. They noted that, "in the first place [the first rule] caution was given that an entirely new version was not to be furnished, but an old version [the Bishop's], long received by the Church, to be purged from all blemishes and faults; to this end there was to

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[3] One may readily consult the 1611 reprint by Nelson noted above, which is not a photographic facsimile, or the photographic facsimile done by Pollard in 1911, (reprint in Records, pg. 340-377; photographic facsimile in "Introduction," https://archive.org/details/holybiblefacsimi00polluoft), or the reprint in the appendix of Daniell, "*The Bible In English*" (pg. 775-793) should one wish to examine the details. An easy to read online edition is also available here http://www.ccel.org/bible/kjv/preface/pref1.htm or here http://www.kjvbibles.com/kjpreface.htm, though the online editions typically present only the text, without the headings or marginal notes.

[4] See Daniell, "*The Bible in English*" pg. 440-442; and Vance, "*The Making of the King James Bible*" pg. ix, for explanation that the KJV is more of a revision than a translation.

be no departure from the ancient translation, unless the truth of the original text or emphasis demanded."[5] In fact, as Pollard noted, the AV was not listed in the Cambridge printing registry like new translations always were, because it was considered by the register to be simply another revision of the Bishop's Bible. As Norton notes of the translators, "they were not pioneers, but revisers."[6] The work of the "translators" was, far more accurately, that of revisers.[7] As they note in the section of their preface where they explain their purpose,

> *"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 in stead 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."*

This understanding of the dual nature of their translation work as primarily a revision of the Bishop's Bible, but which will incorporate elements in a composite way from several previous English Bibles is somewhat assumed by Smith as he pens the Preface, and it must be kept in mind as we read it.

Second, the original Preface printed what we would today call "headings" in the margins. Thus, one must take account of these marginal headings to catch the flow of the document.[8] Reading the document, one can easily detect the flow of thought along three basic lines of argument, and the subordination of modern outlining which helps us to visually see the intent. The translators refer in the preface to their revision of the Bishop's Bible as "the work" or "this work" almost a dozen times. It is their favorite title here for the AV, and so it seems appropriate to use this title for the AV in the overview headings. Examining the headings they provide, and the content they contain, produces something

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[5] Pollard, "*Records*" pg. 339.

[6] Norton, "*History of the English Bible as Literature*," pg. 60, who notes that because, as a revision, it wasn't listed, we don't know the exact date or even month of its publication.

[7] Note the title of Daniell's section, "*Revisers not Translators*," or the statement of Scrivener that rather than a new translation the AV is, "to speak more correctly, a revision of former versions."

[8] The fifteen headings they provide are as follows; *The best things have been calumniated. The highest personages have been calumniated. His Majesty's constancy, notwithstanding calumniation, for the survey of the English translations. The praise of the holy Scriptures. Translation necessary. The translation of the Old Testament out of 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.*

like the following in outline format. [I have added in brackets a summary of the major units.[9]]

I. [An anticipation of slander against the work for its newness]
   a. *The best things have been calumniated.*
   b. *The highest personages have been calumniated.*
   c. *His Majesty's constancy, notwithstanding calumniation, for the survey of the English translations.*
II. [A defense of the validity of the work]
   a. *The praise of the holy Scriptures.*
   b. *Translation necessary.*
      i. *The translation of the Old Testament out of Hebrew into Greek.*
      ii. *Translation out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin.*
      iii. *The translating of the Scripture into the vulgar tongues.*
      iv. *The unwillingness of our chief adversaries, that the Scriptures should be divulged in the mother tongue, etc.*
   c. *The speeches and reasons, both of our brethren, and of our adversaries, against this work.*
      i. *A satisfaction to our brethren.*
      ii. *An answer to the imputations of our adversaries*.
III. [An explanation of the purpose of the work, with two notes about procedure]
   a. *The purpose of the Translators, with their number, furniture, care, etc.*
      i. *Reasons moving us to set diversity of senses in the margin, where there is great probability for each.*
      ii. *Reasons inducing us not to stand curiously upon an identity of phrasing.*

The argument of the Preface flows along three basic lines of thought. First is a general anticipation of slander against their work, due simply to the fact that it is a new revision, and new things are never given a warm welcome at first. This first line of thought inductively builds in three parts. Second comes a much longer defense of the validity of continually revising the English Bible that also contains three basic parts. This second line of thought contains at length the basic argument of the preface, which is that translations of the Bible will always require continual revision, and thus that their present revision of the

[9] It would also be possible to see II,a, II,b, and II,c, as separate main sections, and thus see five major sections instead of three. The logic and intent remains the same either way. The first three headings are obviously set off as a section by their linked content, as can be seen also in their repeated use of "calumniation" even in the heading titles. II,b,i-iv are clearly a section on the need for translation, as the titles and content show, (though they admit II,b,iv to be an aside, and in the heading even use "divulged" instead of "translation," which each of the other headings of that section use). II,c,i-ii clearly function together, as the content, and the title of II,c raises the issue of "brethren" and "adversaries," and the next two headings clearly subordinate under these to take up each in turn. The final section, III, clearly functions on its own to describe "Purpose, etc." and the final two headings clearly subordinate under the "Purpose" section, as is clear by content, and by beginning both titles with "reasons."

Bishop's Bible should not be rejected out of hand. Their work is but one point in a progression of revision that began long before them and will continue long after them. This present point thus cannot be rejected out of hand. This second line of thought, like the first, also contains three basic parts; a praise of Scripture in the Original languages, a sustained defense of the need to have vulgar translations of Scripture in readiness, and specific objections to their particular revision of the Bishop's Bible raised and refuted. The third line of thought is a brief explanation of the purpose of the translators in their work, and two notes about specific procedures that they have employed; the use of marginal notes to express translational difficulties and textual doubts, and the liberty they have taken with English words. [10] This is followed finally by a brief benediction that concludes the Preface as a whole.

Anticipating Calumniation

They begin their first line of argument by anticipating the slander (calumniation) that many would have against their work of revising the already established English Bibles. Under the first three "headings" they cumulatively build a case to explain the true source of this anticipated slander. New things are always slandered, even the most Royal of persons, and their revision of the Bible will be no different, but the King determined that the work should be finished despite the slander it will no doubt receive for its novelty.

New Things Are Always Slandered

The first heading, *The best things have been calumniated*, explains that there is an almost universal conservatism and traditionalism that all religion employs, and advancements of knowledge are rarely seen in a positive light when they are first discovered. Correction of previous errors is typically wrongly seen as the creation of new error. Thus, the Translators note, that "zeal to promote the common good" whether in devising something new, or "revising" that which hath been labored by others, should be given respect and esteem. But rarely is it so. Rather it "findeth but cold entertainment in the world." They note the common trend to resist innovation, stating, "For was there ever anything projected, that savored any way of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying and opposition?"

They then note five things that ought to prevent such slander. First, basic civility, which separates us from the brute beast; Second, wholesome laws, which bridle human behavior and prevent bodily fights from breaking out; third, learning and eloquence, which allow a man to teach others what he has learned, thus advancing human knowledge; fourth, church Synods (part of their Anglican practice), where disagreements should be hammered out under the King's supervision, rather than endlessly attacking others in writing. The fifth, what they call "Church maintenance," provides an odd and anachronistic example. It was common in the time to practice "exposing" children. This was what we would today call "post birth abortion" where immediately after a child was born parents would decide if they wanted the child, then, if they didn't, they would throw them out into the elements to

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[10] One could also see this section, like the previous two, as having three parts, though it clearly does not have the inductive argument of the previous two. However, due to the way they have worded the headings, (the latter two beginning with "reasons" alike), it seems better to see a general statement followed by two specific notes about procedure.

die a brutal death. The translators note that those who so kill their children at birth are less cruel than those who raise them in an impoverishment that withdraws from their children the "livelihood and support fit for their estate." Parents know that to flourish, children will need constantly growing support. Their ultimate point is that, likewise, the church will need constantly improving revisions of translations of its sacred texts. In other words, they thought it were better to abort the church than to deny her this right of revision.

They note that every one who does anything new gets slandered. And those who try the boldest tasks, the "the fairest and the chiefest," get slandered the most. They provide biblical examples in the attacks upon the King of Syria rather than the common soldier, (I Kings 22:31); David being slandered for his noble work of bringing back the Ark (II Sam. 6:16); and Solomon building a great temple that some disapprovingly wished had never been built. They conclude the first section noting, "So hard a thing is it to please all…"

Even The Most Royal Persons Are Slandered For Attempting New Things

Under the second heading, *the highest personages have been calumniated*, they provide multiple royal examples which develop the same thought further. They explain that throughout history, even the greatest of leaders have not been exempt from such slander when attempting new things. They note the attacks rendered upon Julius Caesar, the first Roman Emperor. Likewise, Constantine, the first "Christian" emperor was made fun of and given a derogatory nickname. Even Justinian I, "the best Christened Emperor" who loved peace, was accused of being a wimp for his new ideas of peace.

The King's Determination Despite Slander

Under the third heading, *His Majesty's constancy, notwithstanding calumniation, for the survey of English translations,* they finally get to the point at which they have been driving in these first three sections, and apply the arguments they have built to their specific revision of the Bishop's Bible. King James stands in the lineage of those royals before him. He knew (or at least, the translators write as though he knew) that many will not like to see yet another new revision of the English Bible, but he pressed on anyway, for the good of the Church. He knows well that, "Whosever attempteth anything for the public (especially if it appertaineth to religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God), the same setteth himself upon a stage to be glouted upon by every evil eye; yea, he casteth himself headlong upon pikes, to be gored by every sharp tongue. For he that meddleth with men's religion in any part meddleth 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." Put simply, when people get attached to a particular form of the Bible, they will never want to see it altered. Even if they can admit its imperfections, they don't want to see it changed. This is the natural tendency of all religion. Prior to 1604, the Geneva Bible had been the standard Bible among the common people for some time, and would remain the favorite translation for decades after the KJV was completed. The Bishop's Bible, which is what the KJV was officially revising, had been the officially sanctioned Church Bible for long enough to establish it among the clergy. While many were dissatisfied with the translation contained in the *Book of Common Prayer*, their complaint was not with the Bible currently in use. Most people did not want their English Bible changed in any way. Changing the Bible was, as they note, "meddling with men's religion" and "meddling with their custom." But the translators utterly opposed the conservatism and traditionalism that

would demand that the resources of learning not be allowed to impact continuing revisions of the Bible in English.

Defending The Work

The next nine headings comprise a sustained defense of the validity of continuing revision of English translations. This defense is the burden of the entire preface. It falls into basically three parts. First comes a detailed and absolutely breathtaking exaltation of the Holy Scriptures in the Original Tongues, which stands as the theological centerpiece of the entire preface, and, for the translators, the theological burden of all translation work. Next comes a section explaining the need for the Scriptures in the Original Tongues to be translated into other tongues, as well as the need for those translations to be continually revised. This will build primarily upon the examples of the Septuagint and the LXX, with brief mention of other versions. Finally will come the presentation of and response to several objections to their revision of the Bishop's Bible from both Catholic and Protestant quarters.

The Praise Of Scripture In The Original Tongues

The first section, *The praise of the holy Scriptures*, stands as something of a bridge to the later and larger sections. This section is the centerpiece of their preface. It is certainly the highest point theologically and literarily.[11] They intend to point out the supremacy of Scripture in its original languages as God's revelation. Noting first in brief a variety of biblical references that speak of the value of Scripture,[12] they then proceed to produce multiple quotes from patristic authors as to the high value of Scripture. They quote the famous words of St. Augustine from his conversion, "*Tolle, lege, Tolle, lege*" (take up and read, take up and read), as well as Augustine's beautiful statement on the sufficiency of Scripture. They quote their favorite father, Jerome, "Love the Scriptures, and wisdom will love thee." They Quote St. Cryil, Tertullian, Saint Justin Martyr, and Saint Basil. Then they

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[11] Though it should be noted that the translators (Smith) should not be too highly praised for this literary beauty. The "*Thirty-Nine Articles*" in the revised form of 1563 was the official statement of faith of the Church of England to which each of the translators belonged, and to which each of them agreed. Article XXXIV, "Of the Homilies," had explained as a matter of the Doctrine of the Church of England that its doctrines were more fully spelled out in the 1st and 2nd Book of Homilies, and the article specifically listed several homilies that were accepted from the second book, which were commanded to be regularly read in the Churches (though the modern Anglican Church has suspended this article). One of these is, "Homily X – Of The Reverend Estimation of God's Word," also sometimes titled, "An information of them which take offense at certain places of the Holy Scripture." An examination of this homily (see at http://www.footstoolpublications.com/Homilies/Bk2_ScriptureOffence10.pdf) reveals that much of the language of the Preface at this point is borrowed directly from this homily. This borrowing may well be unintentional, as Smith would have heard this sermon read over and over again, and its language would have worked its way into his own heart in a devotional way.

[12] They note John 5:39; Is. 8:20; Acts 8:28-29; 17:11; Matt. 22:29; Luke 24.25 and II Tim. 3:15.

mention (without quoting directly) further statements from St. Cyril, Saint Jerome, and St. Augustine. Following this, they take six common elements from mythological lore,[13] and creatively suggest that Scripture does all the things these did in legend, and more. After this comparison, they conclude the section with a strained sentence poetically praising the attributes of Scripture[14] that is so beautiful it is worth quoting at length.

> *"And what marvel? The original thereof being from heaven, not from earth; the author being God, not man; the enditer, [composer] the Holy Spirit, not the wit of the Apostles or Prophets; the penman, 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 inheritance immortal, undefiled, and that never shall fade away: Happy is the man that delighteth in the Scripture, and thrice happy that meditateth in it day and night."*

Rarely have more beautiful words of praise for Scripture been penned. This praise of Scripture serves as the center to their argument that will follow. Having explained the Divine origin of the Word of God, they will proceed to examine the various previous translations to which they are indebted in their work (primarily the Septuagint and Latin Vulgate, as well as the later English translations which preceded them), and then make a case for the validity of adding their work to this number. It is well worth noting in connection with the purpose of this essay, that, like the SWBC statement on Scripture, and like the formulation of the later fundamentalists (see below) the KJV translators seem to have held the historic position that the Word of God was inspired and inerrant only in the original autographs. It was likely to these autographs they referred when they wrote, "the original thereof being from heaven, not earth." At the least, since this section refers to Scripture in its original languages, before translation,[15] their words of praise here refer to original language texts only, not English translations of them.

Having laid the theological foundations for the primacy of Scripture in the original tongues, the next eight headings will make up a single section defending the

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[13] Ειρεσιωνη, (eiresione), the Philosopher's stone, *Cornu-copia*, *Panaces* the herb, *Catholicon* the magical drug, and the legendary armor of the god Vulcan (Hephaestus). They demonstrate here their wide reading of ancient Greek mythology and philosophy.

[14] The sentence in turn praises with multiple points, the origins of the original, the Author's divinity, the composer being the Spirit, the penman, the matter, the form, the effects, and the end result of study.

[15] The next heading, *Translation Necessary*, and the whole next section of the argument takes up the need to translate these Scriptures from their original tongues, which would be nonsensical if this section in any way referred to translations of any kind rather than Scripture in the original tongues.

validity of their work. There are two basic parts. The first part (under the next five headings) argues for the necessity of translation of Scripture, explains the history of the two major and well known translations that influenced the KJV revisers and their understanding of translation principles, gives a brief summary of other translations into different languages, and then a brief side note about the Catholic objection to translations other than Latin. The second part of the section raises and answers specific objections from two general directions – Catholic and Protestant.

The Need To Have Translations In Readiness

Under the first of these headings, *Translation necessary*, the revisers build on the high praise they have just given to Scripture. If the Bible is such an important work, it ought to be translated into as many languages as possible. Noting Paul's injunction from the issue of tongues in the church,[16] and a variety of examples from history of differing nations and popes being unable to communicate across linguistic boundaries, they support their assertion that, "all of us in those tongues that we do not understand are plainly deaf." They then note an illustration from the Roman Senate. Cicero had noted his annoyance that there had to always be interpreters ready at hand because many of the Romans, who should have known Greek, didn't. When one who was part of the proceedings didn't understand, there was an exigent (pressing, demanding) problem that created sort of an emergency need for one. The translators apply the illustration to the pressing need for English translations of the Bible, noting, "…So, lest the Church be driven to the like exigent, it is necessary to have translations in a readiness." Note the use of the plural, "translations." They will pick up the idea later (in relation to their marginal notes) that one translation is never sufficient. They conclude this first heading, and introduce the larger section, by penning beautiful words on the nature of translation that have rightly lived on in infamy;

> *"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 was deep) without a bucket or some thing to draw with: or as that person mentioned by Esau, to whom when a sealed book was delivered, with this motion, Reade this, I pray thee, he was fain to make this answer, I cannot, for it is sealed."*

The next three headings will take up well-known examples of translations of Scripture, two of which have deeply influenced their own work. Under the first of these headings, *The translation of the Old Testament out of Hebrew into Greek,* they describe the

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[16] I Cor. 14:11, though note that the preface, as usual, quotes the Geneva Bible here, with a rather different wording than the KJV.

Septuagint and it various revisions. Using an Augustinian illustration from Gideon's fleece as an allegory of God's intention that only Israel would know him, and thus that the Scriptures were only in the language of Canaan, they conclude that, "one and the selfsame original in Hebrew was sufficient." But the incarnation began a new period in God's dealings with man. Salvation was now "not of the Jew only, but also of the Greek." Thus, "it pleased the Lord" to bring about the production of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament known as the Septuagint, what they call, "the translation of the seventy interpreters" (abbreviated as LXX). They briefly mention the origins story of the LXX given in the letter of Aristeas,[17] and proceed to draw some contemplative theological thoughts which have implications for all translation work. They suggest that the Hellenization of the world[18] was an event brought about by a special plan of God. "The Greek tongue was well known and made familiar" in Asia, the colonies, Europe, Africa, etc. This wide-spread Hellenization allowed unique opportunity to "prepare the way for our Savior among the Gentiles." Because there was a universal language, (which Hebrew had never been) a translation could now be made that could be universally readable, and thus the OT could spread widely among the gentile nations, preparing the way for Jesus. "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." In fact, not a few NT historians have noted God's providence working in Hellenization and the LXX in a similar fashion.

They next take up the nature and history of the LXX, which creates a pivotal point in their argument in defense of their revision. The imperfections of all translation work make objections to continual revision of a translation invalid. They deal through the rest of this heading with three thoughts; the undeniable faults in the LXX as a translation of the Hebrew (including explanation and denial of its occasionally claimed status as "an inspired translation"), a possible reason notwithstanding to explain why Jesus and the Apostles used the LXX despite its imperfections, and the later revisions that were made of the translation. This third element is the point at which they are driving, and the first element (the imperfections of the LXX) is the foundation for it. But before we take up the larger two-part argument, we must note the second element, which serves as something of an aside at this point.

They presume the use of the LXX by Jesus and the Apostles, a point strangely denied by many who believe the KJV is above revision. They mention this use at this point only as a caveat to prevent one from drawing an extreme conclusion from their extensive explanation of the errors of the LXX. They must build the case that the LXX contained many imperfections in order to make the revisions of it a valid procedure, and they must show such revisions to be valid in order for their example to work as a case for continued revision of English Bibles. But they want to be careful that the reader doesn't draw from this the opposite extreme result of vilifying the LXX, since that would end up demeaning

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[17] See the attached essay, "What Would Jesus Read" for details about the origins story.
[18] Accomplished under Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC, who they don't directly mention, but which is presumed in their mention of the letter of Aristeas.

Jesus and the Apostles, who both used and endorsed it, despites its known faults. After asserting that, "it is certain" that the LXX needed correction, they qualify, "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 then by 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 witness to themselves, their witness not to be regarded. This may be supposed to be some cause, why the Translation of the *Seventie* was allowed to pass for currant." They suggest (though only as an uncertain possibility which "may be supposed to be some cause") that the reason that Jesus and the Apostles didn't produce a more perfect translation of the Greek OT in their day is that this action might have caused problems in the foundational age of the Church. Some could have accused them of producing a "tailor made" translation which would suite their own needs, but which would then have no authority, since it was biased precisely to affirm the Christian message.[19] Thus, "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and them to take that which they found," and use it despite its imperfections. This isn't a real problem for them anyway, since they affirm that the LXX, despite its imperfections is, "for the greatest part true and sufficient." It is precisely this thought that they will later in the preface develop more extensively to show that good translations, though always imperfect, are nonetheless sufficient and authoritative. But at this point, they only want to qualify their remarks about the LXX.

To return to their larger case, the first and third element as a two-part argument may now be noted. They move back and forth between the two parts of the argument. The LXX was (1) "commended generally" but most certainly imperfect, and thus (2) continual revision of it was not invalid. They are well aware of the rather drastic differences between the LXX and the Hebrew text at points, and while in some cases they prefer the LXX text to the Hebrew[20] in the majority of cases they felt the Hebrew was correct, and thus the LXX contained many imperfections. As they note, "It is certain, that the Translation was not so sound and so perfect, but that it needed in many places correction…" Before they render their own final conclusion on the errors of the LXX, they take up a possible historical objection. Some in the early history of the church (notably after Augustine, who popularized the idea) had claimed that the LXX translators were inspired in their work, and thus that their work was now superior to the Hebrew original from which it was translated. Some had seen the LXX as "advanced revelation" from God. Affirming a common legend that the LXX translators had miraculously completed their work individually in 70 days, and then come together and miraculously found their translation work virtually identical, Augustine had noted, "These translators [of the LXX] are now considered by the most learned Churches to have translated under such sublime inspiration of the Holy Ghost that

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[19] They may intend to allude to the fact that this is exactly what happened later in the church. The Jewish people, faced with Christians continuing to use the LXX to "show Jesus in the OT," claimed they had made it with a Christian bias to read Jesus into the sacred text. They initially produced their own Greek translation, but then abandoned even this, and called for a return to the primacy of the Hebrew language texts.

[20] See section above on the OT of the KJV.

from so many man there was only one version."[21] *Epiphanius* had likewise asserted its inspiration. They note, that he, "doeth attribute so much unto it, that he holdeth the Authors thereof not only for Interpreters, but also for Prophets [i.e., givers of new revelation] in some respect: and *Justinian* the Emperor enjoining the *Jews* his subjects to use specially the Translation of the *Seventy*, rendereth this reason thereof, because they were as it were enlighted with prophetical grace." Such claims for the inspiration of the LXX had been common in a previous age, and Justinian had even based a decree that the LXX (and Aquila's version) be used in Hellenistic synagogues upon the belief that the translators were inspired.

They soundly reject such an opinion. They know that all translation is interpretation, and that translators are not prophets giving new revelation; they are fallible men giving their best interpretation. They conclude, "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…" Isaiah had well prophesied that the Egyptians (among whom the LXX was translated) were "Men and not God." Only God could produce perfection; not translators, who are always human. They likewise bring Jerome (their favorite father) to the stand as witness against such a mistaken notion as a perfect translation. Jerome had been the impetus behind the movement to reject the notions of inspired translation, and to seek to return to the original languages, and to always regard them and them alone as primary.[22] He had written especially, *De optimo genere interpretandi*, giving guidelines for interpretation which see the original languages of Scripture as primary, and all translations into any language as necessarily inferior.[23] The translators assert agreement with Jerome's assessment. "The seventy were interpreters, not prophets." They made repeated mistakes, because to err is human, to not err is an action only of God. Sometimes they were simply didn't have enough knowledge, sometimes they simply had slips of the mind. Sometimes the LXX unnecessarily expands the text, sometimes it needlessly shortens it.

They again add the caveat to protect Jesus and the Apostles from the suggestion that they didn't realize there were errors, "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 is referring to the fact that sometimes the NT authors don't use the LXX, but instead quote the Hebrew text, where it differs and is demonstrably a better text than the LXX. Obviously they don't do this in every case (otherwise the previous caveat is meaningless) but they do on occasion so depart from the LXX to prefer the Hebrew.

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[21] Quoted by Rhodes and Lupas explaining the background to this section, pg. 36.

[22] Ironically, Jerome's own translation would later come under the same attitude, with many claiming, for almost 1000 years, that his own translation into Latin was inspired! It is simply the common nature of fallen man to want to believe that he has a translation equal to the originals.

[23] Further references to other works of Jerome where he expresses the same sentiments are provided in Rhodes and Lupas, pg. 36.

This is the logical groundwork for their argument. The LXX was demonstrably imperfect, and though used despite its imperfections, even the Apostles and Jesus understood that it was undeniably imperfect. Thus, revisions of it were continually needed. As they note, "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 middle column by *Origen* (for the worth and excellency thereof above the rest, as *Epiphanius* gathereth) but also was used by the *Greek* fathers for the ground and foundation of their Commentaries." The LXX of the seventy was the first translation of the Hebrew OT intro Greek but it was by no means the last one.[24] One translation of scripture alone into Greek would not have been sufficient, and would have made all its errors permanent. Thus, Aquila later produced a major revision. So did Theodotian. Later, so did Symmachus produce a new revision. And two other forms of Greek translations are known, which Epiphanius (their source for this info) had not known the author of.

The clear analogy they intend the reader to draw is that one cannot object to their work of revising the Bishop's Bible, because it is an axiom of translation that translation work is always imperfect and necessarily incomplete, and thus continual revision is always both valid and necessary. Objections to their revision of the Bishop's Bible would mean accepting mistaken legends, and would necessarily entail a claim of inspiration for the translators of a particular translation work. But Jerome (to say nothing of the prophet Isaiah) has already rendered his judgment that such a claim is deeply mistaken. However, they will wait to state such implications directly until later in the preface. For the time, they conclude, "This may suffice touching the Greek Translations of the old Testament."

Under the next heading, *Translation out of Hebrew and Greek into Latin,* they take up the examples of the Old Latin translations and the Vulgate. This section is much briefer, as it would be redundant to say again what they have already said from the illustration of the LXX. Their point is exactly the same, with only one minor caveat – whereas the LXX was a single version later revised in multiple different ways, the Latin translations were initially excessively numerous, and later revised into a single better form by Jerome. "But now the Latin Translations were too many to be all good, for they were infinite" as Augustine had

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[24] Today, it is unfortunately common for many to speak of "The LXX" and to regard each of the various Greek translations of the OT under that title. Yet this is a mistaken notion. There are a variety of different Greek translations of the OT found in some 2000+ manuscripts today. They fall generally into the categories of a variety of different rescensions of the Septuagint, several of which are noted by the translators, (though scholars today sometimes use slightly different titles for these rescensions). See the attached essay "What Would Jesus Read?" for details. The translators avoided this common historical mistake, well aware of the different forms. They reserved the title, "the seventy" or "the translation of the seventy interpreters" for the initial edition produced in Alexandria as the letter of Aristeas supposed, which was the one, in their opinion, used by Jesus and the Apostles, and they use the titles of the authors of the later rescensions to distinguish their works.

said. More importantly, many of the Old Latin translations were, "not out of the Greek stream" being translations of the LXX into Latin, and thus a translation of a translation, rather than direct from the original languages. The results of translating from a translation of course, "must needs be muddy." And such a situation required correction. "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 fountains themselves…" Thus they make the same two-fold argument as above; (1) The Old Latin translations were of course imperfect. (2) Further revision was thus necessary. Jerome saw to this, and produced a revision of the Old Latin translations, known as the Latin Vulgate. Once again, using exactly the same argument, they clearly intend the reader to draw the implication, which they (masterfully) don't spell out yet explicitly – their revision to the Bishop's Bible cannot be objected to, since (1) translation is always imperfect, and (2) revision, if well done, is always valid. They conclude with high words of praise for St. Jerome and his Vulgate, perhaps the highest praise anywhere in the preface (apart from the praise of Scripture section). "Which [translation] he performed with that evidence of great learning, judgment, industry and faithfulness, that he hath for ever bound the Church unto him, in a debt of special remembrance and thankfulness." The translators themselves were seemingly somewhat enamored with Jerome and with the Latin Vulgate he produced.[25]

Under the next heading, *The translating of the Scripture into the vulgar tongues,* (the third giving examples of translations of the Bible), the translators lump together the variety of ancient versions which they know of, though it is clear that they don't have any direct acquaintance with many of them. While the translators have first hand knowledge of the LXX and Latin Vulgate, they refer rather to second hand accounts about most of these. This heading is different from the first two not only because it is based on secondhand information, but also in its purpose. They don't intend to employ the argument that translation requires revision, but rather, here, that translation into common language is acceptable. Anticipating some of the Catholic objection they will explicitly deal with following, (which thought English too base a language to be worthy of having Scripture translated into it), they maintain that vulgar translation has precedent. Using the illustrations of the Roman senate and the lepers who shared the spoil ((II Kings 7:3-10), they transition into the other translations, noting that scholars, "were not content to have the Scriptures in the Language which themselves understood," but sought to produce many translations into the vulgar (common) tongues of the common man, so that (in their opinion) most nations heard not only the gospel of Christ, but "the written word translated." They proceed to mention rumored examples of translations into the Dalmation tongue, the tongues of the Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Ethiopians, "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." Gothic, Arabic, Saxon [Old English], French, and Dutch (German) are also mentioned. They even mention the Wycliffe Bibles, found often, which they presume to be

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[25] They mention Jerome by name no less than twenty times in the preface. This is almost more than all their other patristic references (e.g., Cyril -2 , Chrysostom -3, Tertullian – 5, etc.) combined. Only Augustine even comes close in their words of praise for him and frequency of quotation.

the work of John Trevisia. They conclude, "So 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, even from the first times of the conversion of any Nation; no doubt, because it was esteemed most profitable, to cause faith to grown in men's hearts the sooner, and to make them to be able to say with the words of the Psalm*, As we have heard, so we have seen*."

Thus turn in their argument gets them a little off track from their main point. The following heading, *The unwillingness of our chief adversaries, that the Scriptures should be divulged in the mother tongue, etc.,* is seen as something of an aside, as they acknowledge at the end of the paragraph. It is the most poorly written part of the preface, and should logically have been incorporated into the heading answering, "the imputations of our adversaries," since it is a similar issue raised. But their mention of vulgar translation has called to mind this issue, and they will briefly deal with it before moving on. And there is some distinction from the later issue. What they take up here is the Roman Catholic claim that they do in fact allow for English translation. They had in fact produced the Rheims-Douay English translation of the Latin Vulgate to fill that need. While only the New Testament was complete, the Old Testament was on its way. While the Constitutions of Oxford had made translating the Bible into English, or reading or possessing even a scrap of English translation of the Bible, punishable at times even by death, the Catholics had allowed some magistrates and others to obtain and use English translation. Thus, the prohibition wasn't absolute. It only required that one get a license to own or use an English translation. The problem of course was that such a license was given only at the discretion of the corrupt church, which means, only if one was wealthy or powerful enough to warrant one, and, more importantly, only if one affirmed Roman Catholic doctrine in full. They note of such a procedure, "indeed it is a gift, not deserving to be called a gift, an unprofitable gift." They regard the Catholic offer as insincere. "So much are they afraid of the light of the Scripture… that they will not trust the people with it…" As proof that the Catholic offer is insincere, they mention a statement from the preface to the Rheims NT that "much also moved thereunto by the desires of many devout persons" they had been motivated to their work. In other words, the Catholics only produced the Rheims because of Protestant pressure. "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."

Specific Catholic And Protestant Objections To The Revision

They now come, with the next three headings, to the third part of this middle section defending their work. Here they will present several specific objections to a revision of the Bishop's Bible from the Roman Catholics ("our adversaries") and fellow Protestants ("our brethren"). Under the first of these headings, *The speeches and reasons, both of our brethren, and of our adversaries, against this work,* they point out that objections have come against the work before it had even been finished from two directions. Unlike the first section of the preface, where they anticipate objections to come, they here deal concretely with objections that have come already. Some six years in the labor had given ample time for mouths to wag about their work in progress. They had noted these objections briefly in the three page dedication to James as well, where they dedicated their work to the King,

> *"whose allowance and acceptance of our labors shall more honor and encourage us, than all the calumniations and hard interpretations of other men shall dismay us. So that if, on the one side, we shall be traduced by Popish persons at home or abroad, who therefore will malign us, because we are poor instruments to make God's holy truth to be yet more and more known unto the people, whom they desire still to keep in ignorance and darkness; or if, on the other side, we shall be maligned by self-conceited brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their anvil, we may rest secure, supported within by the truth and innocency of a good conscience, having walked the ways of simplicity and integrity, as before the Lord, and sustained without by the powerful protection of Your Majesty's grace and favor, which will ever give countenance to honest and Christian endeavors against bitter censures and uncharitable imputations."*

One of the more vocal of these opponents had been Hugh Broughton, who had been almost since the initiation of their work criticizing it. He was a Hebrew scholar with impeccable scholarly credentials. In fact, he would likely have been chosen by Bancroft to be on the translation committee, had it not been for his infamous reputation for a cantankerous inability to work well with others.[26]

He had long been arguing for a new translation of the Scriptures, before the Hampton Conference in 1604, and it is quite possible that his attitude sparked the idea for the petition to the King for one, (however insincerely it may have been first presented). Yet he was convinced that the KJV translators were going about their work all the wrong way. His points of contention were several, and they were driven by his high esteem of the Hebrew text. He held deeply to the infallibility of the text, and even denied the presence of textual corruption in the Hebrew text.[27] Thus, firstly, when the KJV translators emended the Hebrew text of the OT, he felt that rather than correcting error, they were introducing it. While the KJV occasionally coorects the Hebrew text to present LXX readings instead, he felt that LXX readings should go in the margins only, but never be introduced into the text.[28] For Broughton, "Faith depends on the infallible perfection of the Bible, and this perfection is only revealed through the most careful attention to the way the language is used."[29]

Secondly, and more substantially, he felt that translation should be as literal to the text as possible. Contrary to some common notions, the idea of different translating philosophies is nothing new. Jerome discussed both literal and free translation. The Wycliffe Bibles fall under two general forms – one a very literal translation, and one a much

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[26] It would be quite natural to see their reference in the dedication to the King to "self-conceited brethren" as a reference to Broughton, though we can never say for sure.
[27] See Norton, who notes this, and quotes him as refusing to admit the Hebrew text corrupted in any way. Of admitting the presence of textual corruption in the Hebrew text, (which the translators had of course admitted), he had proclaimed, "that I will never do, while breath standeth in my lungs." (Norton, "*A History of the English Bible*" pg. 56.)
[28] Norton, "A History of the English Bible" pg. 57.
[29] Norton, "A History of the English Bible" pg. 57.

more "dynamic equivalence" translation.[30] And it was the less literal one that had become the favorite of the People. Erasmus had published his Latin text for students, but also translated a "paraphrase" form for the average man (not unlike our modern "The Message" of Peterson), and his paraphrases had been translated into English, and placed by royal order in every parish church.[31] But Broughton was convinced that verbal inspiration of Scripture demanded the most literal translation possible, and the KJV (especially in the OT) was nowhere near literal enough to please him.

Thirdly, he felt that in a variety of places the translator's changes to the text had introduced error into the Bible. For example, he was convinced that the correct reading in Luke 3:23, was that Jesus, "was called of the Father, My Sonne, being (as men thought), son of Joseph." But the KJV had made a textual decision to remove (in his opinion) the messianic lineage and Deity of Christ here.[32] He listed numerous other errors as well.

While they were still engaged in the work, Broughton addressed to them an epistle, "*An advertisement how to examine the translation now in hand, that the first edition be only for a trial, and that all learned men may have their censure*." He wanted them to publish only as a trial run, and allow scholars with other (often more conservative) voices to have their say in the work. In fact, such a censure by a wider swath of scholarship had been demanded by the rules that had been given to the translators by the King (especially rules #11 and #12),[33] but they seemed to have ignored his commands at that point, or at the least to have ignored the opinions so gathered. He published a full criticism of the KJV, "*A Censure of the Late Translation*" immediately after its first printing. His opening words set the tone, "The late Bible, Right Worshipful, was sent me to censure: which bred in me a sadness that will greeve me while I breathe, it is so ill done. Tell his Majesty that I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses, than any such Translation by my consent should be urged upon poore churches."[34] Others, like Lowth, and later Seldon, would much object to the translation at later points. And there was of course a general Catholic objection. These could have been envisioned when the translators wrote this section.

But in other ways, it seems that they were answering here a more general objection to any new revision whatsoever. Thus, under this first heading, the translators note, "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…" Protestants liked the Geneva Bible, and didn't want it replaced. It was a product of exemplary protestant

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[30] See Daniell, "The Bible in English" pg. 76-78, who refers to these as "the earlier" and "the later" versions.

[31] See Daniell, "The Bible in English," pg. 132, 255, et. al.

[32] Broughton, "*A Censure of the Late Translation*" second enumerated error, no page numbers.

[33] Rule #11, "When any place of especial obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority to send to any learned man in the land for his judgment of such a place."
Rule #12, "Letters to be sent from every Bishop to the rest of his clergy, admonishing them of this translation in hand, and to move and charge as many as being skillful in the tongues have taken pains in that kind, to send his particular observations to the company, either at Westminster, Cambridge, or Oxford."

[34] Broughton, "A Censure," opening paragraph, no page numbers.

scholarship, and they felt little willingness to see it changed. There was a general sense that if one called for (yet another) revision of the English Bible, that would say something about what they had possessed and used before. If revision is needed, (the objectors said), then isn't that saying that what we have isn't good enough? Or, in the words of the translators, "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*,) [Translated, It is quite wrong to mix lime with God's milk]." To suggest that continued revision to translation is needed could appear to be saying that what they had used as the Word of God previously had been in error, and wouldn't that be to say the Bible was in error? And what would this say about the character of God?

The translators continue to give voice their detractors objections, "We hoped that we had been in the right way, that we had 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* [gritty], as *Seneca* speaketh? What is it to handle the word of God deceitfully, if this be not? Thus certain brethren." Isn't any claim that a new revision is needed an arrogant affront to the great men who have throughout the church used the word of God as we presently have it? If they have told us we had the Word of God, but what we had was imperfect, then aren't we saying they deceived us? There is an interesting thought here that moves beyond an objection to the revision of an English translation. The appeal to "the bread delivered by the fathers" and the quote by Seneca suggest that their detractors felt that the translational and textual choices made by the translators were changing the form of the text to be different than what the church had always received, even from the first centuries of its existence. While the translators claimed to be correcting errors with such changes, objectors would claim they were introducing them. This was an objection from Protestant quarters.

But an objection came from Catholic quarters as well. In fact, it would be more accurate to say that the Catholics didn't render an objection to the revision *per se*, so much as use the revision as an occasion for slander against the Protestant system of theology as a whole. The Catholics claimed (quite mistakenly) that the Latin Vulgate was the original form of the Scriptures. They claimed to believe in a "preserved" form of text that had never changed, and was the form of the text of Scripture that had always been used. They had in fact constructed a rather fictional narrative to continue to believe this, but it was understandable. They held to a basic presupposition (which to this day undergirds the entire Catholic system of thought) of absolute certainty. The reason they so opposed *Sola Scriptura* is precisely because interpretation can then be challenged, and there is no one authoritative voice to decide with certainty what God's will is. And they had convinced themselves that they had absolute certainty about the text of Scriptures, and absolutely certain interpretation of it through the Pope. They were convinced that the protestant Bibles that had been appearing since Wycliffe were heretical corruptions of the text. Thus, the Catholic, "objection" was more of a general sentiment against all English Bibles from Wycliffe and beyond (apart from the Rheims), arising from an absolutist bibliology that the translators do not share.

The translators begin their presentation of the Catholic objection by comparing them to Sanballat in Nehemiah, with his slander against the Jews. "Also the adversaries of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, like *Sanballat* in *Nehemiah*, mock, as we hear, both at the work and workmen, saying; *What doe 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*.[35] 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 doe it. They have learning, and they know when a thing is well, they can *manum de tabulá*." Notice several things being asserted in these imaginary detractors; First, the spate of English translations (or, more properly, revisions or, "mending" of Tyndale) shows that the Protestants don't have a settled text. If it continues to change, and constant revisions continue to appear, then only two things are possible (from the imagined Catholic perspective); either the translation was good before, and is now being changed for the worse, or it was bad before, in which case, how horrible of the Protestants to have foisted it upon the people. Further, Protestants have claimed for a century that the Catholics had an inferior text, and thus condemned them for not "going to hear" the protestant text. Isn't revision of the English text basically admitting that the Catholics were right? Second, if an English Translation truly was needed, Catholics were surely most fit to do it, not Protestants. They are generally more well educated, and they have a history of "knowing when a thing is well," and can, "*manum de tabulá*" or, "keep their hands off the tablet." In other words, a Catholic revision would be careful not to corrupt the sacred text with Protestant heresy.

Thus proceeds the introductory explanation of the Protestant and Catholic objection. The translators lastly explain, "We will answer them both briefly..." In the next two headings, they will specifically address these objections. But before they launch into that answer, they give a sort of "preemptive strike" in the Protestant direction by sharing a brief quote from Jerome, as though they can't wait for the formal answer to get his quote in,[36] and show that they are simply following in the steps of the greatest of Bible revisers. "We will answer them both briefly: and the former, being brethren, thus, *with S. Jerome*, *Damnamus veteres? Minimè, sed post priorum studia in domo Domini quod possumus 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*."[37] They follow with a periphrastic interpretation of Jerome's meaning, "As if he said, 'Being provoked by the example of the learned 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

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[35] Note again that the quotation comes from the beloved Geneva, rather than the KJV, which has a variety of minor differences; feeble/weak, revive the stones/make the stones whole again, dust/rubbish, and, "Even *that which they build*, if a fox go up, he shall break down their *stone* wall"/"*although they build*, *yet* if a fox go up, he shall even break down their *stony* wall."

[36] One could also make the case that they accidentally placed the heading in the wrong place. It would fit much more naturally just prior to this brief note, coming right above, "Wee will answer them both…"

[37] The Quotation is of St. Jerome from, "*Contra Rufinum*," 2.25.

Gods Church, lest I should seem to have labored 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." They understood that when Jerome sought to revise the Old Latin translations that had gone before him, he faced detractors who didn't want their Bible changed, and some violently opposed his work of revision. But Jerome understood himself to be not creating something new, but returning to something ancient; not creating errors, but correcting them. He was in fact following in the spirit of those great fathers who had gone before him, even if he was technically seeking to improve earlier work. But he wanted to give it his best shot – to see if God had allowed him a greater "talent in knowledge of the tongues." Advancements in knowledge in his day would seem to demand the acceptance of such, unless one wanted to give more credit to previous scholars (however ancient) than they deserved. The Translators of course likewise see their own revision in the same vein, as they note in the next sentence.

Answers To Protestant Objections

Under the first subheading of this "speeches and reasons" section, *A satisfaction to our brethren*, the translators now take up a direct rebuttal to the Protestant objection, furthering the thought which their quotation of Jerome had provoked. While some Protestants might claim that anyone who suggests the need for a revision is thus condemning the translation they seek to revise, nothing could be further from the truth in the translator's minds. "And to the same effect [as Jerome's quote] 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…" They absolutely do not condemn the translations they know of that went before, or any others for that matter. It is interesting that the scope of their qualification is full. It crosses land and sea in its expanse. They even note, though they are not sure if there were new translations or revisions of old translations made under Edward, "if there were any translation, or correction of a translation," they want to make sure that that is included to. They haven't even seen such a translation, but they don't want to condemn it either. Quite the opposite from condemning, they rather freely acknowledge the Divine hand in all such translation and revision work. So they note, "…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."

In continuing to commend the previous English translations they revise, they next make the point that greater things can only exist because good things have proceeded them. Previous English translations were good. "The Judgment of *Aristotle* is worthy and well known: '*If Timotheus had not been, we had not had much sweet music*; *but if Phrynis* (*Timotheus* his master*) had not been, we had not had Timotheus*.'[38] Therefore blessed be they, and most honored be their name, that break the ice, and give the onset upon that which helpeth forward to the saving of souls." In fact, not only is such translation work good – but what could be better? "Now what can be more available thereto, than to deliver

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[38] The reference here is to the poet Phrynis of Mytilene and his imitator Timotheus of Miletus. Timotheus was considered a greater poet, though he was an imitator and improver of an already great artist.

God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they understand? Since of an hidden treasure, and of a fountain that is sealed, there is no profit, as *Ptolomee Philadelph* wrote to the Rabbins or masters of the Jewes, as witnesseth *Epiphanius*: and as S*. Augustine* saith; *A man had rather be with his dog then with a stranger* (whose tongue is strange unto him.)"

They then apply the thought begun above with a quotation from Aristotle. If that which went before is good (and to translate the Bible is inherently good), then an improvement of that work is even better. Continual revision of English Bibles creates an ever-better product. "Yet for all that, as nothing is begun and perfected[39] 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 helped by their labors, 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." Of course, that, "which they left so good" is the Bishop's Bible which they are revising. Who can object to making a good thing better? And who could claim that a later revision is not better? In fact, it is a general rule that, "the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser." The full scope of their intention is clear. This is a rule from which, "nothing" is excepted, including their own revision.

They then present five illustrations of this rule (that "the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser") at work; two from biblical history, one from revision of the biblical translation of the LXX, and two from revision of secular translation works. First, "The vintage of *Abiezer*, that strake the stroake: yet the gleaning of grapes of Ephraim was not to be despised. See *Judges* 8. *verse* 2." This is reference to the diplomatic answer of Gideon to the tribe of Ephraim when they became upset that they had not been invited to be part of the fight against Midian. They likely would have declined such an invite, but after Gideon's 300, (who were mostly descendants of Abiezer), had seen a miracle when they "strake the stroke," or delivered the deadly blow, they could complain after the fact. In 7:24-8:1, Gideon had called upon Ephraim to help with the "mop-up" operation, and they had contributed by capturing and slaughtering Oreb and Zeeb, two prominent princes. Gideon answers with uncharacteristic wisdom, that while this mop-up action was secondary, and subsequent to the real battle, the princes so captured were of more value than the Midianites killed in the battle. Ephraim had merely gleaned unharvested grapes from the corner of the field, but those grapes made a better wine than the very best, "the vintage," of his own men. "What have I now done in comparison of you?" Gideon's answer is pure rhetorical and diplomatic fluff of course, but it served to make the Ephraimites more self-assured. The translators remove some of the force of his rhetoric, asserting only that the "gleaning" is "not to be despised." The translators are drawing the comparison that their work of revising the Bishop's (and "picking" and choosing elements from other previous translations), though it is secondary and subsequent, could in fact produce something better than what went before, for the general rules is that the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser.

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[39] The word has its archaic sense of "brought to Maturity" or "brought to completion," here being the opposite of "begun," in the sentence, rather than the more modern, "without fault or error," which was just coming into use (and is used later in the preface). See OED. E.g., Luke 1:3; James 3:2; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:15, etc. The Webster's 1828 list only, "finished, completed" for the past participial (-ed) form, "perfected." (E.g., see II Chron. 8:16; 24:13; Ez. 27:4 for the "-ed" past participle form).

Second*, "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." The story of Elisha and the Israelite King Josh is a memorable one in II Kings 13:13-19. The prophet had instructed the King to shoot an arrow out the window, to prophetically symbolize the victory to over Syria God would give him. Then, the prophet had commanded him to strike the ground with the arrows. This was a test both of the zeal of the king and his belief in the prophetic word already delivered. Presumably, the king understood this. He struck the ground three times, and then stopped. The prophet sharply rebuked him. He should have struck the ground 5-6 times, and his victory would have been complete. Since he only struck three times, he would win three battles against Syria, but not ultimately consume them. The translators make two different points from the story. First, the king wasn't content to strike only once and then stop. He "did not satisfy himself" with the first blow. But second, he should have kept going, and been zealous enough to continue making blows. Zeal to not quit is the point of the comparison. Recall that the translators opened this preface with their "zeal to promote [further] the common good." The Bishop's (and Geneva) Bible had made a few strokes of revision – they have zeal to continue such efforts of revision.

Third, "*Aquila*, of whom we spake before, translated the Bible as carefully, and as skillfully 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 κατα ακριβειαν, that is accurately done, as Saint *Jerome* witnesseth." Here they pick up what they have already referred to before (and will mention again); the translation of the Hebrew OT into Greek known as the "Septuagint" or LXX for short, and the subsequent revisions of that work. They mention here specifically the revision of Aquila.[40] Yet interestingly enough, they refer here, not to Aquila's work as a revision of the LXX (the point they made before), but to Aquila's own continual revision of his version. While the LXX proper had been produced (according to the translators) several centuries before Christ, around 140 AD, Aquila had produced a revision of that work, different enough that many ancient writers considered it an all new translation. Aquila had been a Christian, but had converted to Judaism. Thus, in his version, he had sought to remove all of the "Christian" elements (passages that Christians were claiming were prophetic references to Christ). He continued to revise his work, and his translation (in contrast to the Christian versions) became the standard version used in Hellenistic Synagogues for the next several centuries.[41] The translator's point is that as Aquila continued to revise his translation, it continued to become more accurate. Even Jerome,

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[40] See, Jobes/Silva, "Invitation" pg. 38-41, and at greater length Swete, "Introduction" pg. 31-42 and for details on Aquila's version. Swete provides a helpful comparison of several passages of the LXX with Aquila's version to show the extremely literal nature of Aquila, and the anti-Christian taint. Swete also notes that Aquila does not use the Nomina Sacra, and does not even transliterate the Tetragrammaton into Greek Letters at all, but rather always writes the Divine name in Hebrew (despite the fact that he is producing a Greek translation, Swete, "Introduction" pg. 39). This is likely due to his anti-Christian polemic, as Christians had used the abbreviated form to show that Jesus shared with the Father in the identity of Yahweh (see Appendix on the high Christology of early Christian Scribes).
[41] Swete, "*Introduction*" pg. 41, though he notes that its real popularity was due to its anti-Christian approach.

(their favorite Father), could say of its later revision that it was, "accurately done."[42] Once again, the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser.

Fourth they note, "How many books of profane learning have been gone over again and again, by the same translators, by others?" They refer to a generally known process rather than a specific work. Many secular scholarly works had been translated, but those translators often continued to revise their work, and in almost every case later translators came along later and produced more contemporary revisions of their works to meet the needs of a different age. In such cases, "the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser."

Fifth, and finally, they mention one specific example of the category they have just mentioned. "Of one and the same book of *Aristotles* Ethics, there are extant not so few as six or seven several translations." Rhodes and Lupas note that Ethics was, "one of the most widely read philosophical treatises in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries."[43] The translators are referring to its Latin translations primarily (the language in which they did most of their own reading). There were versions available in their day produced by Bruni, Argyropoulos, Krosbein, Feliciano, Lambin, Perion, Riccoboni, Segni, Scaino, Latini, etc. some were literal translations, some were updated versions of previous works, some were "paraphrases," etc. Much work had been expanded to give the people a great variety of versions of Aristotle's great work, which is the point the translators will now develop.

Having used a variety of illustrations to show that "the later thoughts are thought to be the wiser," and that such great cost has been paid to produce multiple different versions of even secular literature like Aristotle, the translators will now apply that thought to Scripture, and thus to their own work directly. "Now if this cost may bee bestowed upon the gourd, which affordeth us a little shade, and which to day flourisheth, but to morrow is cut down; [a reference to the passing value of secular literature] what may we bestow, nay what ought we not to bestow upon the Vine [i.e., the root from which all that is good in secular literature grows], the fruit whereof maketh glad the conscience of man, and the stem whereof abideth for ever? And this is the word of God, which we translate." If secular works are worthy of multiple translations being produced of them, and of continual revision being made to them to keep them up-to-date, how much more worthy is the Word of God of such labor? "*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 wee to value the true pearl?"

The translators now further their argument for the validity of continual revising of translations of Scripture by making two points. First, a specific appeal to the King and his Royal authority is made. At the end of the day, the revision of the Bishop's Bible was made for one reason, and it was really the only one that mattered. It was made because the King so decreed, and obedience to the King meant completing the work. And that meant that naysaying the work is naysaying the King. But secondly, a chance to produce a new revision is a chance to correct errors in previous ones. Like polishing gold, continual work on it only makes it shine more. As anyone who has shined shoes knows, one can polish to infinity – continual work only takes a shiny product and makes it shine all the more. So with revision. What is bad can be progressively removed, and what is good can be made to shine all the

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[42] In his commentary on Ezekiel, book 3.15. But note that Jerome is only referring to the fact that it was excessively literal, a point the translators may have missed.

[43] Rhodes and Lupas, "*The Translators to the Reader*" pg. 46.

more. An already good work can be still improved, and the more "rubbing and polishing" that one does, the "more brightly" it shines. "Therefore let no mans eye be evil, because his Majesties 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*[44] do so, which therefore do bear their just reproof) but let us rather blesse 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 commeth 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 then their authentic vulgar) the same will shine as gold more brightly, being rubbed and polished; also if any thing be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may bee corrected, and the truth set in place. And what can the King command to bee done, that will bring him more true honor then 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, then by yielding their service, and all that is within them, for the furnishing of the work?"

The translator's attitude to the previous English translations they have used as a source here is notable. They believe they can be improved (to say otherwise would be to denigrate their own work), and can even suggest (though not directly assert) that they may contain things that are "halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original." Thus, their revision work provides opportunity for revision in these areas. Yet they assert strongly that all such translations (at least, those produced by Protestants) are "sound for substance" (i.e., substantially sound). More specific, the worst of Protestant versions (probably a reference to the Great Bible), is still "far better" than the Vulgate of the Roman Catholic Church. They well understood that translations always contain imperfections, but are nonetheless, "sound for substance."

They conclude the answer to Protestant objections with a final thought. In this answer it seems that they move beyond general Protestant objections to the specific Puritan ones that were being raised. Their answer is, how can Puritans object to the results of the work when they are historically the ones who called for it to be done?[45] Puritan's of course far preferred the Geneva Bible. In fact, for the next century and a half they would continue to ship copies of the Geneva Bible into Briton, long after printing such copies at home was forbidden. It would take them some 150 years to fully warm to the KJV. True,

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[44] This is a reference back to the Catholic objectors, who they had condemned as naysayers by this reference. In other words, let the Catholics object, and bear the judgment for it – Protestants should not do so.

[45] Strangely, McGrath quotes this section but omits (without ellipsis) the first part of the sentence to support his claim, that "For Smith, the origins of the King James Bible are not to be seen in Puritan concerns over the accuracy of existing translations , or the need to ensure that the biblical translations included in the Prayer Book were reliable." (McGrath, "In the Beginning" pg. 189). The part of the sentence he omits, which introduces the thought, directly states the opposite, "But besides all this, they [the Puritans] were the principal motives of it, and therefore ought least to quarrel it…" I concur ultimately with his judgments, but it is odd to appeal for their support to the very section of the Preface where Smith is logically arguing that the Puritans *were* the principal cause of the translation, and thus cannot object to it justly.

their request for a revision was probably, "an empty shift," and in any case was probably only related to the changing of what version was to be quoted in the "Book of Common Prayer," and at that only a final tactic to get at least some revision of the Prayer Book approved. They had tried several different tactics at the conference to get various elements of the prayer book changed, (especially the liturgy) but to no avail. They finally did make a case that worked, when they pointed to the faulty translations in the prayer book. They really weren't asking with any sincerity for a whole new translation to be made – it was likely a tactic to get the Geneva Bible officially approved (see above on the Hampton Conference). But the king had seized upon the request as a way to show that he was granting some of what they asked, to pacify the conference, unite the clergy and non-conformists, and to establish his own fame. Nonetheless, they are the ones who asked for it, and they should live with the consequences of their request, whether they like them or not. "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 this 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 all 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." With this final thought, they conclude their response to Protestant objections, "This much to satisfy our scrupulous Brethren."

Answers To Catholic Objections

Having dealt with the Protestant objections, they take up now the Catholic objections which they had raised earlier, under the heading, *An answer to the imputations of our adversaries.* There are three basic objections taken up; one from the absolutists bibliology that Catholics of the time claimed necessary, one from the Catholic claim that Heretics had produced the various English versions (which the translators consider a prime example of the Fallacy of Origins), and one from the claim that their constant and continual revision of the English text shows it to be hopelessly flawed. English translations, according to Catholic thinking, should not really be considered the Word of God, since they are necessarily flawed. Further, as noted above, if translation into English must be done, it should be by Catholics. Protestants (especially Wycliffe and Tyndale) have shown that English translations (those, in the translator's words, "set forth by men of our profession") done by them will only introduce heresy (i.e., reformation doctrine), the second objection taken up. Besides which, by producing a new revision, aren't the translator's admitting that the previous protestant Bibles were heretical, which is what they'd been saying all this time? This is the third and final point they deal with. We take them each up in turn.

The Objection From Absolutist Bibliology

Remember that, first, Catholics had objected to the idea of translation into English at all. This came from an absolutists view of Scripture which felt that any form of the Scripture must be perfect, or it is not Scripture. It must be perfect, or it is not worthy to be

called the Word of God. The Bible should only be read in the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Church, because the Latin Vulgate was produced under inspiration, and is a work of perfection. The Bible should certainly not be read in a language as base as English. In fact, for some time, Catholics had even claimed that the Bible had originally been written in Latin, and that the Vulgate was identical to the autographs. One cannot accurately translate such a Divine book into such a base language as English. To most Catholics of the time, an English translation is necessarily inferior, and thus necessarily not truly the Word of God. This attitude led to the wholesale rejection of the enterprise of translation at all, and certainly of any translation into English. And thus the translators reply. "Now to the later [their Catholic adversaries] we answer; that we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest [poorest] 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." Catholics argued that since a translation in English is naturally imperfect, it can't truly be the Word of God, a title they reserved for the Vulgate. Since the translators are producing a revision of the Bible's that brought about the reformation, they might seem to be agreeing with the Catholic attitude towards those Bibles and their faults. The translators want to make it abundantly clear that this is not the case. They think even the "meanest" [i.e., "poorest" or, "most poorly done"] Protestant translation into English is still the Word of God, despite its undeniable imperfections. Translation is not only necessary, it is possible. And any translation made by genuine Christians is a good one, and is the Word of God. They note that they have not yet seen a full Bible from the Catholics. The New Testament Rheims-Douay translation of the Vulgate had been published in 1582, and the NT had just been released, but not yet circulated.

This is not to say though that they fail to understand the Catholic objection that translation into English can never be perfect, and must always of necessity contain some faults. They don't disagree. They rather argue that while English translation is clearly imperfect, and certainly not to be equated to the original languages, this doesn't mean that a translation can't and shouldn't be seen as authoritative. They set out this point by using the example of various interpreters who interpret the King's decrees in Parliament into other languages. Some interpreters will do a great job, some will do a mediocre job. All such translation will be an imperfect rendering. But the end product is nonetheless still the word of the King. And more to their point, the decree, though translated imperfectly, is still seen as authoritative. "As the Kings Speech which he uttered in Parliament, being translated into *French, Dutch, Italian* and *Latin*, is still the Kings 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." The King's speech is still the King's speech, even though translated imperfectly. And translations of the Bible into English, (of which theirs is but one more of a long line), though all an imperfect representation of the original languages, are still the Word of our King.

Why is this so? Because we name a thing by its greater part, not by its minor imperfections. "For it is confessed, that things are to take their denomination of the greater part…" A work should be assessed by its general character, not by its minor faults. They are arguing here against the kind of "absolutism" that characterized their Catholic opponents and their thinking. While some wanted to hold an either/or attitude, (translations are either perfect, or they are not the word of God, and since no translation can be perfect, none can be the word of God), they staunchly reject such an absolutists approach to

Scripture. Translations of Scripture should be judged authoritative representations of the Word of the King, rather than rejected because of minor faults. They will now present three illustrations to further amplify this point.

First, they provide the example from the poetic world. They quote a line from Horace, "…and a natural man could say, *Verùm ubi multa nitent in carmine, non ego paucis offendor maculis, &c."* The line is translated, "But when the beauties in a poem are more in number, I shall not take offence at a few blots."[46] One doesn't look at a beautiful poem and exclaim, "Look at those faults!" All poems contain faults. But Horace knew that if the general character of a poem was beauty, then it should be judged a beautiful poem, its imperfections notwithstanding. Things take their denomination from the greater part.

Second, they note the way we talk about a man's character. "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*)…" Quoting James 3:2, they point out that all of us sin. And we sin a lot. But a man can still be called a virtuous man, if the general character of his life is virtuous. Things take their denomination from the greater part.

Third, they present the same idea in relation to a man's beauty. "…also a comely man and lovely, though he have some warts upon his hand, yea, not only freckles upon his face, but all scars." All humans have warts, freckles, or even scars. But we don't thereby decree that all of humanity is ugly. Some women are undoubtedly "comely and lovely," truly works of the Master's hand, and a tribute to his artistry. But they all also have warts, freckles, or scars. This doesn't deny their beauty. Things take their denomination from the greater part.

They now apply these three illustrations to Scripture. "No cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be currant [authoritative], notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it." All translations of the Word of God contain imperfections, and even blemishes. This is undeniable (as they will go on to say). But things take their denomination from the greater part. And if a translation "for its substance" is a generally good translation (and they conclude that all Protestant translations are), then it is the Word, and more importantly, it is "current" [authoritative]. The King's speech is still the King's speech, though translated with imperfections and blemishes. And the Word of God in English is still the authoritative Word of God, though admittedly always translated with imperfections and blemishes.

They then make the point that it could not but be so. Imperfection is the common lot of man. All works of man of course contain error. There is only one exception. They only time, and the only way, that the product of a man's hand can escape imperfections and blemishes, is if that man is an Apostle or granted the Apostolic gift of infallibility. They are making the point that they do understand that all translation is imperfect. This should go without saying, and the Catholic claim implication that they don't understand this is a straw man. Only Apostles could be so endued with the Spirit as to render a perfect work. As they note, "For what ever was perfect under the Sun, where Apostles or Apostolic men, that is, men indued with an extraordinary measure of Gods Spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hand?" It is crucial to catch this point if one is to understand how they see their own work. They freely admit that previous translations were imperfect. They freely admit that their own translation work is imperfect. This is the lot of all men

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[46] See Rhodes and Lupas pg. 47 for reference and translator citation.

except those who penned the autographs, because those men were given a special dispensation of the Holy Spirit (what we call verbal, plenary inspiration) to allow them to prevent error. But this can only ever be the case for such Apostolic men. According to the translators, apart from being the work of an Apostle, every translation is necessarily flawed.

They then turn the objection of the Catholics back upon the objectors. Catholics were absolutists, (the Word is perfect, or it is not the Word, and since all translation is imperfect, it cannot be the Word). But the Catholics were mistaken. All good English translations are the Word of God, despite all their errors. And this means the Catholics are wrong to object to them. "The Romanists therefore in refusing to hear, and daring to burn the Word translated, did no less then despite the Spirit of grace…" It is true that all translation is limited, and can only express the sense and meaning of the original's "as well as man's weakness would enable." Nonetheless, the ultimate origin of the Bible is God, and even in imperfect and flawed translation, limited by man's fallibility, it is still the word of God. As they note, "…from whom originally it proceeded, and whose sense and meaning, as well as man's weakness would enable, it did express." Catholics told themselves they were burning heretical translations, not the Word of God. The translators maintain that all good translations are the Word of God, however imperfect, and the Catholic absolutists were in fact guilty of burning God's very Word. They then provide three examples of the point that just because flawed translations are inferior to the originals, this does not mean that the flawed translation should not be seen as the authoritative Word of God. The first is an architectural illustration from Greco-Roman history, the second an architectural illustration from Biblical History, and the third a more pointed example from the Christian reception of the LXX.

The mention of burning brings to mind a few examples, which they then share, suggesting that the readers, "Judge by an example or two." First, "*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 sightly and convenient…" The original city of Rome had been burnt by the Gauls around 390 B.C. When it was rebuilt, the rebuilt work (as Plutarch noted) was far inferior to the original. The streets were haphazard and confused, the once well-ordered houses now like a maze. There is no question that rebuilt Rome was inferior to original Rome. But does this mean rebuilt Rome can be burned without guilt? "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?" Lucius Catilina tried unsuccessfully, and Nero accomplished successfully the burning of rebuilt Rome. Would the Catholic contend that since rebuilt Rome was inferior to the original, that it could be burnt without Guilt? Of course not. An inferior version thought it was, it was still the city of Rome.

The Second example comes from Biblical History, specifically from the narrative in Ezra three and the prophecy in Haggai two. The temple built by Solomon had been vast and awe-inspiring. It was rightly regarded as a wonder of the World. After the destruction of that temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and the seventy-year captivity of the Northern kingdom in Babylon, Zerubbabel rebuilt the foundations of a new temple. The new temple was undeniably inferior. It was nowhere close to the same size. It had nowhere near the same grandeur. The gold overlays and shiny silvers were no longer present. In fact, it was so inferior in glory that some who had seen the old temple wept with sadness to see the new

one. As the translators note, "So, by the story of *Ezrah*, and the prophecy of *Haggai* it may be gathered, that the Temple build 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 later either have been abhorred and forsaken by the *Jewes*, or profaned by the *Greeks*?" There was no doubt that the former temple was inferior. But despite it's being inferior to the original, it was still the Temple of the Lord. And more importantly, it was still the place were God met with his people. It may have been inferior to the original, but God's presence was still there. Thus, no one had the right to abhor, forsake, or profane the new temple. And this is how the translators view English translations, despite their inevitable flaws. "The like we are to think of Translations." Every English translation produced by Protestants (genuine Christians) will inevitably display errors, and is inevitably inferior to the Originals. But every translation produced by genuine Christians is still the Word of God, even in imperfect translation, and no one has the right to condemn, abhor, or forsake such translations.

They come then to their third and most applicable example, the reception of the Septuagint (the "translation of the seventy") by the early church. Because this example is more pertinent, they develop it at greater length. Remember that the translators have already written above about the LXX, and have rightly distinguished it from the later revisions of the LXX produced by Aquila and others. They have made the point above that the later revisions were probably much better translations. But it was the Septuagint proper that had been initially received in the church. More important, it was the Septuagint proper that had been endorsed and quoted by the Apostles. They have suggested above that surely the Apostles of all men knew that the Septuagint was seriously deficient in much of its textual basis, and in much of its translation method. It was textually different from the original Hebrew in many places, and it was a poor translation of the Hebrew in many others. But the Apostles did not condemn it. As they note, "The translation of the *Seventy* dissenteth from the Original in many places, neither doeth 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 doe 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 the appellation and name of the word of God." The LLX was demonstrably inferior to the Originals, and even demonstrably inferior to later revisions of the LXX. But even so, the Apostles did not condemn it; rather, they used and endorsed it (commending it to the church by their example of using it). Why? Because all English translations, despite their flaws, must still be considered the Word of God. All English translations are worthy of this title, and the respect it commands.

The Objection From The Fallacy Of Origins

The translators have dealt with the Catholic objection that their revision of the Bishop's Bible shows that the previous Protestant versions were in error, and thus that no English translation should be considered the Word of God. The translators have answered with a resounding, "No." Translation is always flawed, but it is always still the word of God. They then take up a second objection from the Catholics. The Catholics had claimed that the reason they disallowed (and even sometimes burnt) all English translation wasn't just because they were against the necessarily flawed translation of the holy book into the base English language, but also because the ones who have produced these translations were

themselves heretics (i.e., Protestants), and a good book cannot come from a bad source. The translators disagree on two fronts. First, they don't consider Protestants heretics, and they think that the Catholic cry of "heresy" has about as much weight to it as the empty Catholic claim to the title, "Catholic." But second, and more importantly, they don't think that a translation work should be judged bad just because its authors are so judged. In fact, they think such a notion ridiculous, and completely out of line with the theology of the Church Fathers. No church father (divinity) ever taught them so. "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) wee marvel what divinity taught them so."

They then provide several examples from the church fathers to show that translations should be judged on the merits of the end product, not be the theology of their authors. First, they quote Tertullian, "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." Tertullian is speaking in his "Prescription Against Heretics" about what happens when good people go bad. For example, when a Bishop or even a martyr goes into heresy, do we then judge everything they had said as bad? Or do we now consider all that he says good because it comes from a good source? Do we judge the teaching by the person, or do we judge the person by the teaching? "But what if a bishop, if a deacon, if a widow, if a virgin, if a doctor, if even a martyr, have fallen from the rule (of faith), will heresies on that account appear to possess the truth? Do we prove the faith by the persons, or the persons by the faith?"[47] Clearly, Tertullian would judge a translation by its own merits, not its source.

Second, they marshal the great Augustine to their response. "Also S. *Augustine* was of an other 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. *Augustines* third booke *De doctrinâ Christianâ*." In his third book, "On Christian Doctrine," Augustine had done the unthinkable (in Catholic eyes); he had commended and used a book written by a heretic. Tychonius was a Donatists,[48]who had written a series of "rules" for biblical interpretation. Despite disapproving of its author as a heretic, Augustine felt that much of the "rules" could be helpful, and useful if employed with caution. Likewise, a translation should be judged on its merits, not its source.

Finally, the refer (in brief) to Origin, and the early church, and their reception of the Jewish revisions of the LXX. "To be short, *Origen*, and the whole Church of God for certain hundred years, were of an other 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

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[47] See the whole treatise at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.v.iii.iii.html

[48] Both the Catholics and the translators held the general opinion that the Donatists were heretics, though that view has been much nuanced today, and it is generally agreed today that they should be considered only schismatics rather than heretics proper.

them 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." They note that Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion were unchristian Jews, who had a decided theological bias in their translations of the Hebrew text into Greek.[49] However, their translations were nonetheless used and endorsed by the early church. Origen had in fact, according to the sources, printed a Bible called the "Hexepla," which had printed the Hebrew text of the OT, a transliteration of the Hebrew into Greek letters, a woodenly literal translation of the Hebrew into Greek, the standard Septuagint proper, and each of these Jewish translations. Far from condemning these translations into Greek because of the mistaken theology of the authors, they had each historically been "set forth openly to be considered and perused by all." Likewise with English translations. Even if the theology of the authors were heretical, this is no reason to condemn the product. A translation should by judged by its merits, not its source. With this they conclude the second Catholic objection, "But we weary the unlearned, who need not know so much, and trouble the learned, who know it already."

The Objection From Continual Changing And Correcting

Finally, they come to answer the last and final objection, the Catholic complaint that the Protestants are so often revising, changing, and correcting their English Bibles. Thus they note, "Yet before we end, we must answer a third cavil [complaint] and objection of theirs against us, for altering and amending our Translations so oft; wherein truly they deal hardly, and strangely with us." One would think that Tyndale would be enough. Or that, once Coverdale had printed an entire English Bible, they could leave well enough alone. Or that once the Geneva had become so popular, it would have stabilized. But, in fact, there had been ten entirely new English versions or heavy revisions of the Bible between Tyndale and the KJV, and that's not counting the numerous revisions of each.[50] Daniell notes that from the time the Bishop's Bible had appeared in 1568 to 1616, the Bishop's Bible alone had gone through forty different editions,[51] and many of these were so different from one another that they could more properly be considered entirely new translations.[52] From 1564 to 1616, there had been produced of the Geneva Bible no less than "142 different editions – not just reprintings: different editions – in three parallel basic states."[53] He also notes that one of the standard catalogues of printed versions of the English Bible shows well over 1500 different editions of the Bible, or parts of it, printed between 1525 and 1640.[54]

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[49] See above on Aquila's anti-Christian bias.
[50] See Daniell, "The Bible in English" pg. 126. Daniel list 35 translations of all or parts of the Bible made between Tyndale and the KJV on pages 844-845.
[51] Daniell, "The Bible in English" pg. 129.
[52] See even Norton, "*Textual History*" pg. 35, fn 7, who explains that his previously published statements that this huge diversity between the Bishop's editions didn't exist is simply wrong. He is to be admired for correcting his errors. The Translators would be proud.
[53] Daniell, "The Bible in English" pg. 129.
[54] Daniell, "The Bible in English" pg. 120.

The Catholic objection was grounded in a historical reality. The problem was what they had concluded from it. They had concluded (note the first objection above) that such repeated revision demanded the condemnation of all such "flawed" Bibles that clearly needed such revision – but this was a sentiment the translators would not allow. The translators essentially answer the objection itself in a single statement. Sons of the Truth must trample on the work of themselves and others when truth demands it, and so constant and continual revision is not a fault, but a virtue. "For to whom ever 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?" Then they spend much more space to note that such an objection from the Catholics is actually an empty complaint; a red herring. It is a kind of hypocrisy; there has been precisely the same kind of revision of the Catholic versions of the Latin Vulgate.

To answer the objection directly, they marshal the example of Augustine, who had encouraged Jerome to, "proceed and correct and revise that work of yours." Further, Augustine also, at the end of his life, published his, "retractions," a whole long list of things he had once said that the wisdom of a long life of Scriptural study had led him to realize he was wrong about. And he acknowledged that it was a greater wisdom to realize faults and correct them than to pretend one doesn't have them. "Saint *Augustine* was not afraid to exhort S. *Jerome* to a *Palinodia* or recantation; the same S. *Augustine* was not ashamed to retractat, we might say revoke, many things that had passed him, and doth even glory that he seeth his infirmities." Thus they believe that continually correcting and amending English translations is not a fault, but a virture. "If we will be sonnes of the Trueth, we must consider what it speaketh, and trample upon our owne credit, yea, and upon other mens too, if either be any way an hinderance to it."

Having answered the objection proper, they now explain how deeply hypocritical the claim really is. "This to the cause: then to the persons we say, that of all men they ought to bee most silent in this case. For what varieties have they, and what alterations have they made, not onely of their Service bookes, Portesses and Breviaries, but also of their *Latine* Translation?" They then proceed to give numerous examples from the ancient fathers of revision of the Catholic liturgy. Following this survey of the past, they note, "Neither was there this chopping and changing in the more ancient times onely, but also of late…" and proceed to detail even numerous contempory revisions of the Latin liturgy. But it is specifically against the numerous and very different translations of Scripture that the Catholics are objecting, so they expand, "But the difference that appeareth betweene our Translations, and our often correcting of them, is the thing that wee are specially charged with; let us see therefore whether they themselves bee without fault this way, (if it be to be counted a fault, to correct) and whether they bee fit men to throw stones at us: *O tandem major parcas insane minori*: they that are lesse sound themselves, ought not to object infirmities to others." Then follows a long list of revisions that have been made to the Latin Vulgate. Valla had begun (though not finished) a revision. His work had inspired Erasmus to produce his own revision of the Latin Vulgate, which was the Latin text he printed with each edition of his Greek text, noting that the Greek text could be used to support his revisions.[55] Further, while some Catholics (primarily Stunica and Lee) had objected to the

[55] See in the essay proper for an explanation that Erasmus' own goal in his *Novum Testamentum* was the Latin text, and his Greek text was only a secondary by product. The

revision by Erasmus, Pope Leo the tenth had fully endorsed it by a letter of endorsement and even a Papal bull that bore (to the Catholics) Apostolic authority. "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 Apostolike Letter & Bull…" Not only this, but the pope was so impressed with the work of Erasmus in correcting the Vulgate New Testament, that he had commissioned Paginus to accomplish in a similar vein the same work for the Old Testament, for, "the same *Leo* exhorted *Pagnin* to translate the whole Bible, and bare whatsoever charges was necessary for the worke…"
The Vulgate has been repeatedly changed. "Surely, as the Apostle reasoneth to the *Hebrewes*, that *if the former Law and Testament had bene sufficient, there had beene no need of the latter*: so we may say, that if the olde vulgar had bene at all points allowable, to small purpose had labour and charges bene undergone, about framing of a new."

Should a Catholic object that an independent Pope didn't have the right to allow such revision, they explain even several authors of the Council of Trent had endorsed them. "If they say, it was one Popes private opinion, and that he consulted onely himselfe; then wee are able to goe further with them, and to averre, that more of their chiefe men of all sorts, even their owne *Trent*-champions *Paiva & Vega*, and their owne Inquisitors, *Hieronymus ab Oleastro*, and their own Bishop *Isidorus Clarius*, and their owne Cardinall *Thomas à Vio Caietan*, doe either make new Translations themselves, or follow new ones of other mens making, or note the vulgar Interpretor for halting; none of them feare to dissent from him, nor yet to except against him. And call they this an uniforme tenour of text and judgement about the text, so many of their Worthies disclaiming the now received conceit?"

Then they choose to substantiate their case by pointing out (at length) the numerous editions of the Vulgate that are used by contemporary Catholics but which differ among themselves. The Paris edition of the Vulgate which was issued by Robert Estienne (Stephanus)[56] differs from the Lovaine, and both from Hentenius. One Pope even suggested that the variety of different editions of the Latin Bible must have been a work of Satan to cause confusion in the Church, a complaint that the translators aver can be no more true of Protestant versions than Catholic. Thus, all such objections from the Catholic corner to constant and continual revision of the English Bible are only so much hypocrisy. Their absolutists claims simply disagree with the realities of history. "What is to have the faith of our glorious Lord JESUS CHRIST with Yea and Nay, if this be not? Againe, what is sweet harmonie and consent, if this be?"

The translators conclude their response to this final catholic objection with an illustration from Roman history. As they note above, it is not a valid objection, because continual and constant revision is not a fault, it is a virtue. But coming from the Catholic corner, it is utter Hypocrisy. There is a story, repeated numerous times in Plutarch, about a conversation between Demaratus of Corinth and King Philip II of Macedon. Philip was at odds with his wife and son, and had serious domestic failures. But when Demaratus arrived from Greece before him, the King asked with earnestness about how the Greek were behaving among themselves. Demaratus' reply is picked up by the translators, "Much right

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translators of course well understood this fact all-too-often forgotten by contemporary students.

[56] Note that this was the same editor who produced the 1550 edition of the Greek NT that the translators employed.

have you to talk about the harmony of the Greeks when the dearest of your own household feel so towards you!"[57] Or, in the translator's words concluding this objection,

> *"Therefore, as Demaratus of Corinth advised a great King, before he talked of the dissentions among 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.*

Explaining The Purpose And Procedure Of The Work

Having made a strong defense for the validity of their revision of the Bishop's Bible, and having specifically explained and dealt at length with anticipated objections from both Catholic and Protestant corners, the translators now move to the third and final section of their preface. Here they set forth a basic summary of their purpose and procedure in their work.

Notes On Purpose

Under the first, and "summary" heading of this final section, *The purpose of the Translators, with their number, furniture, care, etc.*, the translators set forth a brief recounting of their purpose, principles, and procedures in the work. "But it is high time to leave them [the objections of their Catholic adversaries], and to show in brief what we proposed to our selves, and what course we held in this our perusal and survey of the Bible." The heading title explains four + things they set out to briefly explain. First, their purpose (especially, the above noted dual nature of the work as Translation/Revision); second, the number of translators (they don't list an exact number, but conclude that it was not too many, and not too few); third, their "furniture" (that is, what helps and equipment they were furnished with for their work); fourth, their "care" (that is, the concerns that had caused them to take so long in the work); and finally, "etc.," which probably is a broad way to cover the two notes they will give about specific procedures

First, to their purpose in the work; as noted above, it is a translation from Original Language texts, but is also a revision of the previous English revisions that had gone before, making use also of the versions that had been produced in a variety of other languages. "Truly (good Christian Reader) wee 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[58] 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." They expressly explain that their intent was to produce a politically correct unifying translation. There were two basic

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[57] Translation and citation provided in Rhodes and Lupas, pg. 54.

[58] In the ellipsed section, they explain once again that they do not consider any of the Protestant translations that have preceded them "bad." As they noted above, even the ones they have never seen are good, because all English translations produced by genuine believers are "good." To say otherwise would allow that the Catholic claim that the continual revision of the Protestant Bible's shows the protestant Bibles to be in admitted error, which shows that the Reformation has been feeding the Church of God with gall and whey rather than wine and milk.

Protestant versions that held the market at the time, and they were contending from opposite corners of the Church of England; the Puritans and the common people deeply preferred the Geneva Bible, produced by so many great Reformation scholars. But the Church of England's clergy strongly objected to this version, (and not least of all because of the same notes beloved by the Puritans). Thus, they had produced the "Bishop's Bible," and made it the official Bible of the Church. But this was rejected by the Puritans as a terribly inferior version (and not least because it didn't contain the beloved notes of the Geneva). The battle between these two Bible's (and the ideology they represented) was a constant source of tension to the new King. Thus, James had sought a compromise, and a translation that would unify. The troublesome marginal notes were forbidden, and a revision of the Bishop's Bible was attempted that would end up (probably unintentionally) very near to the Geneva in sense, though different enough to market as a new translation. This would, hopefully, please both sides. This is what the translators refer to when they explain that their purpose was to produce (as a compilation from a survey of previous English versions) "one principal version, not justly to be excepted against." The goal was a unifying translation, that nobody could justly complain about.

The translators then note the selection of the men for the work. They were men humble in their own estimation, but respected as scholars by others. "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 then their own praise." They were not immature students learning the Bible, but mature scholars who knew it well. "Again, they came or were thought to come to the work, not *exercendi causâ* (as one saith) but *exercitati*, that is, learned, not to learn: For the chief overseer [Archbishop Richard Bancroft] 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." Bancroft didn't want the work to be the trial run of young and learning scholars, but the work of scholarship tested by years of experience, and on this criteria he had selected the translators.

Specifically, the translators quote and apply to themselves the approbation of Jerome about his own learning. "Therefore such were thought upon, as could say modestly with Saint *Jerome*, *Et Hebruæum Sermonem ex parte didicimus, & in Latino penè ab ipsis incunabulis &c. detriti sumus. Both we have learned the Hebrew tongue in part, and in the Latine wee have beene exercised almost from our verie cradle*. S. *Jerome* maketh no mention of the *Greeke* tongue, wherein yet hee did excell, because hee translated not the old Testament out of *Greeke*, but out of *Hebrewe*." Jerome didn't mention Greek in his statement, because he was producing a translation of the Hebrew text into Latin. But he explains that he had at least partial understanding of Hebrew,[59] and that he had been born and raised on the Latin language. The translators think the same of themselves (note that

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[59] Their quote of Jerome here comes from his preface to Job, and his letter to *Eustochium* (Epistle 108.26.3). The context is his explanation that Paula was far superior to he in Hebrew. He had partially learned Hebrew, and fought to retain what he had learned. (See ANF 6, pg. 209-210 here http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf206/Page_209.html). He was of course being overly modest, and explains in this same context (pg. 209) the dangers of self-confident pride, which is precisely what the translators are picking up here.

they take his singular "I" and quote it as the plural "we"), and history bears out that they had at least a passing acquaintance with Hebrew (though probably not the expertise of Broughton, who would have brought much greater scholarship to the task), but they especially excelled in the Latin tongue, which they had known from the cradle. They were surely competent for their work.

But as Jerome had noted in the section of his work from which they quote, "self confidence is the worst of teachers." Therefore, they next set forth their utter lack of self-confidence, and instead explain their total confidence in, religious devotion for, and utter dependence on, God the Father. Thus, they explain, "And in what sort did these assemble? In the trust of their own knowledge, or of their sharpeness 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…" They seek not to boast of their learning, requisite as it may have been to be chosen by Bancroft to be a translator, but rather to throw all the praise upon God. They also take up their, "number," as mentioned in the heading. It was, "…not too many, lest one should trouble another; and yet many, lest many things haply might escape them."

They then take up the basic source from which they had translated, and make again a plug for the primacy of the original language texts.[60] They do this with a two-fold argument. First, the original languages have historically been the final court of appeal for doctrinal and textual controversies. Augustine held the original languages as primary, and Jerome felt that Hebrew and Greek manuscripts should take precedence over Latin ones, especially in deciding text-critical questions. "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*)." Their reference here is to Jerome's letter to Lucinius, which had been quoted and invoked in the Catholic, *Decretum Gratiani*, which was considered one of the most important canonical collections in the history of the medieval Cannon Law. Thus, this particular patristic principle had been even bolstered by decree. Jerome had noted, "For as the true text of the old testament can only be tested by a reference to the Hebrew, so the true text of the new requires for its decision an appeal to the Greek."[61] They are likely making another subtle jab at the Catholic objection noted above here. The Catholics allow only Jerome's Vulgate to be used, but Jerome himself noted the priority of the Hebrew and Greek.

The second part of the argument flows from the established priority of the original languages. "If truth be to 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,

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[60] See the section above in the essay proper for a detailed examination of the different editions of the Hebrew OT and Greek NT they made selective use of.

[61] ANF Vol. 6, pg. 206, available here.
http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf206.v.LXXI.html

we set before us to translate, being the tongues wherein God was pleased to speak to his Church by his Prophets and Apostles." St. Augustine and St. Jerome had both spoken about the primacy of the "precedent" or "original" languages, and the translators concur. Translation should be done, at least as much as possible, directly from the original language texts. Though this is not to be pressed so far as to agree with the criticisms of Hugh Broughton against all emendation, noted above. The translators will go on to explain that they felt no compulsion about making use of the LXX and Latin Vulgate, particularly to correct the Hebrew text of the OT at minor points.

They next take up an explanation of their "care," which involves three problems that might be supposed but which their work has avoided. First, the reason they had taken so long to produce the translation, illustrating their work by contrast with the LXX (but noting that they legend of it being produced in 72 days is only legend, not established fact). "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…" Second, their willingness to bring back to the anvil what had been done, when others suggested that it needed correction (note the three-stage revision process explained in the essay proper). They illustrate this with a quote from Jerome about some of his own works being accidentally published before he could correct them. "…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 any thing, but presently it was caught from him, and published, and he could not have leave to mend it…" Third, they explain their reliance upon previous translations in English, which they illustrate with a mention of how Origin made many errors in his commentaries, because has was the pioneer of biblical commentating. "…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." They were protected from each of these problems. They finally protest that they have not been subject to any of these errors, noting, "None of these things: the worke hath not bene hudled up in 72. dayes, but hath cost the workemen, as light as it seemeth, the paines of twise seven times seventie two dayes and more: matters of such weight and consequence are to bee speeded with maturitie: for in a businesse of moment a man feareth not the blame of convenient slacknesse.

As a final note, they say a brief word about some text-critical sources they made use of. They make plain that they were not hesitant or reluctant to make use of the Versional translations into other languages, especially the Greek (LXX and its later revisions), Chaldee (Aramaic Targums), Latin (both Vulgate and Old Latin), and Syriac versions, which they mention especially, as well as more modern translations into Spanish, French, Italian, and German (Dutch). Note the section above on the "KJV OT and the Masoretic Text" for an explanation of how they occasionally emended the Hebrew text using each of these text-critical sources. They also note that they made use of the patristic sources in their text-criticism, referring to the "commentators" (i.e., patristic quotations). Thus, "Neither did wee thinke much[62] to consult the Translators or Commentators, *Chaldee, Hebrewe, Syrian,*

[62] The OED notes this usage of "think much" under definition 13, e, a. "to be reluctant or shy, hesitate *to* do something, to have an objection." In other words, they were not hesitant or reluctant to make use of the Versional and Patristic sources in their textual criticism.

Greeke, or *Latine,* no nor the *Spanish, French, Italian,* or *Dutch*; neither did we disdaine to revise that which we had done, and to bring backe to the anvill 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 the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that pass [to its present state][63] that you see."

Two Specific Notes About Procedure

Having spelled out their purpose and procedure in brief, they now take up two special points in relation to their procedure.[64] Specifically, they explain the "reason" why they did two things which the readers might well quibble with; first, the issue of marginal notes expressing doubt, second, the issue of their liberty with words in translating.

Difficult Translations And Textual Doubts

Under the heading, *Reasons moving us to set diversity of senses in the margin, where there is great probability for each*, the translators take up the issue of their reason for including marginal notes that express translational difficulties and textual doubts, or what they refer to in the heading as "diversity of senses in the margin." They also use the language "differences of readings," and passages of such "difficulty and doubtfulness," pointing to this two-fold element of their marginal notes.

Modern readers of the Bible are so used to the commonplace notes in their Bibles (especially so called "study Bibles") that it is difficult for us to appreciate this section in its historical context, and there are several points of history that should be noted before an exposition of the section can be attempted. There are several forces that have combined to influence the way the translators have handled marginal notes. The Rules that Archbishop Bancroft placed (by the King's authority) upon the translators had expressly forbidden all marginal notes except for two types; those that were absolutely needed to explain obscure words in the original which would be impossible to translate well into English, and those that present "cross references" which would go in the margin. The rules had stated;

> Rule 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."

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[63] OED specifically notes Smith's use in the preface here as an example of the definition for "pass," as "Event, issue, outcome" (under the 3rd noun "pass," "A situation or point in the course of a sequence of events," 2nd definition). Rhodes and Lupas (pg. 82) paraphrase "brought the work to that pass" as, "brought the work to its present state." The point being emphasized is the excellent outcome of their revision work, i.e., the current state of the continuing revision. Note that this is in light of a context about previous revisions, where in the same sentence they note not disdaining to "revise" that which they had done, and the value of "bringing back to the anvil that which we have hammered."

[64] It should be noted that the earlier words about a gap in the literature to not apply to these two final headings. These are the sections typically discussed, and they are often quoted and examined in the literature.

Rule 7 - "Such quotations of places to be marginally set down as shall serve for fit reference of one Scripture to another."

The reason for this restriction of course was the controversial history of the notes in the Geneva Bible, and the King's particular fear that some such notes could inspire an overthrow of the monarchy. Archbishop Bancroft was harshly opposed to the non-conformists theology that the Geneva notes had contained. The entire enterprise of Geneva reeked of a desire to put the control of the Church in the hand of the people, and no one was a more ardent defender than Bancroft of the Church of England ideal that the King alone is rightly the head of the Church. The King, on the other hand, seemed specifically afraid that such notes might lead to an attempted overthrow of the monarchy. In fact, William Barlowe, who was present at the Hampton Conference in 1604 when the suggestion for a new translation was made, pointed out that the first thing the King decreed after agreeing that a new translation was a good idea was that the new Bible should not have marginal notes, "having found in them that were affixed to the Geneva, (which he saw in a Bible given to him by an English lady), some notes very partial, untrue, seditious, and favoring too much of dangerous, and traitorous conceits."[65] The King gave two examples of such notes in the Geneva Bible; the notes on Ex. 1:19,[66] and on II Chron. 15:16.[67] He feared that as simple a thing as a marginal note endorsing treason against a monarch could become the basis for a revolt from an already unsatisfied populace against their new King. Thus, the King wanted no notes, afraid of sedition; and Bancroft wanted no notes, (except for those explaining obscure words), afraid of heresy.

But a third and fourth force was in the mix as well, relating specifically to the well-established practice of placing alternate translations in the margins of Protestant English Bibles. First, there was a general sentiment among some that allowing for multiple translations of a passage allowed a liberty of interpretation to the reader that would ultimately undermine the authority of Scripture. If one isn't sure which way the text should be translated, then one isn't sure what the text means. Some thought that providing "options" in the margin makes the reader, rather than the Bible, the final authority. Of course, the same could be said for notes relating to textual uncertainty, though opposition to these seem less pronounced in the period.

Second, there was a general and related Catholic sentiment that was held against the Protestant doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*. The Catholic view had been that the church (meaning the Pope and his representatives) and the church alone can interpret the Bible; the average man cannot. Protestants since Luther had challenged this notion, arguing that the Scriptures are a higher authority than the Church, and even a "final authority." Thus, there had been regular Catholic decrees against such notes in Catholic versions of the Latin Vulgate. This sentiment, though modified slightly, still held much weight in the Church of England, which hadn't gone as far from their roots as some other Protestants had at this

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[65] Barlow, "Summe" pg. 35.

[66] The note had suggested that when the midwives lied to Pharoh, this was judged ok in God's sight, and thus the king thought it might encourage disobedience to the Monarchy.

[67] The note offered a commendation of Asa for deposing his Mother, but the King felt that this again is to endorse the idea that a monarch can be deposed, which notion should be rejected.

point. The clergy, while denying Papal authority, still felt that they should be the ones to interpret the Bible for the people, and that to allow such freedom to the general reader was a dangerous game that would lead to heresy. The Church of England was still essentially Catholic in their practice at this point. What had changed was that instead of Bishop's being representatives of the Pope, and thus gaining their authority from him, Bishop's were now the representative of the King, the "true head of the Church," and thus gained their authority from him. Both were staunchly opposed to the common man so glibly being allowed to handle and interpret on his own such a holy book. In this context, with all four of these forces at work, to provide marginal notes of any kind (apart from cross-references, which were generally safe) was a practice liable to face great opposition. But the translators have included a number of them in spite of such forces, and they explain in this section the "reasons" why.

A Brief History Of Marginal Notes In Hebrew And Greek Texts

A Brief History Of Marginal Notes In English Bibles

The Types Of Marginal Notes In The 1611 KJV

There are 8,422 marginal notes[68] in the original 1611 KJV, (6,637 OT, 1,018 Apocrypha, 767 NT), and 494 additional ones that were added by the various editors who produced later editions (in 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769). The kind of notes printed in the margin could be divided several different ways. There are three different symbols used to express marginal notes that serve five basic functions. Thus, one could speak of three categories[69] of notes (classifying by symbol or form), or five categories of notes (classifying by basic function).[70] But one should note that they often employ the symbols in a rather inconsistent way, and so categorizing by function seems the best track.

- More Literal Translations
    - These are prefixed by the sign † and then, "*Heb*.," "*Cal*." or "*Gr*." noting a more literal translation of the original languages than was deemed suitable for the text. Scrivener counts 4,111 of these in the Old Testament, (77 of which relate to the Aramaic portions), and 112 in the NT.
- Alternate Translations
    - These are in a sense one part of a larger category of notes dealing with "alternate readings." These are prefixed by double vertical lines || and then, "Or" noting that there is another equally probable way that the text may be translated from that expressed in the text. Scrivener counts 2,156 of these in the OT, and 582 in the NT.
- Textual Variants / Alternate Textual Readings
    - These are also in a sense a smaller subcategory of "alternate readings" like the alternate translations above. They are likewise typically prefixed by double vertical lines || and then, "Or" noting that there is a textual variant in

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[68] See Norton "*Textual History*" pg. 163, and Scrivener, "*Authorized Edition*" pg. 40-60. Unless otherwise noted, the numbers listed in this section come from Scrivener's work.
[69] This is how Norton categorizes them. See Norton, "*Textual History*" pg. 49.
[70] Scrivener, "*Authorized Edition*" pg. 41.

the passage, and an equally probable textual form that may better represent the wording of the original autographs. There are 67 of these in the OT (31 of which express the Masorah textual doubts, see above on the KJV OT), and 37 in the New (15 more were added by the later editors in 1762 and 1769).

- Miscellaneous information
    - There are three basic kinds of information given in this type of note. In the OT, 63 notes give the meaning of Proper names; 240 provide harmonizing information with a parallel text or explanations. In the NT, 35 marginal notes provide miscellaneous information relating to explanations or brief exposition.
- Cross References
    - These are prefixed with an asterisk (*) and then an abbreviated Scripture reference judged to be relevant to the present context. Scrivener completely redid these for the Cambridge Paragraph Bible, noting that most of those included in the 1611 were essentially worthless for the English reader, as they often refer to the chapter and verse divisions of the Latin Vulgate, which the translators regularly referred to, rather than the chapter and verse divisions of the English Bible they were revising. English chapter and verse divisions are often significantly different than those of the English Bibles. But Latin was the primary language of the translators, and it was in the Latin Vulgate primarily that they read their Bibles.

Examples Of Marginal Notes In The 1611 Referring to Textual Variants

While the KJV translators in fact made textual choices about hundreds of textual variants in order to create the text they translated, in most cases they made this choice without notice. However, in a few of those places, they noted textual variants in the margins, and thus the reader can get a glimpse of their textual choices by examining their marginal notes. Scrivener suggests that there are at least 37 marginal notes in the New Testament of the 1611 KJV that were intended to alert the reader to places where they were uncertain about the reading of the original Greek text.[71] What is amazing about this number is not how small it is, considering the hundreds of such choices that they made, but how large. The rules listed for the translators (presented below) expressly forbid any marginal notes except those relating to alternate translations or more literal renderings of Hebrew and Greek. One of the major impetuses for King James' commissioning of a new translation was in fact his hatred of the marginal notes of Geneva. Thus, it is somewhat surprising that even these few managed to "slip through" without his notice. As we have suggested, (and as Scrivener explains at length), the translators did not directly use any Greek New Testament manuscripts, or any one printed Greek text, but rather made use of several printed editions of the Greek New Testament, each of which differed from the others at points, and each of which included at least some notes about textual variants in the manuscript record known then. Also, there were occasional notes in the Bishop's Bible that had preceded them that spelled out some textual variants. They did not follow any one of these texts exactly. Yet even with this variety of meager sources for their information,

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[71] Scrivener, "Authorized Edition," pg. 56. These have been more fully dealt with in the essay above.

and the restraints placed upon them by King James, they still felt compelled to alert the reader in a number of places where they were not certain about the reading of the original text. These represent only a small fraction of the places they were uncertain about the text (as comparison with John Bois' notes about the translation, explained below, would reveal.) We will briefly examine a handful of these passages here to serve as illustrations.

Matt. 26:26 – blessed it or gave thanks?

The text of the KJV 1611 reads, "*Jesus took bread and blessed it*." But the KJV translators added the marginal note that reads, "*Many Greek copies have, gave thanks*." The majority of Greek manuscripts read "and gave thanks," and so Robinson's majority text has that reading here. Beza had a note that explained that "gave thanks" was read by most manuscripts, while Erasmus and Stephanus read "blessed." The KJV chose the minority reading, and thus the TR disagrees at this point with the vast majority of Greek witnesses. Which was originally written by Matthew? The KJV translators were not sure, and they informed us of their doubts with their marginal note.

Luke 2:38 – Jerusalem or Israel?

In the text of the KJV 1611, the last words of verse 38 are "*in Jerusalem*." In the Margin, the translators wrote, "*or, Israel*." The reading, "in Israel" is read by only one Greek manuscript (1071, a 12 century miniscule), and a handful of Latin and Versional witnesses. The translators were probably only aware of the variant through the Latin. Every Greek manuscript known except one reads "in Jerusalem." Once again, it is evident that the KJV translators had a meager amount of evidence available to them, but even with what little evidence they had, they noted for the reader that a single variant in a single manuscript was enough to make them uncertain, and this was a passage where they weren't sure what the original said. Which was original? They were not sure.

Luke 10:22 – Did Jesus turn to His disciples or not?

In the text of the 1611, verse 22 begins, "*All things are delivered to me of my father*." In the marginal note, the KJV translators wrote "*Many ancient copies add these words, And turning to the disciples he said*." The KJV translators weren't sure whether this phrase "and turning to his disciples he said" should be at the beginning of the verse or not in the verse at all. Stephan's Greek text had them, and explained that most Greek manuscripts contained the words. Yet the KJV translators choose not to include them in their text. According to the apparatuses of NA 28 and CNTTS, the phrase is absent from only P45.75, ℵ, B, D, L, X, 070, f1 and f13, 33, 579, 700, 892, 1241, 1424, 2542, and some Latin and Syriac manuscripts. The phrase is present in some form in A, C, K, N, W, 0115, Γ, Δ, Θ, Ω, Ξ, E07, G11, K017, 565, as well as the Byzantine Manuscripts which make up the greatest number by far of the Greek manuscripts. (Thus Robinson has included the phrase in his majority text.) Note here that the KJV translators made a textual decision based on textual critical principles (though they never explained exactly what reasons they had for which reading they chose), and decided to not include the phrase, even though the vast majority of the later manuscripts had it, when a few *earlier* witnesses didn't have them. This is precisely one of the textual critical principles that modern textual critics follow, and thus the NA28 text does not have the phrase, because early witnesses don't have them, and because the internal evidence is against them.[72]

Luke 17:36 – Did Luke write this verse or not?

The KJV 1611 has this verse in the text, which reads, "*Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken, and the other left*." Yet the KJV translators explain in a marginal note, *"This, 36. verse*

[72] See discussion in Metzger, "*Textual Commentary*," pg. 152.

is wanting in most of the Greek copies." Did Luke write this verse or not? The KJV translators were not sure. According to the CNTTS apparatus, the verse is only found in D05, 030, 13, 124, 346, 579, 700, 1071, and f13 (a group of about a dozen manuscripts all apparently copied from the same exemplar – none of them contain the whole verse, but only part of the wording). Among this small handful of manuscripts which have the verse, the verse exist in *four different forms*. The vast majority of manuscripts do not contain the verse in this place at all, in any form. The Byzantine manuscripts do not contain the verse at all, and so Robinson does not include the verse in his majority text, and notes it as never having been part of the Byzantine textform.[73] The KJV translators didn't know at the time how right they were when they said the verse was completely missing from most of the Greek copies. Remember that not every manuscript contains the gospel of Luke (most don't), and of those that do, not every manuscript of Luke is complete enough to have this section of chapter 17. But of those manuscripts that do read in this section of Luke, (if the work of Metzger, and the NA 28 apparatus and the CNTTS apparatus are correct at this point), then the verse is entirely missing, for example, from Papyri manuscripts P2, P3, P42, P64, P69, P75, P111, Uncial Manuscripts 01, 02, 03, 04, 07, 09, 011, 013, 017, 019, 021, 024, 026, 028, 030, 032, 034, 036, 039, 041, 044, 045, 053, 063, 070, 078, 079, 0102, 0108, 0115, 0135, 0147, 0155, 0171, 0177, 0181, 0182, 0211, 0233, 0239, 0250, 0253, 0265, 0266, 0267, 0279, 0288, 0291, 0303, 0307, 0312, Miniscule manuscripts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 16, 18, 22, 26, 31, 33, 34, 35, 38, 45, 57, 61, 69, 80, 83, 85, 89, 106, 109, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 124, 126, 135, 141, 147, 148, 149, 152, 153, 154, 174, 175, 176, 178, 179, 180, 184, 185, 189, 191, 199, 201, 205, 209, 218, 222, 265, 273, 296, 330, 335, 339, 346, 348, 349, 365, 367, 372, 382, 427, 472, 506, 513, 522, 537, 544, 545, 555, 560, 561, 565, 579, 582, 664, 676, 677, 700, 706, 713, 752, 757, 799, 807, 824, 826, 827, 828, 833, 841, 972, 891, 922, 954, 962, 979, 983, 989, 992, 999, 1003, 1009, 1010, 1014, 1021, 1068, 1071, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1093, 1113, 1128, 1149, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1195, 1210, 1216, 1228, 1241, 1278, 1279, 1313, 1315, 1319, 1328, 1331, 1342, 1346, 1359, 1421, 1424, 1451, 1463, 1482, 1490, 1503, 1509, 1555, 1561, 1563, 1573, 1574, 1579, 1582, 1593, 1609, 1630, 1645, 1647, 1654, 1668, 1675, 1692, 1704, 1780, 1823, 1826, 2127, 2136, 2174, 2193, 2200, 2201, 2223, 2362, 2374, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2407, 2411, 2474, 2495, 2516, 2523, 2554, 2561, 2585, 2588, 2607, 2615, 2680, 2713, 2718, 2737, 2766, 2774, 2790, 2794, 2860, and 2886. And many others.[74] Comfort notes concerning the variant that "Although it is possible that the verse could have been omitted through *homoeoteleuton*, it is hardly possible that the mistake would have occurred in so many manuscripts of such great diversity. Therefore, it is far more likely that the verse is a scribal interpolation borrowed from Matt. 24:40, with harmonization to the style of Luke 17:35. Though the verse is not present in TR [by which he means Stephanus, where it is missing, since it is in Scrivener's reconstructed text in 1884], it was included in KJV (perhaps under the influence of the Latin Vulgate), NKJV, and HCSB, which in deference to the KJV has a pattern of including verses that are omitted by all other modern versions."[75] Of the over 1700 manuscripts which contain this section of Luke, the verse appears to be found in less than 20 manuscripts, over half of them (those of family 13) have a form very different from the KJV, and in the remaining 8, the verse is found in 4 different forms, only one of which became the KJV/TR form. Was the verse original? The KJV translators were not sure.

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[73] Robinson, Maurice, "*The New Testament*" (preface), pg. i., footnote 1.

[74] The *Text Und Textwert* volume may be consulted for the comprehensive list, which I wont type out here. This list is simply of those that have been entered already into the CNTTS apparatus that have this portion of Luke, which represent around 1/5 of the manuscripts of Luke that serve as great representatives of the whole.

[75] Comfort, "Text and Translation Commentary" pg. 221.

John 18:13 – Did John put Christ before Caiaphas in verse 13 or verse 24?

The text of the KJV 1611 in John 18:13 reads "*And led him away to Annas first, (for he was the father in law to Caiaphas) which was the high priest that same year*." The Marginal note uses the double line sigla to explain that verse 13 is expanded to contain the statement of verse 24 reading *"and Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas the high priest, ver. 24."* Apparently a note in the bishops Bible had made them aware of this variant.[76] There is one Greek manuscript (1195, copied in A.D. 1123) that had placed verse 24 after verse 13. There are also several Syriac witnesses that had done the same. In a similar vein, ms 225 had placed verse 24 in the middle of verse 13. Comfort explains what the scribes who had made these changes were apparently wrestling with. "The reason for this rearrangement of verses is that the usual sequence of verses has been problematic for many readers in that 18:13 speaks of Jesus being brought to Annas before Jesus is questioned, and then 18:24 speaks of Jesus being brought before Caiaphas with no mention of any subsequent trial. To confuse matters, the reader is not really sure who the high priest is, Annas or Caiaphas – for both are called such: Caiaphas (18:13, 24) and Annas (18:15, 19, 22)."[77] A few scribes in the 12th century apparently sensed a difficulty with the text, and felt the need to correct what they perceived as a problem. Comfort explains that the problem was never more than apparent, since "Annas had been deposed as the Jewish high priest by the Romans in A.D. 15, but he still exerted great influence over the ruling high priest, his son in law, Caiaphas. And he still retained the title, 'high priest' as an emeritus title. Very likely, Annas had asked to interrogate Jesus and was given the first rights to do so (see 18:19-23). Then Jesus was tried by Caiaphas, the acting high priest. Thus, there is no real need to rearrange the verses."[78] Once again, we have a situation where even just *one Greek witnesses* (and a handful of Syriac witnesses, which they may not even have known about) was enough to make the KJV translators less than certain about the original text, and so they honestly alerted the reader through their marginal note about their doubt. Such a procedure, followed today, if informed by the greater mass of data available now, would result in quite a few more such notes, and would essentially be the same as the NA28 apparatus, alerting the reader to the various textual variants present in the manuscript record. Which was original? Even one variant in one Greek witness was enough to make the KJV Translators unsure.

Acts 13:18 – Did God suffer their manners, or bear and feed them?

The text of the KJV 1611 reads "and about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness." The Marginal note once again introduces some doubt by the KJV translators, noting, "*Gr.* ετροποφοπησεν *perhaps for* ετροφοφορησεν *as a nurse beareth or feedeth her childe, Deut. 1:31. 2 macc 7.27, according to the Sept. and S. Chrysost.*"

Here we have a very interesting case concerning Paul's reference to the OT as recorded by Luke. Paul tells part of Israel's story, and mentions the part of the story that is recorded in Deut. 1:31. The Hebrew text there is that God "יִשָּׂא" with them in the wilderness. But when that Hebrew word got translated into the Greek of the Septuagint, it could be translated in two different ways, one meaning "to carry" or "bear up," and the other meaning, "to bear with/ put up with" or "suffer." There is only 1 letter difference between the two different words in Greek. Interestingly, there are today LXX manuscripts which contain both readings. However, the LXX available to the KJV translators apparently had only the "bear up/carry" reading, while the Greek texts before them had the "bear with/suffer" reading.[79] They weren't sure whether to follow the Greek texts of Acts

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[76] Scrivener, pg. 58.

[77] Comfort, Textual Commentary, pg 316.

[78] Comfort, textual commentary, pg 316-317.

[79] See Stephanus, Erasmus, and Scrivener.

they had, or to correct them on the basis of the LXX translation of the Deuteronomy passage which they had. (They also note the same translation difficulty with the Apocrypha of 2 Maccabess 7:27.) In this case, an LXX reading of the OT passage that was different than the text of Acts as they had it made them less than certain about which text Luke had actually quoted. So, they noted their uncertainty in the margin. In this case, it would appear from their note that they didn't even realize that there were different Greek manuscripts that had the same variant. Yet scribes had often encountered the same question as the copied the text of Acts, and so today, we have manuscripts of Acts that contain both readings, as scribes corrected the text to one reading or the other, and its something of a 50/50 shot to know which one Luke wrote.[80] Which one did Luke write? Which was Original? In this case, the LXX made the KJV translators admit they were not sure.

Acts 25:6 – Did Paul tarry more than 10 days, or no more than 8 or 10 days?

The text of the KJV 1611 reads in the first part of the verse "And when he had tarried among them more than ten days…" The Marginal note again notes the translators uncertainty by noting, "*Or, as some copies reade, no more than 8 or 10 dayes*." While the TR follows the majority of manuscripts here, the KJV translators were aware through Beza's note that some early manuscripts read "no more than 8 or 10 days" and those few early manuscripts were enough to make them unsure, and so note their doubt in the margin. Which was original? They were not sure.

However, neither these marginal notes about textual variants (nor the others not listed here) nor the hundreds of variants where it is clear the translators made some decision about textual variants to form their new text (the result of their choices) should be taken as an indication that they were intending to be terribly accurate in the form of the original language text they translated. Far from it. They were textual critics only in the amateur way that most translators even today are. And it wasn't their purpose to publish a new Greek text (which is why they never published the Greek text behind the KJV NT, which never existed in print until 1881), even though they did create one. In the most accurate sense there were not really even translators. They were revisers of an English Bible more than they were translators, and the combination of textual variants that make up the original language texts of the KJV (both OT and NT) are less often the result of careful consideration of the variant readings known to them to determine which was most likely to be original, and are more often the result of them picking one or another reading from the various English translations they were revising which had in turn a variety of different original language bases.[81]

The Translator's Defense Of Marginal Notes

The translators first raise the objection noted above that providing alternate translations in the margins would threaten the authority of Scripture. The understanding on the surface seems reasonable. If the reader can "choose" translations, then the Bible isn't really the final authority – right? If we give the reader a choice, then he becomes the authority – right? Doesn't this shake the authority of Scripture? "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." They

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[80] See discussion of the difficulties on both sides in Comfort, pg. 380-381, and Metzger, pg. 405-406.

[81] See Scrivener, "The New Testament in Greek" pg. viii.

then decidedly disagree. “But we hold their judgment not to be so be so sound in this point.” They then explain that this is the absolutists framework they have already rejected simply in different dress. To suppose that the reader must be equally certain about every part of the biblical text is the same “all or nothing” approach they had previously objected to. They want their translation to present uncertainty at some points for a simple reason – the text is uncertain at some points. They point out that historically, Christianity has maintained that the Bible speaks clearly in matters of faith and Christian practice (hope, charity, and salvation). Thus, salvation is clearly witnesses to in scripture. But the corollary some would build from this, that since the Bible is all equally the Word of God, we must have equal certainty about it in every place, does not follow in their minds. They marshal Augustine and Chrysostom to make the point. “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*.” The “necessary” things (the essentials, the doctrinal points important to “salvation”) are clearly “manifest” and “plainly set down.”

Their next sentence can appear somewhat convoluted, and this is likely intentionally so. It is easily one of the most complex sentences in the entire Preface.[82] It argues against the corollary being drawn from the first section. The necessary things are plainly manifest, but “...it cannot be dissembled that…it hath pleased God…here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness…that fear would better beseem us than confidence…[*viz*., we thus we are certain only of uncertainty, and say, with St. Augustine that] it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, then to strive about those things that are uncertain.”

The essentials of the faith are not in dispute due to translational and textual uncertainty. But this does not mean that all of Scripture is without such uncertainty. In fact God has scattered throughout Scripture passages that are “difficult.” Some Passages are hard to interpret or translate with any conviction. Thus, translation can at times feel like a toss of a coin between various options. Further, God has allowed there to be here and there scattered passages of “doubtfulness.” Here they are likely referring to the form of the original text being in dispute at points. They are well aware that there are textual variants where the precise wording of the originals is in some dispute. God has allowed these things to be so, and this “cannot be dissembled [hidden].” They refuse to conceal this fact. The structure of the sentence may be roughly phrased as follows;

> “Yet for all that
> <u>it cannot be dissembled [concealed],</u>
> <u>that</u>
>
> - partly to exercise and whet our wits,
> - partly to wean the curious from loathing of them for their every-where-plainness,
> - partly also to stir up our devotion to crave the assistance of Gods spirit by prayer, and
> - lastly, that we might

[82] Rhodes and Lupas paraphrase it into three separate sentences, some of which are still on their own rather complex.

- 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 bee,
    - being to seek in many things our selves,

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 fearefulness
would better beseem us than
confidence,

and if we will resolve [i.e., make a firm choice],
to resolve upon modesty [i.e., we choose to be uncertain]
with *S. Augustine*, (though not in this same case altogether, yet upon the same ground) *Melius est dubitare de occultis, quàm litigare de incertis*, it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, then to strive about those things that are uncertain."

There are three basic parts to the sentence. First, *why* God has done what he did, second, *what* He did, third, the *results* of Him having done what he did. What did he do? He scattered "words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness" throughout Scripture. Note that they refer specifically both to individual words, as well as to sentences. It is not just an occasional word about which they are unsure. Sometimes it is whole sentences. They immediately qualify that none of these translational difficulties or textual doubts about words and sentences affect doctrine or salvation, but are about "matters of less moment." But they refuse to hide the fact that he did this. It "cannot be dissembled" [hidden or concealed]. Interestingly, while Bancroft's rules for the translators (see #6 and #7

quoted above) would seem to prohibit this practice, they have somewhat more loosely interpreted his rules. Thus, when they summarized them to the Synod of Dort in 1618 (in a paraphrased form),[83] several of the translators explained them as, "Secondly, no notes were to be placed in the margin, but only parallel passages to be noted. Thirdly, where a Hebrew or Greek word admits two meanings of a suitable kind, the one was to be expressed in the text, the other in the margin. The same to be done where a different reading [textual variant] was found in good copies [manuscripts]."[84] While technically breaking the letter of the law concerning their rules by adding textual variants, they have decided to broadly interpret the rules to allow it in at least some rare cases. Thus, it is clear that in their statements in this section of the preface they have in mind both translational difficulties and textual doubts, and that this is what they refer to by passages of "difficulty" and "doubtfulness."

But why did God do this? They provide four purpose clauses explaining partial reasons to explain why God has so acted. First, "to exercise and whet our wits." God gave us brains, and meant for us to use them. Difficulties in text and translation can stir up the curious and give them a desire to dig deeper into Scripture. Second, to, "wean the curious from loathing of them for their every-where-plainness." Curious is used in its obsolete sense[85] here meaning, "expert." God doesn't want the sophisticated "experts" to loathe the Scriptures for being too simplistic and plain,[86] so he has weaned them from this folly by placing such difficulties and doubts within them. Third, to "stir up our devotion to crave the assistance of Gods Spirit by prayer." Difficulties and doubts in the text of Scripture force us to rely on God's Spirit in prayer, rather than our own abilities of understanding.

The fourth purpose clause is somewhat more complex. Fourth (and "lastly"), God did this to humble us. They express this purpose as showing itself in two practical results, which are intended to balance against each other.[87] The first is that because of such difficulties in Scripture, we must humble ourselves and seek help from others by discussing Scripture with them. That is, that we might, "be forward to seek aid of our brethren by conference." No one should interpret the Bible in isolation from the community of faith. In fact, sometimes we even need scholars. And we must discuss Scripture, not just read and

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[83] In this report, they distilled the fifteen rules under seven basic "summaries."

[84] Pollard, "Records" pg. 339. It should be noted that they know these "good copies" almost exclusively through the notes of Beza's 1598 edition for the NT, and Tremellius's Latin text of the OT, and not from any acquaintance with the manuscripts themselves. Their notes typically simply repeat information found in these sources.

[85] See OED Adjective I,4.

[86] One might note the objections of Augustine to Christianity early in his life before his conversion that he couldn't be a Christian because her Scriptures were too simplistic. He later came to marvel at them. His story may have brought to mind the quote at the end of the sentence, thought they don't make this connection explicit.

[87] Note that the paraphrase of Rhodes and Lupas has missed this point, and has subsumed the second clauses as a parenthesis, instead of allowing it to logically balance against the first. This is to fail to note their use of 1st and 3rd person here. "We" scholars must "seek aid" even of our own guild, verses "those" (3rd person) who are unlearned, whom we must "never scorn" since our own ignorance prevents us from scorning. It is a beautifully conceptually balanced statement.

preach it (they have alluded to this in the first section of the preface as well, referring to the discussions of "synods"). Thus, students need help, even from scholars and scholarly discussion. But the second clause balances this thought. The second practical result of this fourth purpose is to humble scholars that, "we might…never scorn those that be not in all respects so complete as they should be, being to seek in many things our selves." That is, scholars can't look down on those unlearned (who are "not in all respects so complete as they should be") because the difficulties of Scripture which they cannot definitively solve constantly remind them that scholars too still need "to seek in many things ourselves."

Having taken up the *what* and the *why* of what God indisputably did, they now explain the *results* of what He did. The entire last section of the sentence, beginning with "that fearfulness…," explains the end result of God's action, and their required response to it, which is the whole point of the sentence. The result of God's action is, "that fearfulness would better beseem us than confidence." In places of translational difficulty and textual doubt, they refuse to speak with confidence. Having a text, without a margin, might give the appearance that they had a certainty about the text that they didn't have, and they want to be especially careful not to miscommunicate at this point. The truth is, they weren't sure in many places which reading or translation to adopt. As their heading states, "there is good probability for each." Thus, they will not make a firm choice between the two. In fact, "if we will resolve [make a firm choice]," they will make only one such choice; "to resolve upon modesty…" that is, to choose to remain uncertain.

They take as a model in this regard St. Augustine, and in fact, as they "resolve" to be uncertain, they resolve so, "with St. Augustine." They provide a quote from his unfinished work, "*On the literal interpretation of Genesis*," though noting that he is speaking in a different context (difficult interpretation of a hard passage, not difficult translation or textual variation). Nevertheless, he speaks, "upon the same ground," so they quote him,[88] and translate his words, with which they so agree, "it is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, then to strive about those things that are uncertain." About some passages they are not sure of the text or the translation, and they, in accordance with Augustine, explicitly want their marginal notes to "make doubt" about such places.

They then provide two illustrations. It is interesting to note the kind of illustrations they have chosen. It is clear by their statements in this sentence, as well as the later sentences under this heading, that they refer primarily to alternate readings, both of textual and translational doubt. Their summary to the Synod of Dort makes this even more clear. They refer specifically in the sentence just looked at to words and "sentences." But in the two illustrations they will provide of their practice, they mention only individual words, and only of the kind that might be regarded as the least significant of their notes. It is easy to get the impression that they are intentionally downplaying the scope of their marginal doubts. This is a marvelous Semitic tactic, given the forces they struggled against mentioned above. Establishing agreement about the lesser implicitly brings acceptance of the greater.

Their first illustration is from the phenomenon known as "*hapax legomenon*," or "words that be used only once." They print the Greek phrase in the margin here. While

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[88] Slightly inaccurately – See Rhodes and Lupas pg. 58 n. 175.

counts vary slightly by method and text,[89] there are something like 686 of these in the Greek NT, and some 1,500 of them in the Hebrew OT (though only about 400 of these Hebrew words don't have some relation to one another). These words pose a special difficulty for translators, because they typically determine what a word means by examining how it is used in different context, by different authors. When a word occurs only once, we have no other examples of its usage in the text (which the translators refer to as the word, "having neither brother nor neighbor"). Interestingly, these words were a much greater challenge to Greek translators (as were many linguistic elements) in 1611 than they are today. In the early 17th century, many scholars thought that the Greek language of the NT was an entirely different language than the Greek of its own time, sometimes called, "Holy Ghost Greek." One of the reasons for this was the high number of words used only in the NT, and so many used only once. However, we later discovered thousands of papyri from the same era, and Adolf Deissmann published his magisterial work, "*Bible Studies*" in 1895, showing by comparison of these thousands of papyri with the NT that this entire idea was flawed. The Language in which the NT was written was not a unique language invented by the Holy Ghost specifically for biblical revelation; it was the common language of the everyday man. Nonetheless, such words, though much better understood today, were a great challenge to translators of the NT in the early 17th century, which is why the translators note, "There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once, (having neither brother nor neighbor, as the *Hebrews* speak) so that we cannot be helped by conference of places."

Their second illustration comes from zoology and geology. The point out that in many cases, they just didn't know what animal or precious stone etc. was being referred to in a particular biblical text, and that many ancient commentators were not particularly helpful, as they often said something with a show of certainty, but not really the knowledge to back it up. While we have much advanced today in our understanding of geology and zoology in the biblical references, there was a great ignorance of such subjects in 1611, and the translators admit to this, and mention the specific problem this posed for them as translators.[90] They note, "Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. concerning which 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*." It is noteworthy again that both of the illustrations of marginal notes give by the translators here (*hapax legomenon* and admitted ignorance of natural history) make up only a small section, and perhaps the most insignificant section, of the marginal notes which they actually included with the text of the 1611.

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[89] See one Logos generated list of such words here https://community.logos.com/cfs-file.ashx/__key/CommunityServer.Discussions.Components.Files/66/3465.Hapax-Legomena.docx

[90] Advancements have been made especially since Henry Tristram's "Natural history of the Bible" in 1867; see also "Zoology of the Bible" 1876 by Harland Coultas, in the preface to which Moulton explains that the KJV translators were deeply limited at this point, but that we are far more (though still far from perfectly) informed today.

Having given two illustrations (of the actually much broader) types of marginal notes they employed, the translators then make their point, and explain their logic. They note, "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?" When one is not sure what they text says, or what the text means, it would be dishonest for the reader to draw a conclusion based on the translators fallible translation peremptorily. It would be better that they not "conclude" or "dogmatize" upon the translational difficulties and textual doubts. Note that they are presuming the presence of error in their work here. If they felt they had not made errors, it would *not* be preemptory to conclude and dogmatize, and there would be no need for the reader to "seek further."

They now expand the reason why this is so, and clearly have in mind now the broader type of notes they typically include, rather than just those relating to zoology, geology, and *hapax legomenon*. "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 then presumption." When God has spoken clearly, and there are no translational difficulties, and no textual uncertainties about what he said, it would be a fault to fail to believe what God has said. It would in fact be simple incredulity (a blatant unwillingness to believe what God has said). But in the same way, in some places the Spirit of God has left the meaning/translation of a text, or its textual veracity, "questionable." And in such cases to "determine;" to conclude or dogmatize; to speak with certainty when we simply don't have certainty, is "no less than presumption." Where God has not given us certainty, it is presumption to pretend (or demand) that we have it.

They then note Augustine's wise words to the same effect, directly applying their thought now to the addition of marginal notes. "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." Augustine knew that there is no perfect way to translate much of Scripture, and had suggested that the wise reader always compare different translations to make sure that he understands the sense of Scripture, not just the interpretation of the translator. Our translators quite agree. They have made a strong case to say that when the text is not clear, a marginal note to "make doubt" is the honest way. However, they are being somewhat facetious here. They by no means notate all of the translational difficulties, which they were aware of. The large number of debates and discussions which are indicated by the notations in Bod 1602, Ms. 98, and the records in the notes of John Bois, but which don't make their way into a marginal note make this clear. And they touch only the tip of the iceberg of the textual doubts of what they are aware of verses what they notate. In Erasmus alone there were 1000 + annotations, and at least as many in the 1598 edition of Beza they made use of, almost none of which made their way into the margins. In the notes of John Bois, which reflect only one stage of the work, there are multiple textual variants dealt with or mentioned that did not end up in a marginal note. The truth is, they got away with what they could, given the limitations they had been given by Archbishop Bancroft. Had they notated all such places, or all the places where they were unsure about the text or its translation, their notes would have overtaken the Geneva Bible for scope, and the King and Bancroft would have censured them and their work.

They conclude this section with a note about Pope Sixtus V, and their disagreements, showcasing again the Protestant nature of their work. Sixtus had commanded that no marginal notes (and no Latin textual variants) be notated in the printed edition of the Latin Vulgate. They note that the comparison is not identical, became his statement was about the Vulgate, but it is similar. "We know that *Sixtus Quintus* expressly forbiddeth, that any variety of readings[91] 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." Even Catholics did not agree with such a decision, as Erasmus and Valla had shown. They had produced in their editions of the Latin Vulgate notes about textual variants and translational difficulties. If the Pope could truly speak *ex cathedra* as claimed, he of course could give a final word about all translation difficulties and textual variants. "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 an other matter; then his word were an Oracle, his opinion a decision." But they know this to be only a myth, and they are grateful to God that the Reformation has opened men's eyes to such nonsense. The Pope is a fallible man – he bleeds. "But the eyes of the world are now open, God be thanked, and have been a great while, they find that he [the Pope] 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." The translator's concluding thought (if not the exact last words) of this section are, "They that are wise, had rather have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, then to be captivated to one, when it may be the other." If there is uncertainty, it is the greater part of wisdom to leave the reader's judgment at liberty, than to be captivated to one translation, or one decision about a textual variant, when it may well be the other.

Liberty With Words In Translation

Under the final heading, *Reasons inducing us not to stand curiously upon an identity of phrasing*, the translators take up the second and final specific note about procedure, the liberty they have taken with words so as to avoid pedantry. There are two basic issues taken up. First is the issue of liberty with words, which is the bulk of the section. It addresses three different aspects of this liberty;[92] lack of consistency in how they render certain words and phrases, then (much more briefly), the partiality they showed to some words, and finally, the diversity they took with what words they did choose. Second, in a final note, they also address their choice to preserve traditional language and yet reject Catholic obscurantism.

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[91] The fact that Sixtus specifies textual variants (see Rhodes and Lupas pg. 58 for citation and translation) shows again that the translators are (in at least a veiled way) speaking of alternate readings of both translation and text throughout this section.

[92] Note the structure (1a) "We have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing [verbal and unnecessary changes]…(1b) we might also be charged… with…unequal dealings towards a good number of English words…(1c) add hereunto, that niceness in words [etc.]… (2a-b) and lastly…[preserving tradition but rejecting obscurantism]."

Shunning Consistency In Rendering Words And Phrases – Verbal And Unnecessary Changings

To the first they note, "An other 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 some where, have been as exact as they could that way." It is likely that they have in mind here Hugh Broughton, and any others whom his views might represent. As noted above, the eminent Hebrew scholar Broughton felt that belief in the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture (what would today be called verbal plenary inspiration) demanded the most literal translation possible. He believed that if a Hebrew word had one meaning, then it should be translated into English only one way, and consistently so throughout the translations. A phrase translated one way in one place should be translated the same way if it occurs in another, provided the intent is the same in both places. His concern was a deep accuracy to the original text. The translators try to assuage his opinion by suggesting that while somewhat free in their translation, and diverse in the way they worded the passages, they did still try to retain the same sense. "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 of the same sense every where) we were especially careful, and made a conscience,[93] according to our duty."

But having explained that they sought to follow their conscience and be scrupulous about such matters, they simply didn't feel the need for the kind of literalism with words that Broughton and others were advocating. If it doesn't contravene the meaning of Scripture, they feel liberty. They provide a few illustrative examples, but as with the examples they provide about marginal notes above, they have chosen as illustrations some of the mildest examples of a class which primarily includes far more extreme examples. Thus, while the heading refers to "phrasing" being varied, and while their practice shows entire sentences rendered rather differently, and the relation of words to one another repeatedly varied, their provided examples all relate only to a single word being translated with two separate single words. "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 *Travelling*; if one where *Think*, never *Suppose*; if one where *Pain*, never *Ache*; if one where *Joy*, never *Gladness*, etc., thus to mince the matter, we thought to savor more of curiosity than wisdom, and that rather it would breed scorn in the Atheist, then bring profit to the godly Reader." They believe that to "express the same notion in the same particular word" every time that notion occurs in Scripture would be to "mince the matter." It would be a scrupulous over-attention to details. In their opinion, this would be to "savor more of curiosity than wisdom," and such an approach they wholly reject. The word "curiosity" used both here and in the heading to describe what they are trying to avoid, is an archaic way to refer to scrupulousness. They are speaking about "pedantry," or "literalism." In fact, they feel that to seek such literalism would end up causing the KJV to be scorned by atheist, and would be no real help to the

[93] The OED defines the archaic phrase here, "to make a conscience" as meaning, "to make it a matter of conscience, to have scruples about, to scruple." They did there best to follow their conscience in such choices.

Christian reader. They are not tied to uniform phrasing, but rather express the freedom and liberty which they felt with words. They are concerned to communicate the content and ideas of Scripture, not its exact words. "For is the kingdom of God 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?"

They then provide two examples from church history where liberty with words in translation had caused quite a stir. Their point is to show that the objections against them (raised by Broughton and others) for not being scrupulously literal are nothing new, and are to be expected. They are well aware that people get somewhat emotionally attached to the Scriptures in a certain verbal form and, as they mentioned earlier, "cannot abide to hear of altering." They know they will be accused of "meddling with men's religion." In the two examples they provide, minor and insignificant verbal changes had caused a stir among the people. The stir about their even greater liberty with words is thus to be expected.

First comes an example from a Bishop Triphyllius in the late 4th century, who had substituted a different word in an exposition of Mark 2:9. The phrase "take up thy bed and walk," using the word "κραββατον" for bed, had apparently been presented in an exposition using instead the word "σκιμπους" for bed. They have a slightly different nuance, but the same basic meaning. However, according to the story as recounted in Nicephorus, St. Spyridon had harshly rebuked the Bishop for not being exact with the words of Scripture. Or, in the words of the translators, "A godly Father in the Primitive time showed himself greatly moved, that one of newfangledness called κραββατον, σκιμπους, though the difference be little or none…" They regard the rebuke of St. Spyridon as unnecessary.

Second comes a more well known example from the Latin Vulgate of Jerome. The translators refer in the margin both to a text in Jerome's commentary on Jonah that mentions the incident and to Augustine's epistle to Jerome which recounts it. The Old Latin texts, translated from the Greek LXX, had apparently used the word "*cucerbita*" or "gourd" for the description of the plant in the text in Jonah 4:6. But when Jerome produced his revision of the Latin, going back to the Hebrew, he had determined that the Hebrew word קִיקָיֹון more properly was "*hedera*" or "ivy." Augustine had described the situation in his letter to Jerome, "A certain bishop, one of our brethren, having introduced in the church over which he presides the reading of your version, came upon a word in the book of the prophet Jonah, of which you have given a very different rendering from that which had been of old familiar to the senses and memory of all the worshippers, and had been chanted for so many generations in the church. Thereupon arose such a tumult in the congregation, especially among the Greeks, correcting what had been read, and denouncing the translation as false, that the bishop was compelled to ask the testimony of the Jewish residents (it was in the town of Oea). These, whether from ignorance or from spite, answered that the words in the Hebrew manuscripts were correctly rendered in the Greek version, and in the Latin one taken from it. What further need I say? The man was compelled to correct your version in that passage as if it had been falsely translated, as he desired not to be left without a congregation,—a calamity which he narrowly escaped."[94] Or, in the words of our translators, "…and another reporteth, that he was much abused for

[94] Augustine, Epistle 71.3.5. See at http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1102071.htm

turning *Cucurbita* (to which reading the people had been used) into *Hedera*." The translators conclude that their own "verbal and uneccesary changings" will of course meet similar opposition, "Now if this happen in better times, and upon so small occasions, we might justly fear hard censure, if generally we should make verbal and unnecessary changings."

Examples Of Liberty With Words

Before moving on to the additional sections of the preface that deal with different aspects of the liberty with words the translators have taken, it may be instructive to examine a few examples from their work of what they mean by the "verbal and unnecessary changes" which they have made.

Thus, for example, in Rom. 4, the same Greek lemma "λογίζομαι," occurs 11 times, meaning the same thing in each case. Paul intends the repetition to show that the same "counting" that was given to Abraham is given to all who come to Christ by faith. But the translators chose three different words variously to translate it with here. Sometimes as "counted," other times, "reckoned," or "imputed." Paul's point is to build the connections between his use of the word – consistency is essential to his meaning, yet the English reader who failed to realize the liberty that the translators have taken with words might think there to be three different Greek words here, and might miss the connections Paul is making.

In a similar vein, Gen. 15:6 is quoted (probably from the LXX) three different times in the NT (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23), always with essentially identical wording.[95] But each time it is quoted, the translators have slightly varied the way they translated it;

- *Abraham believed God, and it was <u>imputed</u> unto him for righteousness (Jam 2:23)*
- *Abraham believed God, and it was <u>accounted</u> **to** him for righteousness. (Gal 3:6)*
- *Abraham believed God, and it was <u>counted</u> unto him for righteousness. (Rom 4:3*)

The English reader unaware of the liberty they have taken with words might think the text to have been quoted in different forms.

Or, for example, in Rom. 7:7-8 – the verb, "ἐπιθυμέω," and its noun form, though it has the same meaning in each instance, and is repeated by Paul to make a point, is translated differently as "lust," "covet," and "concupiscence" by the translators. They have created variety where Paul intended to create repetition, and the reader who didn't understand their liberty with words, or who was scrupulous with the words of their English translation, might easily think Paul to have intended different words here.

In I Cor. 3:17, Paul uses a play on words when he write, "If any man φθείρει the temple of God, him shall God φθείρει…" He even places the words next to each other in the sentence to highlight his wordplay. But the translators translated the first as "defile" and the second as "destroy." They have created variety where Paul directly intended to use the same word to make a point.

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[95]Apart from differing word order, which doesn't affect translation, the passages are verbally identical in the TR;
Ἐπίστευσε δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. (Rom 4:3 SCR)
Ἀβραὰμ ἐπίστευσε τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. (Gal 3:6 SCR)
Ἐπίστευσε δὲ Ἀβραὰμ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην (Jam 2:23 SCR)

Or for example, note that throughout II Corinthians 1, two different words are paired repeatedly against each other. Yet the translators variously render these same two words as, "comfort," "affliction," "tribulation," and "consolation" in the passage. Creating variety where there was none in the original.

For another example, Deut. 32:35 (probably from the LXX[96]) is quoted twice in the NT (Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30), both times in the same words in the Greek text,[97] but rendered differently both times in KJV.

- *For we know him that hath said, Vengeance* belongeth unto me*, I will recompense, saith the Lord. (Heb 10:30)*
- *for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (Rom 12:19)*

Or, for example, Psalm 95:11 is quoted (from the LXX) by the author of Hebrews twice, and the text is verbally identical both times (3:11 and 4:3).[98] But the translators made a significant translational choice to render the same quotation in two different ways.

- *So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. (Heb 3:11)*
- *As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest (Heb 4:3)*

The English reader who does not understand the liberty they have taken with words might think the quotation to have occurred in two different forms. Yet this is not the case. Nor could one claim that different authors are interpreting the text in two different ways, for the author and context is identical.

One might also note parallel passages that occur in the gospels, where the wording between the Evangelists is identical but where the KJV has translated the texts differently.

- Mt. 4:6/Luke 4:10 – concerning/over
- Mark 1:17/ Matt. 4:19 – follow/ come ye after
- Matt. 10:14/Luke 9:5 – the dust/the very dust
- Matt. 10:22/ Mark 13:13 – he that endureth to the end shall be saved/he that shall endure the same shall be saved
- Matt. 17:19/Mark 9:28 – apart/privately
- Etc., (this phenomenon is incredibly common)

For another example, Mark used the adverb "εὐθέως" (immediately, at once) some 42 times throughout his gospel,[99] connecting the various narratives with a consistently vivid pace. But what Mark intends as a regular literary device to connect the narrative, the

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[96] The form is different still from the Hebrew MT, and the KJV translation of it.

[97] The introductory "quotation formulas" used by the authors change, but the text is identical;

γέγραπται γάρ, Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω, λέγει Κύριος. (Rom 12:19 SCR)
οἴδαμεν γὰρ τὸν εἰπόντα, Ἐμοὶ ἐκδίκησις, ἐγὼ ἀνταποδώσω, λέγει Κύριος· (Heb 10:30 SCR)

[98] ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου, Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου· (Heb 4:3 SCR)
ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου, Εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου. (Heb 3:11 SCR)

[99] Mk. 1:10, 12, 18, 20-21, 28-31, 42-43; 2:2, 8, 12; 3:6; 4:5, 15-17, 29; 5:2, 13, 29-30, 36, 42; 6:25, 27, 45, 50, 54; 7:35; 8:10; 9:15, 20, 24; 10:52; 11:2-3; 14:43, 45; 15:1.

KJV's liberty with words has obliterated. It varies the translation of Mark's adverb by variously translating with "immediately," "straightway,"[100] "forthwith,"[101] "anon,"[102] and "as soon as."[103] The English reader who was not aware of the liberty with words that the translators took could easily miss Mark's intentional repetition of the same word. They have created a variety that the original text did not have.

Take for another example the one Hebrew word פָּנֶה or "the face." Strong's lexicon lists only two basic definitions for the word with a variety of applications of those definitions, "(1) The face (as the part that turns); used in a great variety of applications (literally and figuratively); (2) also (with prepositional prefix) as a preposition (before, etc.)." Modern lexicons, like HALOT, with slightly more nuance, list some 15 basic meanings, with distinction among each. Yet this one word was rendered some 83 different ways by the KJV translators.[104] Surely, in so many instances of this word in the Hebrew Bible, it does have several different meanings, and good translation must respect this. But there are clearly not eighty-three distinctly different meanings of the word. The English reader who wasn't aware of the translator's liberty with words might easily think some eighty different words to occur in the original text, but he would be mistaken. This is rather an instance of liberty with words.

Or, from another direction, there are some 45 distinctly different Hebrew and Aramaic words, (and around 12 different Greek words) that are simply rendered with the single English word "destroy" in the KJV,[105] obliterating the various nuances and distinctions that the original language texts employed between these words. Yet in other passages, the translators have used some 80 different English expressions to render these same Hebrew and Aramaic roots, so it is not as if they didn't have a store of English words to present the distinctions of the original with. They were executing what they called, "verbal and unnecessary changes." The English reader who didn't understand the liberty the translators have taken with words might think every occurrence of "destroy" in its different forms to have meant the same thing to the original readers. But this would not be the case. In each of these cases, and many more, it becomes clear that the KJV translators did not feel tied to a particular verbal form for their translation. They did not seek to be

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[100] Mk. 1:10, 18, 20-21; 2:2; 3:6; 5:29, 42; 6:25, 45, 54; 7:35; 8:10; 9:15, 20, 24; 11:3; 14:45; 15:1

[101] Mk. 1:29, 43; 5:13

[102] Mark 1:30

[103] Mk. 1:42; 5:36; 11:2; 14:45

[104] Strong's Concordance lists the following as different ways the KJV translates this single word; "accept, a-(be-) fore(-time), against, anger, as (long as), at, battle, because (of), beseech, countenance, edge, employ, endure, enquire, face, favor, fear of, for, forefront(-part), form(-er time, -ward), from, front, heaviness, him(-self), honorable, impudent, in, it, look(-eth) (-s), me, meet, more than, mouth, of, off, (of) old (time), on, open, out of, over against, the partial, person, please, presence, prospect, was purposed, by reason of, regard, right forth, serve, shewbread, sight, state, straight, street, thee, them(-selves), through (-out), till, time(-s) past, (un-) to(-ward), upon, upside (down), with(-in, -stand), ye, you."

[105] See a full list at, https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/search.cfm?Criteria=destroy&t=KJV&lexcSt=2#s=s_lexiconc

verbally exact, or verbally consistent in their translation, and they explained this from the very start so that no one would take the words of their translation too seriously.

Election And Reprobation Of Language - Unequal Dealings With Words

Having explained their intention to make "verbal and unnecessary changings" they now take up briefly a second issue in their liberty with words. The first issue had to do with translating the same Hebrew and Greek words and ideas in a variety of different ways in English. They now take up the reasons they often chose one English word or phrase but rejected another. Using an interesting analogy from a philosopher's comment, they build a vivid picture. Imagining a forest of trees, the philosopher reflects on the fact that some of these trees will be shaped into idols by pagans to worship. But ironically, some of these very same trees will be turned into firewood to be burned. In a somewhat arbitrary choice, some trees are have a destiny as worthless as firewood, and other of the exact same trees have a destiny as an object of worship. The translators draw an analogy to their sometimes arbitrary choice of one word over another. Perhaps from the doctrine of election, the translators suggest that they have been quite partial in electing some words to become part of biblical language, and "damning others" to remain only part of the common but not biblical vocabulary. They conclude by quoting James and asserting themselves as judges of words. "We might also be charged (by scoffers)[106] 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 for ever, we might be taxed peradventure with S. *James* his words, namely*, To be partial in our selves and judges of evil thoughts*."

Freedom In Wording - Rejecting Niceness In Words

In the third and final aspect of the liberty they have taken with words, they point out the abundant store of linguistic vocabulary that has been furnished for them by God in English, and even the pattern He has set by varying in Scripture the language He uses to describe things, with an apparent indifference (they think) to the exact wording. In rejecting a focus on words that they consider, "trifling," they believe they are actually following God's example. "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 then 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 & Greek*, for that copy or store that he hath given us."

Thus, in this first section dealing with their desire to "use the same liberty in our English versions" and to not tie themselves to a "uniformity of phrasing," they have made it clear that they feel free to make "verbal and unnecessary changings." They are

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[106] It is interesting to note that they are well aware that there are good grounds for such a charge to be brought against them at this point, but they provide no defense whatsoever here of their choices. They simply state that they are aware that they are open to this charge.

"admonishing" the reader to be careful not to focus too much on the precise words of their translation; they certainly did not. They are more concerned with the message than the exact verbal form. They are not bound by words, and they don't want the reader to be either. "For is the kingdom of God 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?"

Preserving Traditionalism But Rejecting Obscurantism

In the final section of their note, they take up the second issue concerning words, (or, the final issue concerning liberty with words)[107] which is the balance they sought between traditionalism and obscurantism. They rightly understood that these are two sides of the same issue, and that wise translation should seek a medium between the two. All translation seeks to lessen the distance between the modern reader and the original one. Translation should be into the vulgar tongue, or the language of the common man. The goal should be to make the Bible understood. However, there are two extremes that must be avoided.

Preserving Traditional Language

On the one hand, a desire to be relevant to modern culture and language could lead one to abandon traditional language rightly held. If one makes readability the only goal of translation, then the work could become novel. This is what Puritan translations had often done, departing from the traditional ecclesiastical language like "baptism" which had long had connotations of Infant immersion to prefer "washings" or "immersions;" and "Church" which had now long had connotations of in institutional gathering only legitimized by a representative of the Pope, in favor of "congregation." Puritans had provided translations like "washing" and "congregation" to remove the distance between the modern and ancient reader, and prevent the mistaken connotations of tradition. But the translators felt that many traditions should be retained. "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* in stead of *Church*…"

Rejecting Catholic Obscurantism

But on the other hand, if one doesn't seek to reduce the distance between the ancient and modern reader at all, then the translation becomes obscure, and they are convinced that the Catholic translation has been intentionally so. They believe that the Catholics were forced into translating their text into English against their will, so they compensated by intentionally being obscure in the wording. It has created an intentionally misunderstood vocabulary that has, "darkened the sense." Or, as they note,
"…as also 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, whereof their late Translation is full, and that of purpose to darken the sense, that since they must needs

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[107] "Lastly" here could be understood to be enumerating a second of two major divisions (liberty with words, in three areas; then balanced translational theory, in two areas), or a final of four divisions (thus, four examples of liberty with words, the last of which has two parts).

translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof, it may bee kept from being understood." A Bible translator can fall into a ditch on either side, becoming either too novel or too obscure. The translators would rather avoid both extremes, and speak the language of the common man, and they believe that it was just such a common language that the original writings of Scripture spoke, and they seek to emulate just that. "But we 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 [common]."

Closing Benediction

In the final paragraph of the Preface, the translators give a beautiful closing benediction, commending the reader to God, and encouraging them to the lifelong study of Scripture. We could find no better way to conclude this exposition than to quote their words in full.

> "Many other things we might give thee warning of (gentle Reader) if wee had not exceeded the measure of a Preface alreadie. It remaineth, that we commend thee to God, and to the Spirit of his grace, which is able to build further then we can aske or thinke. Hee removeth the scales from our eyes, the vaile from our hearts, opening our wits that wee may understand his word, enlarging our hearts, yea correcting our affections, that we may love it above gold and silver, yea that we may love it to the end. Ye are brought unto fountaines of living water which yee digged not; doe not cast earth into them with the Philistines, neither preferre broken pits before them with the wicked Jewes. Others have laboured, and you may enter into their labours; O receive not so great things in vaine, O despise not so great salvation! Be not like swine to treade under foote so precious things, neither yet like dogs to teare and abuse holy things. Say not to our Saviour with the *Gergesites*, Depart out of our coasts; neither yet with *Esau* sell your birthright for a messe of potage. If light be come into the world, love not darknesse more then light; if foode, if clothing be offered, goe not naked, starve not your selves. Remember the advise of *Nazianzene*, *It is a grievous thing* (or dangerous*) to neglect a great faire, and to seeke to make markets afterwards*: also the encouragement of S. *Chrysostome*, *It is altogether impossible, that he that is sober (and watchfull) should at any time be neglected*: Lastly, the admonition and menacing of S. *Augustine*, *They that despise Gods will inviting them, shal feele Gods will taking vengeance of them*. It is a fearefull thing to fall into the hands of the living God; but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessednes in the end, when God speaketh unto us, to hearken; when he setteth his word before us, to reade it; when hee stretcheth out his hand and calleth, to answere, Here am I; here wee are to doe thy will, O God. The Lord worke 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 prayse and thankesgiving. Amen."